

Maximilian Mörlin excerpted from the McClintock and Strong cyclopedia pages 617 - 618

Maximilian Mörlin was a younger brother of Joachim Mörlin and was born at Wittenberg Oct 14, 1516. He received his classical education at the Wittenberg Gymnasium, and studied theology under Luther and Melancthon, both of whom esteemed him highly, though subsequently he was one of Melancthon's most determined opponents. After his ordination he preached at Pegau and Zeitz, and in 1548 received a call to Schelkau, in Franconia, where he was so universally beloved for his piety and eloquence that the people would not let him go when in 1544 he was called to Coburg as court-preacher. In 1546 the theological faculty of his alma mater conferred the honorary degree of S.T.D. upon him, and two years later he nominated superintendent of the churches and schools of Coburg. Like his brother Joachim, he was very decided in all his peculiar religious views, and the words he inscribed (1530) on a copy of the Augsburg Confession give an insight into this strict Lutheranism: "Huic sacrosanctæ confessioni et indubitatae assertion ex verbo Dei toto pectore assentior et subscribe et deum oro, ut in illius constanti confessione et immutabile professione per spiritum S. me perpetuo servet," or "The Word of God with our whole heart to this agree with the assertion of the holy confession of the sign and the true God, and I pray you, through the Holy Spirit so that in me, that they were beheaded, and the unchangeable and perpetual profession is to maintain," etc. Everything outside of Lutheranism he considered heresy, and treated as such. In the same copy of the Augsburg Confession we find the following marginal note, which is significant of this character "Ad hanc subscriptionem impulit me impia profanation, corruption et mutation præcipuorum hujus confessionis articulorum per ipsum autorem in corpore suæ doctrinæ, quam ut hujus confessionis negationem detestor et abjicio et damno in articulis mutatis." Or "To this signature pushed impious profanation, corruption and mutation of this confession, the principal author of the joints in the body, through his teaching, how to get this confession, denial and hate aside and damage to joints, things changed." His strict Lutheran view led him to subscribe the so-called *Censuræ* passed upon Andreas Osiander by the Saxon theologians at Weimar and Coburg, and with the same zealotism he fought against Justus Menius at the Synod of Eisenach (1556), determined to have him cut off from the Church for heresy. When this plan failed, he, nothing daunted, drew up a paper in which Menius's heretical views were set forth and his condemnation called for, and then travelled with Stolz of

Weimar, through all Saxony to gather subscriptions thereto. As an undoubted champion of the genuine theology of Saxony, as taught by Luther, he, by order of his prince, went to the Worms Colloquy, and so strictly followed the instructions of Flacius that the conference had to be abandoned as hopeless. Like Flacius, he was sincere and deeply in earnest, and as a true follower of Luther espoused the cause of his deceased teacher, showing by the severest logic that the Lutheran Church was, under Melancthon's guidance drifting away from its moorings. Like a great many Lutherans of this period, he was mercilessly, though conscientiously, contentious. He was a born polemic. In connection with Flacius, Stössel, and Musäus, he published the *Sächsische Confutationsschrift* (1559), which was afterwards declared law by the prince of Saxony, and as such proved injurious both to the university and Flacius. About this time the elector Frederick prepared to introduce the doctrines of the Reformed Church into his territory. His zealous Lutheran son-in-law, prince Frederick of Saxony, tried his best to prevent him, and in 1560 went with Mörlin and Stössel to Heidelberg to meet Peter Boguin and other Reformed clergymen in open conference. The disputation, which was afterwards published under the title of *Propositiones, in quibus vera de cæna Domini sentiis juxta confessionem Augustanam, etc., propositæ 1560 in Academia Heidelberg (Magdeberg 1561)*, led to no result. Shortly after his return, Mörlin separated from Flacius, who had made himself odious by the rash statement (in his discussion with Strigel at Weimar in 1560) that original sin is the very substance of man in his fallen state, thus laying himself open to the charge of Manichæism. Mörlin openly denounced Flacius, and the duke established a censorship, of which Mörlin was made a member. Flacius and his followers were deposed. March 3, 1562, he signed Strigel's declaration, and in his official visits tried to prevail upon the different ministers to sign the same, and to desist in future from all public denouncement of the Synergistic heretics. In 1569, when the government of Saxony was placed into the hands of John William, than whom there was no more ardent friend of Flacius, Mörlin was deposed, but yet in the same year was called as court-preacher to Dillenburg. His strict Lutheranism did not, however, prove acceptable to the count of Dillenburg; and when in 1572 John William extended a call to him to resume his former position, he gladly accepted it. But the clergy of Coburg, mostly followers of Flacius, with Musäus at their head, opposed him so decidedly that he had to leave Coburg again. At last (in 1578) Musäus and all the clergymen opposed to Mörlin were dismissed, and Mörlin resumed his former position. He died April 20, 1584. It cannot be denied that Mörlin was a consistent upholder of the doctrines which he originally learned

from Luther. In his theological views he opposed Melancthon, asserting that if that reformer was great, truth was greater. He seemed to consider it his special mission to call every man to account who either openly or secretly attempted to destroy what Luther had built up.