

THE ROLE OF THE HEART AND WILL IN PHILIP MELANCHTHON'S THEOLOGY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH

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1. Introduction

Praised by some, condemned by others, called "the prime mover of conflicts,"¹ a "synergist"² or *praeceptor Germaniae*, Melanchthon remains a controversial person, but certainly one of the great theologians of the Reformation. He formulated *Confessio Augustana*, a synthesized declaration of the Lutheran faith read before the Diet at Augsburg, on June 25, 1530, that later "would become normative for the Lutheran confession."³

The basis for this statement of faith was already set by Melanchthon's *Loci communes*, published in 1521, as the first systematic presentation of the biblical truth, based on the *Sola Scriptura* principle. "No better book has been written

¹ F. Bente, "Historical Introductions to the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church," in *Concordia Triglotta* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1921), 104.

² John M. Drickamer, "Did Melanchthon Become a Synergist?" *The Springfielder* 40, (1976): 95-101. The term "synergism" comes from the Greek word *synergos*, "a fellow-worker" (from *syn*, "together" and *ergon*, "work"). The accusation of synergism as applied to Melanchthon insinuated that he ceded the human will a place in salvation, as a "fellow-worker" with faith. This contrasted with what was understood as being Luther's monergism (*monos*, "alone"), thus allowing only God's influence in salvation.

³ Thomas A. Brady, "Emergence and Consolidation of Protestantism in the Holy Roman Empire to 1600," in *Reform and Expansion 1500-1660*, ed. Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, vol. 6 of *The Cambridge History of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 21.

after the Holy Scriptures than Philip's,"⁴ Luther remarked about the book. The last edition was revised one year before Melanchthon's death in 1560.

These revisions, starting in 1521 and ending in 1559, resulted in a final edition four times larger than the first one. The different editions show a theological development during this time.⁵ It expressed the Lutheran understanding of righteousness by faith in terms that appeared for some of his contemporaries as a betrayal of Luther's own monergist understanding. Melanchthon tried to solve the theodicy problem raised by the concept of predestination. He states that the reason why some will be lost is found in the "connection of the causes which are the Word of God, the Holy Spirit and the will of man."⁶

In other words, Melanchthon speaks of a certain degree of freedom that human beings have, in contrast with Luther's understanding of a passive will, as expressed in the well-known book *De servo arbitrio*.⁷ Coupled with the events following the Schmalkaldic War, Johann Pfeffinger started the synergist controversy. Being influenced by Melanchthon's declarations, like the one above, he affirmed that "the reason that some responded to the gospel and others did not was to be found within humans themselves, rather than in an extrinsic prior divine decision."⁸

Melanchthon is considered "the father of all the synergists that have raised their heads within the Lutheran Church."⁹ Such a negative attitude towards Melanchthon reflects a bias toward the assumption that he was influenced more by humanism than the Bible¹⁰ in his articulation of the causes/factors in human salvation as including the will, beside the Scripture and the Holy Spirit. Is this affirmation true in light of the Lutheran principle of *Sola Scriptura* and in the light of his own statements and definitions, or was Melanchthon's assertion about the will misunderstood?

⁴ Philipp Melanchthon and Jacob A. O. Preus, *Loci Communes, 1543* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1992), 9.

⁵ Philipp Melanchthon and Christian Preus, *Commonplaces: Loci Communes 1521* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2014), 28.

⁶ Melanchthon and Preus, *Loci Communes, 1543*, 44.

⁷ Lat. for "On the Bondage of the Will". Translated and published in Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, vol. 33, *Career of the Reformer III*, ed. Philip S. Watson (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972).

⁸ Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 244-245.

⁹ Bente, "Historical Introductions," 131.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 105.

In order to arrive at an answer, it is necessary to render a new assessment of the place of the will in Melanchthon's theology. A novel approach is to understand the will as related to the heart in Melanchthon's theology of righteousness by faith. Thus, the problem investigated by this study is the manner in which an understanding of the place of the heart and of the will clarifies Melanchthon's interpretation of the role of the will in the process of human salvation. Hence this study analyzes the manner in which Melanchthon uses the word "heart" and "will" and evaluates the relation between them in his major theological work, *Loci communes*.

The research is delimited to the study of Melanchthon's major work, *Loci communes*, first edition (1521) and the 1543 edition, English translations, compared with their Latin original¹¹ and the 1555 edition, the English translation. Any reference to other books will be only secondary, to facilitate a better understanding of the concepts conveyed in the *Loci*.

The results of this research can contribute to the clarification of the ambivalence regarding Melanchthon's theology and his position about the freedom of the will.¹² This can be useful to all researchers interested in Melanchthon's theology of the will. Also, it can be profitable to all Protestants who feel disheartened by the popular, negative attitude against Melanchthon. A growing trend of appreciation states that Melanchthon "developed an uniquely Lutheran understanding of Christian freedom,"¹³ which does not contradict the *Sola Scriptura*, *Sola fide* and the *Sola gratia* of Martin Luther.

The understanding of freedom encompasses a biblical understanding of human nature, in which the mind, the will, and the heart each have their proper place. A clear understanding of the interaction between the will and the heart in *Loci communes* offers insight into Melanchthon's loyalty to biblical truth. Such intuition may lead to an appreciation of his knowledge and possibly to a change of attitude regarding his theological position.

¹¹ As it is published in the 21st volume of Karl Gottlieb Bretschneider and Heinrich Ernst Bindseil, eds., *Corpus Reformatorum*, 28 vols. (Leipzig, Germany: Schwetschke, 1834-1860). For an analytic bibliography of the online digitalized Melanchthonian Latin books (and various editions), see <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/bibliography/melanchthon.html>.

¹² Melanchthon and Preus, *Loci Communes*, 1543, 7.

¹³ Timothy J. Wengert, "Philip Melanchthon on Human and Divine Freedom," *Dialog* 39, no. 4 (2000), 265.

