

## **Joachim Mörlin excerpted from the McClintock and Strong cyclopedia pages 616 - 617**

**Joachim Mörlin** was a well-known German Lutheran theologian, and one of the most zealous defenders of the great German Reformer and his views, was born at Wittenberg April 6, 1514. His father, Jodocus, professor of metaphysics at the Wittenberg University and afterwards pastor at Westhausen in Franconia, gave Joachim a careful training intellectually and morally, and in 1527 he entered the newly-founded University of Marburg, but soon left for his native city, where under Luther's and Melancthon's special guidance, he devoted himself to the study of theology. When not quite twenty-three years of age he was chosen dean of a church at Wittenberg, and in 1539 accepted a call to the church of Eisleben. At Luther's request, he returned in the following year to Wittenberg; but hardly arrived, left it again for Arnstadt, whence he had received a call as its first ecclesiastical superintendent. He was now but twenty-six years old, and by far too young and inexperienced to fill such and influential position. Zealous in his religion and of rather coarse and contentious disposition, he soon came into serious difficulties with some powerful church members, who persecuted him mercilessly. In 1548 he was deposed, without having been allowed the benefit of a trial. Though the citizens appealed for his retention, Mörlin had to leave Arnstadt, and removed to Göttingen, where he remained until 1549. About this time he, together with many other Lutheran theologians, openly declared against the Augsburg Interim, alleging that it re-established popery; thereupon duke Erich was deposed and Mörlin banished. A few months later he received a pastoral call to Kneiphof, one of the main quarters of Königsberg, in Prussia, which he accepted. Greatly favored by duke Albrecht, Mörlin was at first universally esteemed and beloved. But he soon became involved in the Osiandrian controversy. In his strict Lutheranism he opposed Osiander's views on the nature of justification and its relation to sanctification. According to the manner of the times, Osiander's departure from the grand Lutheran doctrine of Justification, and especially of views approximating the Roman Catholic doctrine, were therefore made the subject of severe comment by Mörlin in a rather coarse and abrasive way. The duke of Prussia anxious to restore peace between the contending parties, issued an edict to all Prussian clergymen and professors of theology, in which slanders and denunciations of their respective opponents was threatened with sever bodily punishment. But the quarrel, in spite of the ducal edict, grew more and more bitter, and after Osiander's death Mörlin attacked and persecuted

his followers. Several of them, among them Johann Funk, were beheaded because they refused to recant. Uncharitable against all opponents, and of a natural contentious and passionate disposition, Mörlin grew so violent and abusive in his language that he called the ducal edict and inspiration of the devil, to which he refused to submit. In consequence he was dismissed (1558), and, notwithstanding his numerous and influential followers, had to leave Königsberg. He went to Dantzic, and lived there for some time, supported by voluntary contributions of his Königsberg friends, until he received a call to Brunswick as ecclesiastical superintendent and first city-preacher. Here, in connection with his friend, Martin Chemnitz, late librarian of duke Albrecht, Mörlin devoted himself to a closer study of the Bible and the fathers, and took a prominent part in all the theological controversies of the time. When in 1556 Albrecht Hardenburg attempted to introduce into the republic of Bremen Calvin's doctrine respecting the Lord's Supper, Mörlin together with Chemnitz, opposed him most violently, and after his dismissal caused the issue of that bigoted Bremen edict (Oct. 6, 1561) "against the sacramental enthusiasts of Anabaptists" (*Gegen die Sacraments – Schwärmer u. Wiedertäufer*). At this occasion, he published his *Erklärung aus Gottes Wort und kurzer Bericht d. Herren Theologen, and Von der Condemnation streitiger Lehr (Magdeburg, 1568)*. These works are not over-lucid exposition of the strict Lutheran view on the Lord's Supper, and are far inferior to Chemnitz's work, *Repetitio sanæ doctrinæ de vera præsentia corporis et sanguinis Domini in cæna sacra*. In 1557 he went to Wittenberg, vainly endeavoring to put a stop to the *Adiaphoristic* controversies. He subsequently separated himself from Flacius, writing against him in his usual abusive and violent style. He was also present at the Worms Colloquy, which, like most such disputations, led to no result whatever. After the death of Melancthon, he grew, if possible, still more zealous in his strict Lutheranism, ample proof of which is to be found in the numerous works which he published about this time. We mention here his *Historia Prutenici: - Treue Warnung und Trost an die Kirchen in Preussen: = Sendsreiben an den Vogel: - Apologia auf die vermeynte Widerlegung dess Osiandrischen Schwarms*. Things meanwhile had been entirely suppressed, and duke Albrecht, yielding to the repeated appeals of the citizens, recalled Mörlin in 1566 to Königsberg, nominating him bishop of Samland. Chemnitz, who always had been a great favorite with the duke, accompanied Mörlin to Königsberg, and became associated with him in the preparation of the *Corpus doctrinæ Prutenicum*, designed as the symbolical text-book of Prussia. July 7, 1567, the work was approved by the duke, and on the following day Mörlin left for

Brunswick, choosing not to accept the proffered position. Owing to his contentious disposition, he came into a new difficult with the city council of Brunswick, and was now glad to accept duke Albrecht's offer. As bishop of Samland, Mörlin took a very prominent part in the Majoristic controversy, and published his *Disputatio contra nocam corruplilam, qua asseritur, operum præsentiam in actu justificationis neccariam ess (Jenæ 1567)*, and his *Verantwortung wider die falschen Auflagen der neuen drei Wittenberg in ihrer Grundfeste Königsberg*. He died May 23, 1571 at Königsberg, before the Majoristic controversy was concluded. Besides the works already named, Mörlin wrote also *Disputatio de communicatione idiomatum (1571): - Postilla: - Vom Berufe der Prediger, sammt zwei Briefen Lutheri*. Mörlin was evidently a tenacious man, and born to be a polemic. His opponents charged him, and perhaps not unjustly, with assuming to be the guardian of the Church. He was evidently sincere and deeply in earnest, asserting that he became involved in these various controversies as a faithful son of the Church, doing only what everyone was bound to do, namely, guarding its purity with all the power and skill at command.