2. The Will in Melanchthonian Studies

This part will deal with current Melanchthonian studies, regarding the role of the will in his understanding. As one will discover, Melanchthonian studies are polarized between his admirers and his critics. In the framework of a brief literature review,¹⁴ this study will argue for a more balanced view of Melanchthon. Afterwards, the crucial terms in the heart of the controversy will be presented.

2.1. Between Hate and Love

Just before his death on April 19, 1560, Melanchthon made a list about the good things to anticipate and evil things he would escape by death.¹⁵ Among the things he would be freed from he listed *rabies Theologorum* (Lat. for “the fury of the theologians”). One can certainly affirm that the theological conflicts from the last part of his life¹⁶ marred his reputation up until the 20th century.¹⁷

A major locus of this conflict is Melanchthon’s understanding regarding the role of the will in the process of salvation,¹⁸ many perceiving his position as a departure from Luther’s.¹⁹ From this point onward, he was accused of

¹⁴ Before proceeding to the study of Melanchthon’s life, one should look through a good biography. The latest is the well-researched study of Gregory B. Graybill, *The Honeycomb Scroll: Philipp Melanchthon at the Dawn of the Reformation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015).

¹⁵ Timothy J. Wengert, “Philip Melanchthon: Speaking for the Reformation,” *The Expository Times* 126 (2015), 313-314.

¹⁶ This is especially true after the death of Luther in 1546.

¹⁷ Clyde L. Manschreck, *Melanchthon: The Quiet Reformer* (New York: Abingdon, 1958; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 13. Manschreck has an excellent insight when he states that “[o]nly now in the travail of modern Protestantism to understand itself and in the perspective of four hundred years is the place of Melanchthon becoming clear;” he understands Melanchthon as one of the “chief figures” of Protestantism, but also “the most enigmatic.” *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Heinz Scheible, *Melanchthon: Eine Biographie* (Munich: Beck, 1997), 10.

¹⁹ Gregory Graybill synthesizes three theories in explaining this supposed departure: (1) he was convinced by Erasmus; (2) he was influenced by philosophy or (3) he had to be consistent with his own theological system. For more details, see Gregory B. Graybill, *Evangelical Free Will: Philipp Melanchthon’s Doctrinal Journey on the Origins of Faith* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 9-11.

fomenting almost all of the conflicts within Lutheranism.²⁰ In his classical biography of Melanchthon, Clyde L. Manschreck affirms that Melanchthon's "gentleness was mistaken for weakness, his learnedness was regarded as questionable rationalism, his refusal to accept Luther without discrimination was painted as rebellion, his struggles to unify Christendom were labeled pro-papalism, and his recognition of the worth of Geneva's great leader was slurred as crypto-Calvinism."²¹

Not all agree that Melanchthon was misinterpreted. Although recognizing his influence as an "indelible positive mark" in the history of Reformation, Kurt K. Hendel makes an equivocal statement when he says that "Philip Melanchthon will continue to be a controversial reformer."²² This ambivalence from the Lutheran standpoint is shared by Wilhelm Pauck who concludes that "Melanchthon gave to Luther's understanding of the gospel a humanistic-scientific form which, in respect of its basic presuppositions, was foreign to Luther's spiritual outlook."²³ While disagreeing with Pauck's negative assessment, Fong thinks that Melanchthon theology was undeniably oriented toward synergism and semi-Pelagianism.²⁴

2.2. Toward a More Balanced View

At the beginning of the 21st century it seems that there is a growing interest in Melanchthon and his influence.²⁵ A short overview of the Melanchthonian studies is helpful in understanding the contemporary perception of Melanchthon as being not in the shadow of Luther but

²⁰ See the historical overview from the *Concordia Triglotta*. Bente, "Historical Introductions," 1-256. Bente expounds the prevalent negative assessment of Melanchthon's position.

²¹ Manschreck, *Melanchthon: The Quiet Reformer*, 14.

²² Kurt K. Hendel, "Augsburg Confessors Philip Melanchthon: Controversial Reformer," *CurrTM* 7 (1980), 55.

²³ Wilhelm Pauck, *From Luther to Tillich: The Reformers and Their Heirs* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), 53.

²⁴ Chung-ming Abel Fong, "Luther, Melanchthon and Calvin: The Dynamic Balance Between the Freedom of God's Grace and the Freedom of Human Responsibility in Salvation" (PhD diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1997), 186.

²⁵ Since 2004, Melanchthon's house in Bretten became the seat of the Melanchthon Academy, with the purpose of researching the universal dimension of this humanist and reformer. The webpage is <http://www.melanchthon.com>. Also, for a comprehensive bibliography of secondary studies on Philip Melanchthon see http://www.melanchthon.com/Melanchthon-Akademie/Wissenschaft_und_Forschung/Melanchthon_Bibliographie_2010-2015.php.

“significant in his own right,”²⁶ as having an original theology,²⁷ thus postulating a more balanced view of the reformer.

A “multifaceted image”²⁸ of Melanchthon emerges with the publishing of the volume edited by Johanna Loehr, encompassing assorted articles about theological, philosophical, political and educational themes, coupled with the historical effects of Melanchthon’s activity.²⁹ In 2010, at the 460th anniversary of Melanchthon’s death, a volume recognizing his influence in Europe was published under the editorship of Irene Dingel and Armin Kohnle.³⁰ It addresses the impact of Melanchthon in Europe, presenting him within his European network and with details about the different disciplines that were influenced by his writings.³¹ For a more detailed impact in the areas of philosophy, theology, pedagogy and ecumenism, trying to do justice to Melanchthon’s image of a humanist reformer, one can consult the 2011 collection of articles edited as a book by Michael Fricke and Matthias Heesch³² and the Wilhelm Schwendemann’s book from 2013.³³ The interaction between

²⁶ Graybill, *Evangelical Free Will*, 4.

²⁷ One can consult the collected articles dedicated to his theology in Frank Günter, ed., *Der Theologe Melanchthon* [The Theologian Melanchthon], Melanchthon-Schriften der Stadt Bretten 5 (Stuttgart: Jan Thorbecke, 2000). For a full list of the volumes in the same series, see http://www.melanchthon.com/Melanchthon-Akademie/Wissenschaft_und_Forschung/Publikationen.php.

²⁸ Michael Plathow, review of *Dona Melanchthoniana: Festschrift für Heinz Scheible zum 70. Geburtstag* [Dona Melanchthoniana: Festschrift for Heinz Schible’s 70th Birthday], ed. Johanna Loehr, *Luther* 73 no. 3 (2002): 158-159.

²⁹ The book was first published at Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt by Frommann-Holzboog in 2001.

³⁰ *Philipp Melanchthon: Lehrer Deutschlands, Reformator Europas* [Philip Melanchthon: The Teacher of Germany, The Reformer of Europe], Leucorea-Studien zur Geschichte der Reformation und der Lutherischen Orthodoxie 13 (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2011).

³¹ For a bird’s eye view of the book, see the publisher’s presentation at http://www.eva-leipzig.de/product_info.php?info=p3039_Philipp-Melanchthon.html.

³² *Der Humanist als Reformator: Über Leben, Werk und Wirkung Philipp Melanchthons* [The Humanist as Reformer: About the Life, the Work and Philip Melanchthon’s Influence] (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2011).

³³ *Reformation und Humanismus: Philipp Melanchthon und Johannes Calvin* [Reformation and Humanism: Philip Melanchthon and John Calvin] (Bern: Lang, 2013). Also, for the subsequent reception of Melanchthon’s writings in schools and literature, see Stefan Rhein and Martin Treu, eds, *Philipp Melanchthon: Zur Populären Rezeption des Reformators* [Philip Melanchthon: On the Popular Reception of the Reformer],

philosophy and theology is analyzed more profoundly in *Der Philosoph Melanchthon* [The Philosopher Melanchthon] based on the supposition that “Melanchthon the theologian cannot be understood without his philological and philosophical educational background.”³⁴

In advancing the present-day understanding of Melanchthon, probably Timothy J. Wengert does more than anyone else.³⁵ He presents Melanchthon as being on a par with Luther, not in his umbra, as being the voice of Reform.³⁶ Wengert studies Melanchthon’s understanding of the will in several books and articles³⁷ concluding that he developed a notable and special interpretation which remains faithful to the core of the Protestant faith. In accordance with this positive appraisal, O’Kelly also argues that Melanchthon and Luther are not in disagreement regarding justification by faith, but in continuity.³⁸

A comprehensive study on the doctrine of the will in Melanchthon’s theology is undertaken by Wolfgang Matz, who, after a detailed analysis of the concept of “will” in varied Melanchthonian writings, infers that Melanchthon used philosophy only to be precise in his anthropological

Schriften/Kataloge der Stiftung Luthergedenkstätten in Sachsen-Anhalt 19 (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2016).

- ³⁴ Günter Frank and Felix Mundt, ed., *Der Philosoph Melanchthon [The Philosopher Melanchthon]* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), v.
- ³⁵ David M. Whitford, “Contributors to the Lutheran Tradition,” in *Reformation and Early Modern Europe: A Guide to Research*, ed. David M. Whitford, (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2008), 13-14.
- ³⁶ Timothy J. Wengert, *Philip Melanchthon, Speaker of the Reformation: Wittenberg’s Other Reformer*, VCS 963 (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2010).
- ³⁷ Timothy J. Wengert, *Human Freedom, Christian Righteousness: Philip Melanchthon’s Exegetical Dispute with Erasmus of Rotterdam*, OSHT (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Wengert, “Human and Divine Freedom;” Timothy J. Wengert, “Philip Melanchthon and the Origins of the ‘Three Causes’ (1533-1535): An Examination on the Roots of the Controversy Over the Freedom of the Will,” in *Philip Melanchthon: Theologian in Classroom, Confession, and Controversy*, ed. Irene Dingel et al., *Refo500 Academic Studies 7* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012); Wengert, “Speaking for the Reformation.”
- ³⁸ Aaron T. O’Kelley, “Luther and Melanchthon on Justification: Continuity or Discontinuity?” in *Since We Are Justified by Faith: Justification in the Theologies of the Protestant Reformations*, ed. Michael Parsons (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2012), 43.

presentation of terms,³⁹ not crossing into the philosophical territory as some other have accused him of doing.

Two other studies, each from a different perspective, approach the concept of the “will.” The first is found in chapter 3 of Dino Bellucci’s book on the role of natural science in Melanchthon’s understanding.⁴⁰ He states that the will must be understood in Melanchthon’s writings as an accurate image of the characteristics of God’s own will,⁴¹ finding no reason whatsoever to impeach his reputation.

The second study is pursued from the perspective of Luther’s *De servo arbitrio* by Robert Kolb.⁴² In the second chapter of his book, Kolb calls Melanchthon a “critical” follower of *De servo arbitrio*. He recognizes that Melanchthon’s language confused some of his students, due to the fact that Melanchthon wanted to preserve a “delicate balance” between the will and God’s grace.⁴³ He also states that both Melanchthon and Luther are to be seen as struggling to make clear that God “exercises total responsibility” over creation while maintaining that He has given “every human being responsibility for obedience” in his or her sphere of life.⁴⁴ In other words, Kolb asserts that there is more of a misreading of both theologians than a contention between them.

2.3. Crucial Terms at the Heart of the Controversy

Before delving into the analysis of the manner in which Melanchthon used the word “heart” and into the study of the interaction between the heart and the will, a brief overview of the key terms in Melanchthon’s writing will be useful.

³⁹ Wolfgang Matz, *Der Befreite Mensch: Die Willenslehre in der Theologie Philipp Melanchthons*, *Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte* 81 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), 238.

⁴⁰ Dino Bellucci, *Science de la Nature et Réformation: La physique au Service de la Réforme dans L’enseignement de Philippe Mélancton*, *Dialogo* 1 (Roma: Vivere In, 1998).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 561.

⁴² Robert Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method: From Martin Luther to the Formula of Concord* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

“Justification” is bed by Melanchthon as receiving “forgiveness of sin and imputed righteousness, for the sake of Christ, through faith.”⁴⁵ He defines “sanctification” as “the renewal that follows, which God effects in us.”⁴⁶ In his 1521 *Loci*, Melanchthon gives the meaning of the “heart” as the “seat of all affections, including love, hatred, blasphemy, and unbelief.”⁴⁷ In the 1543 edition, the heart is place under the “will,” which is defined as “[the] second part of man,” “the seeking part,” “which either obeys or resists judgment.”⁴⁸ The first part of humanity is “the ability of knowing and judging, which is called the mind.”⁴⁹

3. Under the Will, but from the Heart

From the vantage point of the current positive appraisal of Melanchthon’s theology, an analysis of the essence of Melanchthon’s understanding of righteousness by faith in *Loci communes* will follow.⁵⁰ This will create the framework for the discussion of the place and role of the human heart in the process of salvation as described by Melanchthon. After clarifying this issue, the relation and the interaction between the heart and the will in *Loci communes* will be explored, for the purpose of shedding light on his understanding of the role of the will in the process of salvation.

3.1. The Essence of Melanchthon’s Righteousness by Faith

In the book whose content was intended to be a presentation of “the chief topics of Christian doctrine,”⁵¹ Melanchthon concentrates on what he

⁴⁵ Philipp Melanchthon and Clyde Leonard Manschreck, *Melanchthon on Christian Doctrine: Loci Communes, 1555*, A Library of Protestant Thought (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 169.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 163.

⁴⁷ Melanchthon and Preus, *Loci Communes 1521*, 108.

⁴⁸ Melanchthon and Preus, *Loci Communes, 1543*, 41.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ It is not the purpose of this research to present a historical development of his doctrine of justification. This was already done, adequately, by Corneliu C. Simuț, “The Development of the Doctrine of Justification in the Theology of Philip Melanchton: A Brief Historical Survey,” *Perichoresis* 1 (2003): 119-127. Thus this research attempts to view his understanding of righteousness by faith, in all of the three representative editions of his *Loci communes*.

⁵¹ Melanchthon and Preus, *Loci Communes 1521*, 47.

considers to be the essence of Christian knowledge, “the power of sin, the Law, [and] grace.”⁵² These three concepts are part of the process of salvation, which is at the center of understanding of the righteousness by faith in the reformer’s theology. In this soteriological framework, Melanchthon presents his *loci communes*.

Regarding the power of sin, Melanchthon emphasizes the nature of sin. The essence of sin is called an “inner darkness of the mind,” “the stubbornness of the heart,” “doubts,” “ignoring and despising” Jesus Christ, and “turning away” from the will of God.⁵³ Against these, the Holy Spirit brings conviction, because He is the *voce ministerii Evangelici* (Lat. for “the voice of the Gospel ministry”).⁵⁴ The voice of God’s Spirit is heard through the “literal meaning”⁵⁵ of the Scripture, which present both the anger and the mercy of God.⁵⁶ When a person is brought to the point of contrition and recognizes that the only escape is to trust “in the grace promised in Christ” he or she can be “resurrected and revived.”⁵⁷

After addressing the topics of free will, sin, law, gospel and grace,⁵⁸ he starts presenting the loci of grace and justification, “the sum and substance of the Gospel.”⁵⁹ In his understanding, a person is justified after “being put to death by the Law” and is “brought back to life” by the good news of the

⁵² Ibid., 52.

⁵³ Melanchthon and Preus, *Loci Communes*, 1543, 47.

⁵⁴ Bretschneider and Bindseil, *Corpus Reformatorum*, 21: 665-666.

⁵⁵ Melanchthon and Preus, *Loci Communes* 1521, 195. Melanchthon argues here for a cognitive propositional revelation. The meaning is in the plain reading of Scripture. The cognitive content of the Spirit’s revelation is presented on the same edition, where he states that one can see “the plan of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures, how he teaches the pious so sweetly and persuasively and acts for no other reason than to save us.” Ibid., 174.

⁵⁶ In Melanchthon’s understanding, “the Law displays sin, the Gospel grace.” Ibid., 170. Both have promises for life, but the promises made by the Law are only for those who can keep the Law, which a sinner cannot. So, for the sinner, only the promises of the Gospel are attainable. Melanchthon recognizes that the Law and the Gospel are not separated but joined together in the whole Bible. Ibid., 181.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 194.

⁵⁸ The same order is presented in the 1543 edition, with the topics regarding God, creation and the cause of sin being placed at the beginning. Melanchthon defines the Law as being “the knowledge of sin” and the Gospel as “the promise of grace and righteousness.” Ibid., 204.

⁵⁹ Melanchthon and Preus, *Loci Communes*, 1543, 85.

remission of sins.⁶⁰ This can only be done when, though faith, one is clinging without any doubts to the promise of Christ.⁶¹ Thus Melanchthon locates *fides* (faith) in the heart of *iustitia*. In the 1521 version, he defines human righteousness (*iustitia*) as “faith (*fides*) alone in the divine mercy and grace in Jesus Christ.”⁶² This definition of justification (*iustificatio*) is expanded in the 1543 edition as being the “forgiveness of sin and reconciliation or the acceptance of a person to eternal life”⁶³

Understanding it as a forensic term, Melanchthon states that we “must, however, accept this imputed righteousness by faith.”⁶⁴ In the *ordo salutis* faith comes before the working of the Holy Spirit in us of “that which is akin to God,”⁶⁵ but after that one received the “knowledge of God’s mercy.”⁶⁶ After exploring the semantics of the Greek word *pistis*⁶⁷ he concludes that this comprises both firm assent (*assensionem firmam*) and trust (*fiduciam*).⁶⁸ In other words, faith is both knowledge of and trust in God’s promises, promises that bring consolation through the ministry of the Holy Spirit to the “minds that were previously made to tremble in terror”⁶⁹ because of the knowledge of sin. Thus the “firm assent” is contingent on the Holy Spirit’s illumination and renewal.⁷⁰ Closely connected, the trust (*fiducia*) is that the “action of the will

⁶⁰ Melanchthon and Preus, *Loci Communes 1521*, 209.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Personal translation: “Sed sola FIDES de misericordia et gratia dei in Jesu Christo IUSTITIA est.” Bretschneider and Bindseil, *Corpus Reformatorum*, 21:159-160.

⁶³ Personal translation: “IUSTIFICATIO significat remissionem peccatorum et reconciliationem eu acceptationem personae ad vitam aeternam.” Ibid., 21: 741-742.

⁶⁴ Melanchthon and Manschreck, *Loci Communes, 1555*, 161.

⁶⁵ He is referring here to the beginning of sanctification. Ibid., 162. This affirmation must be understood in the context of Andreas Osiander’s (1498-1552) controversial declarations that “we are justified on account of the essential righteousness of God in us.” Quoted by Melanchthon in Ibid., 168.

⁶⁶ Melanchthon and Preus, *Loci Communes, 1543*, 113.

⁶⁷ The Greek term for “faith” which is translated in Latin by Melanchthon as *fides*.

⁶⁸ Bretschneider and Bindseil, *Corpus Reformatorum*, 21: 744. The same structure of faith is presented by Melanchthon in the first edition of *Loci communes*: “faith is constant assent to God’s every word” and “faith is nothing else than trust in God’s mercy promised in Christ.” Melanchthon and Preus, *Loci Communes 1521*, 215.

⁶⁹ Melanchthon and Preus, *Loci Communes 1521*, 189.

⁷⁰ Bretschneider and Bindseil, *Corpus Reformatorum*, 21:161-162.

which of necessity responds to the assent."⁷¹ When the mind "raises itself by faith, remission of sins and reconciliation are given."⁷²

The action of God's Spirit continues the work of renewal, "which God effects in us," calling it sanctification.⁷³ Melancthon recognized faith as the "the source, life, and root of all good works;" from this faith all the good works toward God and toward the human neighbor spring.⁷⁴ This faith still remains a "powerful and eager trust in God's mercy, never failing to produce good fruit."⁷⁵ There is no merit even in the good deeds done after being justified, because the human being is still a sinner.⁷⁶ Even in sanctification faith remains the basis on which a person is sanctified, due to the fact that the godly are sinners and the sins are present with them; in spite of this, they "believe that they are pleasing to God because of His promised mercy, and they sustain themselves with this comfort."⁷⁷ In other words, faith pervades every aspect of our life and our death.⁷⁸

3.2. The Place of the Human Heart in Melancthon's Description

The whole argument that Melancthon presents in his *Loci communes* has, at its center, the concept of the human heart. For a proper understanding of his soteriology, one must first understand the way he defines the term "heart," and its place and role in the explanation of the process of salvation.⁷⁹

⁷¹ Melancthon and Preus, *Loci Communes*, 1543, 87-88.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 86. Speaking about the image of God as the "original righteousness," he lists three constitutive elements: "[1] light in his mind by which he could firmly assent to the Word of God and [2] turning of his will to God and [3] obedience of his heart in harmony with the judgment of God's law, which had been planted in his mind." *Ibid.*, 48.

⁷³ Melancthon and Manschreck, *Loci Communes*, 1555, 163.

⁷⁴ Melancthon and Preus, *Loci Communes* 1521, 249.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 252.

⁷⁶ Melancthon and Preus, *Loci Communes*, 1543, 100.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 101.

⁷⁸ Melancthon and Preus, *Loci Communes* 1521, 235.

⁷⁹ In order to have a comprehensive understanding of the definition, place and role of the human heart, this study will investigate every usage of the word "heart" as it appears in his *Loci communes*, the 1521 and 1543 English editions, supplemented with insights from the 1555 edition. In the 1521 edition, the word is used 150 times; in the 1543 one, the word is used 250 times. Of course, not all of these occurrences

Based on a terminology he considers proper, Melanchthon defines human nature as being made from two parts: (1) a *vis cognitiva* (cognitive power) and (2) a *vis affectiva* (affective power).⁸⁰ The cognitive part refers to the human reason and to “the ability of knowing and judging, which is called the mind.”⁸¹ The second part, *affectiva*, is called the “seeking part” or *voluntas*, that is, the will.⁸² Under the will, there are the “appetites of the senses or affections;”⁸³ the heart is described as the source and also the object of these affections.

As part of his adherence to the Renaissance motto, *ad fontes*, Melanchthon strives to restore the biblical usage of language in theology. Thus he uses the term “heart” in the biblical sense of “the highest faculty of man,” the source of his affections,⁸⁴ based on the fact that God is interested in and judges the heart.⁸⁵

The human sin-stained heart is insincere and corrupted,⁸⁶ in quest of its own advantage,⁸⁷ and with a wickedness that is “inscrutable.”⁸⁸ Bringing an

are relevant for the present study. The following analysis synthesizes all the usages of the term “heart” in connection with the process of salvation.

⁸⁰ In note 32, Christian Preus writes that “Melanchthon’s division of man into the intellect and the affections play a major role in this work and stands as a serious attempt to articulate Lutheran anthropology over against the anthropology of the Scholastics” (Melanchthon and Preus, *Loci Communes* 1521, 73). He expands this definition in the 1555 German edition, where he presents the essential five strengths of the newly created human as being (1) the biological aspect of digesting food; (2) the perceptive senses, both external (sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch) and internal (the capacity to distinguish, to find similarities and to remember); (3) understanding and the power to command external movements; (4) true desires in his heart and will and (5) locomotive power. Melanchthon and Manschreck, *Loci Communes*, 1555, 51.

⁸¹ Melanchthon and Preus, *Loci Communes*, 1543, 41.

⁸² Melanchthon states that the will is also called *adfectus/affectus* (affection) or *appetitus* (appetite). Melanchthon and Preus, *Loci Communes* 1521, 55. He also addresses the Aristotelian distinction between the appetite of the senses and the higher appetite, from which “love, hate, hope, fear, sadness, anger and the other affections that rise from these are present.” *Ibid.*, 56. The word *appetitus* is a derivative of *appetere* “seek after” (*Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 11th ed. [2004], s.v. “appetite”). This is the reason Melanchthon uses the name “seeking part” in his description. In the 1543 edition he clarifies these distinctions.

⁸³ Personal translation of the Lat. “appetitiones sensuum seu affectus.” Bretschneider and Bindseil, *Corpus Reformatorum*, 653-654.

⁸⁴ Melanchthon and Preus, *Loci Communes* 1521, 61.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

array of biblical passages in support, Melancthon refutes the idea that humans can fulfill, in any way, God's law, because the heart is inculcated with sin, the perverse "inner disposition (*affectus*)" and the "deprived agitation" against the will of God.⁸⁹ Contaminated from birth,⁹⁰ the human heart infects with corruption all human powers.⁹¹ Even if there is some knowledge of God left, our acquiescence is "weak because of the stubbornness of our heart."⁹² Unenlightened by the Holy Spirit, the heart flees from God⁹³ and "it turns away to its own counsels and desires and sets itself up as its own god."⁹⁴

Only God can scrutinize the depths of the human heart,⁹⁵ and when the proclamation of the Law reveals the sin in our heart we become conscious of our sinfulness⁹⁶ and the desire for deliverance arises. Because God demands the whole heart,⁹⁷ Melancthon urges his readers to pray that the Holy Spirit may discover also the Gospel to their hearts⁹⁸ in order to renew and sanctify it.⁹⁹ By receiving the understanding of God's grace, one can confess the heart's stubbornness with faith,¹⁰⁰ as an answer from God, through faith, the heart is calmed and then motivated "to give thanks to God for his mercy so that we do

⁸⁷ Ibid., 80.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 84.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 80.

⁹⁰ Melancthon and Preus, *Loci Communes*, 1543, 49.

⁹¹ Melancthon and Preus, *Loci Communes* 1521, 108.

⁹² Melancthon and Preus, *Loci Communes*, 1543, 70, 87.

⁹³ Ibid., 60.

⁹⁴ Melancthon and Preus, *Loci Communes* 1521, 263.

⁹⁵ Melancthon and Preus, *Loci Communes*, 1543, 207.

⁹⁶ Melancthon and Preus, *Loci Communes* 1521, 187.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 129.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 204. As mentioned above, only through the living word of Scripture can "the human heart" learn about God's mercy; Melancthon does not speak here about an ecstatic experience. Ibid., 221. He adds later that the Holy Spirit brings into the heart the reality and truth of the words: "Your sins are forgiven." Melancthon and Preus, *Loci Communes*, 1543, 89-90.

⁹⁹ Melancthon and Preus, *Loci Communes* 1521, 206. In the 1543 edition he adds, in referring to David's prayer from Ps 51:10, that a "clean heart" is "a heart which believes uprightly about God, acknowledges the wrath of God and His promised mercy, which determines that we are seen, heard, aided, protected and preserved by God." Melancthon and Preus, *Loci Communes*, 1543, 106.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 153.

the Law willingly and happily."¹⁰¹ Thus the mind can become aware of God's purposes only when the heart is cleansed and purified by the Holy Spirit.¹⁰² Strengthened by faith in God's grace and by the trust that His promises are to be fulfilled for them, "these are the hearts that truly believe in God."¹⁰³

Melanchthon states that there is a component of faith, beyond the cognitive aspect, that pertains to the *affectus*. In other words, the heart is the locus of faith, as it assents to God's word¹⁰⁴ and also the place where God's love is poured, thus becoming righteous "by infused love;"¹⁰⁵ the heart begins to submit to God and, as a consequence, the God-oriented love begins.¹⁰⁶ The faith begets the love of God and of the neighbor from the heart,¹⁰⁷ and also implants hatred of and contempt for sin.¹⁰⁸ In it, "new God-pleasing emotions"¹⁰⁹ are created and the obedience that follows is both outward and inward, that is, from the heart.¹¹⁰ This obedience from the heart constitutes the "highest and innermost worship,"¹¹¹ because true worship is always associated with "true heart-felt emotion."¹¹²

In Melanchthon's understanding, the heart is the locus of righteousness, that light "which by faith and the knowledge of Christ moves our minds to true invocation of God and to other pious activities which are in agreement

¹⁰¹ Melanchthon and Preus, *Loci Communes* 1521, 215.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 98. On page 253 he adds that when "God strengthens and comforts the human heart through the Gospel and revelation of Christ, then it finally knows God." In the 1543 edition, on page 182, Melanchthon states that "the Holy Spirit is truly beginning and finally perfecting in our hearts the new light, wisdom, righteousness, and everlasting life which is pleasing to God and burning with the emotions engendered by the Holy Spirit, that is to say, with fear, faith, invocation, and love, and which in eternal life rejoices in the sight of God and celebrates Him."

¹⁰³ Melanchthon and Preus, *Loci Communes* 1521, 230.

¹⁰⁴ Melanchthon and Manschreck, *Loci Communes*, 1555, 98.

¹⁰⁵ Melanchthon and Preus, *Loci Communes*, 1543, 109.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 113.

¹⁰⁷ Melanchthon and Preus, *Loci Communes* 1521, 249. These are manifested as obedience toward God and good works towards men. Melanchthon and Preus, *Loci Communes*, 1543, 58.

¹⁰⁸ Melanchthon and Preus, *Loci Communes* 1521, 261.

¹⁰⁹ Melanchthon and Preus, *Loci Communes*, 1543, 22. He calls them "new desires which are in harmony with the law of God." *Ibid.*, 98, 243.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 63.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 151.

with the Law of God and are the beginning of eternal life.”¹¹³ As one grows in Christian maturity he or she may face different trials and may become troubled. When this happens, the heart “must acquiesce in the hope and expectation of divine aid”¹¹⁴ and Christ, who sees the emotions of every heart, will intervene.¹¹⁵

As it can be seen from the above analysis, Melanchthon defines the heart as a counter-part of the mind, the role of which is to spring forth all of the affections (including hate, love, faith, disbelief). It is placed under the will, but controls it. Using biblical language in its description, he states that in the unregenerate person, the heart is the locus of sin, and its role is to set itself as a god, producing hate and disbelief. Still, it is God’s desire to have the whole human heart this being the key to the submitting of the whole human being. When a person is exposed to the proclamation of the Word of God, the heart is revealed as being against God. If a person confesses rebellion and repents, his or her heart is purified and becomes the locus of faith and righteousness. Its new role is to move the mind to worship God and do pious deeds, because it now manifests faith and love and abides in hope.

3.2. The Relation Between the Heart and the Will Defined

As mentioned in the introduction when presenting the background framework of this study, when it comes to the place of the will in Melanchthon’s understanding, the opinions and also interpretations are polarized. One has to study Melanchthon’s own understanding, not the way he was interpreted within the Lutheran framework of thinking. One of the purposes of this research is to clarify how the reformer defined the will from the vantage point of the relation between the heart and the will. The manner in which Melanchthon defined and presented the place and the role of the heart in the process of salvation was analyzed in the previous section. In what will follow, the relation between the will and the heart will be investigated.

In the first edition of *Loci communes*, Melanchthon starts his exposition with a discussion about the *liberum arbitrium* (Lat. for “free will”).¹¹⁶ A

¹¹³ Ibid., 211.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 200.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 207.

¹¹⁶ Melanchthon and Preus, *Loci Communes* 1521, 54. This first edition is initially analyzed because Melanchthon was accused of changing his position from the one expressed here, to one that comes closer to synergism in the last edition.

criticism of the free will opens the discussion due to the fact that Melanchthon sees it as “completely foreign to divine Scripture.”¹¹⁷ This criticism must be understood within his anthropological framework, that is, humanity being formed from two main faculties, the knowing and the seeking ones. Melanchthon explains the way free will is defined in his time:¹¹⁸ when the will is joined to the faculty of knowing, the *liberum arbitrium* comes to life.

In the same place where Melanchthon states that there is “freedom in the ability to act or not to act,” he states that due to the divine predestination, “our will has no freedom.”¹¹⁹ He then discusses the “very nature of the human will,”¹²⁰ starting with the misconception that the “freedom in external works” is all the freedom that a human person has. According to him, one cannot focus his attention on this type of freedom—manifested in habitual activities like dressing, eating and so on— and expand it to refer to all the “moving” faculty a person has—the will—because this leads to self-righteousness by works.¹²¹

The idea that there can be any free action of the will of the unregenerate in doing the righteousness of God is repugnant to Melanchthon. He criticizes the idea that the will can naturally oppose “its affections or can push aside an affection, as long as the intellect advises and recommends it,” stating that our “inner affections” are not in our power.¹²² An external morality will not suffice for salvation, because God looks at the heart, that is, at the inner affections. This neglected side of the will, the heart, or the inner affections, Melanchthon wants to bring into the forefront. Due to his dedication to biblical language, he regrets that the “use [of] the word *heart* instead of *will*” was neglected,¹²³ this

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 55.

¹¹⁸ Christian Preus explains that Melanchthon is referring to Lombard’s *Sentences*, where he states that the “[f]ree will (*liberum arbitrium*) is a faculty of reason and the will (*voluntas*)... And it is called free as concerns the will (*voluntas*), which can be turned to some object, but a judgment (*arbitrium*) as concerns the power of reasoning.” See note 31 in Ibid., 73.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 57. In Latin the formulation is *nulla est voluntatis nostrae libertas* which translates literally “our will’s freedom is none.” Melanchthon also states that “Scripture denies any freedom to our will through the necessity of predestination.” Ibid., 59

¹²⁰ Ibid., 60.

¹²¹ Ibid., 63.

¹²² Ibid., 61-62. In the same place, Melanchthon states that when we choose something else than what we desire, it is because another affection (like vanity) overrules the one that previously appeared (like sensualism). When something is chosen against all the affections, that is a pretense.

¹²³ Ibid., 61.

leading to the delusion of righteousness by works. He offers a scriptural argument in the 1543 edition, affirming that in the prophetic and apostolic literature, the terms “mind” (*mens*) and “heart” (*cor*) are used instead of “intellect” (*intellectum*) and “will” (*voluntate*).

Confronted with the actual language usage, Melanchthon blends the concepts of the will and of the heart together but in a certain structure, with the heart under the general concept of the will. This does not mean that the will is “better and stronger” than the heart, as one can see that there is no power in humanity that can “seriously oppose his affections.”¹²⁴ Melanchthon explicitly rejects the Aristotelian understanding that the will is concerned only with external things.¹²⁵ In other words, the external aspect of the will, must take into account the internal one, that is, the heart.

Thus, in Melanchthon’s understanding, the will comprises both an external movement and an internal one. The Melanchthonian readers will thus much profit if they understand that when Melanchthon is speaking about the external movement, he uses the generic term “will” and when he is speaking about the internal movement, he uses both the the term “heart” and the term “will” interchangeably, or puts them in the same expression as “heart and will.” The unregenerate human being has a certain freedom in the external movement, but no freedom in the internal one.¹²⁶

When human beings were created in the image of God, they were created with a free will. This free will is defined by Melanchthon as being “heart and will,” belonging together¹²⁷ and exercised in unity. The heart is equated with the understanding, which “was endowed with a great light;” having this light, the heart’s desire was full with love for God.¹²⁸ When sin disrupted the created order, this light became very dim, and “all the good virtues in the heart and will were also lost.”¹²⁹

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 64.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ “I confess that in the external selection of things there is a certain freedom, but I completely reject the idea that our inner affections are under our power. Nor do I grand that any will possesses the genuine power of opposing its affections.” *Ibid.*, 65.

¹²⁷ Melanchthon and Manschreck, *Loci Communes*, 1555, 52.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 51, 52.

¹²⁹ Melanchthon speaks about this as the “great ruin of human powers” and he portraits a vivid image of the deteriorated human heart as “like a desolate, deserted, old and decaying house, God no longer dwelling within and winds blowing through” in which “all sorts of conflicting tendencies and lusts drive the heart to the manifold sins of uncontrolled love, hate, envy, and pride.” *Ibid.*, 52.

Because freedom pertains not to the cognitive or the knowing part of the human being, but to the *vis affectiva*, the affective power,¹³⁰ when human beings defected, the inwardly “will and heart” were “wretchedly imprisoned, impaired, and ruined.”¹³¹ The result is that the human being “cannot by his own inward natural powers be obedient,”¹³² that is, his will, understood as the inner affections or the heart, has no freedom, being bound to sin.

In this context Melanchthon’s misunderstood statement about the three causes involved in the process of conversion must be understood. Before presenting the quote, two remarks are to be made. Firstly, starting from Bente’s assertion that Melanchthon speaks about a “so-called human cause of conversion,”¹³³ Fong gives voice to the common misunderstanding that Melanchthon used the expression “three causes of conversion,”¹³⁴ which he didn’t, as will be shown. Secondly, as Fong correctly states, Melanchthon himself denied that his theological understanding could be characterized by synergism.¹³⁵

The passage that speaks about the causes of conversion is not actually found in any of the *Loci communes* editions; it appears in what is called *Examen Ordinandorum*, a document regulating church ordinances, as it follows: “Therefore in conversion concur these causes, the word of God, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father and Son are sending in order that our hearts may be illuminated, and our will assenting, and not opposing the word of God.”¹³⁶ Based on superficial reading, this passage seems to imply that our will is a synergistic part of conversion, leaning dangerously toward the idea that there is in humanity a quality that makes a way for and contributes thus one’s personal salvation.¹³⁷

That this is not what Melanchthon conveys can be inferred from two observations. First, immediately preceding this passage, Melanchthon states

¹³⁰ Melanchthon and Preus, *Loci Communes* 1521, 57.

¹³¹ Melanchthon and Manschreck, *Loci Communes*, 1555, 52.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Bente, “Historical Introductions,” 129.

¹³⁴ See note 12 in Fong, “Luther, Melanchthon and Calvin,” 218.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 220.

¹³⁶ Personal translation of the Lat. “Concurrunt igitur in conversione hae causae, verbum Dei, Spiritus sanctus, quem Pater et Filius mittunt, ut accendat nostra corda, et nostra voluntas assentiens, et non repugnans verbo Dei.” Bretschneider and Bindseil, *Corpus Reformatorum*, 23:15.

¹³⁷ See the discussion in Fong, “Luther, Melanchthon and Calvin,” 218-221.

that “[g]race precedes the accompanying will.”¹³⁸ In other words, he indicates that grace have preeminence in the process of salvation. Second, the quoted passages clearly states that the Holy Spirit is sent in order to illuminate, to move our hearts toward him.¹³⁹ Thus, it is not a movement that the will makes independently and before receiving the Spirit’s illumination. Only when a person is aroused by the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God, then the will can assent and, not opposing the Word, accept its testimony. In other words, in this *ordo salutis*, there are three causes, sources or factors that bring about motion:¹⁴⁰ the first move is done when the Word is expounded; the second move is the illumination brought by the Holy Spirit and, as a consequence, the third move is that of the will, assenting to God’s word. In conversion, all these concur in the sense of agreeing and happening at almost the same time.

When Melanchthon speaks about the will’s movement this must be interpreted in the semantic framework described above. The will referred to here is the heart or the inner affections. The heart moves toward God only as a result of the Spirit’s illumination. In other words, Melanchthon describes here the psychology of conversion.

The passage quoted above appears in a slightly modified form in the 1535 edition,¹⁴¹ and after quoting Romans 8:26, and it reads “[i]n this example we see being joined together these causes, the Word, the Holy Spirit, and the will, certainly not idle, but opposing its weaknesses.”¹⁴² That this passage does not give the will a soteriological role, it is clear in the light of the above argument.

¹³⁸ Personal translation of “*Gratia praeunte comitante voluntate.*” Bretschneider and Bindseil, *Corpus Reformatorum*, 23:15.

¹³⁹ This is a hypothetical condition or wish, expressed by the use of the present subjunctive mood for the verb *accendo*. One may consult any introductory Latin grammar for the use of the subjunctive; for example, see J. C. McKeown, *Classical Latin: An Introductory Course* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2010), 259. Thus, by the use of the subjunctive, Melanchthon implies that conversion can become a reality only if a person obeys the Spirit’s influence.

¹⁴⁰ Under the article “*causa*,” Richard A. Muller defines it as “that which brings about motion and mutation;” see his *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1986), 61. In the same place, he states that the medieval scholastics, the Reformers and the Protestant scholastics followed Aristotle’s understanding regarding a “basic fourfold schema of causality.” It is beyond the purpose of this research to analyze the way Melanchthon uses the concept of “cause” in his theology.

¹⁴¹ Although this edition is not a part of the present paper’s analysis, it is being used because of the conflicted context mentioned above.

¹⁴² Personal translation of the Lat. “*In hoc exemplo videmus coniungi has causas, Verbum, Spiritum sanctum, et voluntatem, non sane otiosam, sed repugnantem infirmitati suae.*” Bretschneider and Bindseil, *Corpus Reformatorum*, 21:376.

Because of the potential misunderstanding of his words, Melanchthon uses the same quotation, but places it in the context of the good works: “[a]nd when we begin by the word, these three causes of good works concur, the word of God, the Holy Spirit, and the human will assenting, not opposing, the word of God,”¹⁴³ which evades any potential accusation. Notwithstanding, he addresses the problem mentioned above, by clarifying the role of “Holy Spirit, who proceeds from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ and who has been sent into the hearts of the faithful and has kindled the knowledge of God through the Gospel and aroused actions which are in keeping with the law of God.”¹⁴⁴ In these words he unambiguously explains that the will moves only as a response to the Spirit’s influence. Thus Melanchthon presents each element’s own place: the Holy Spirit is the one working through the Word and within the will, that is, the heart.

Looking at the way Melanchthon defines the relation between the will and the heart, one can understand passages like the ones mentioned above. The concept of “will” is closely connected with the concept of “heart,” with the will imparting its “seeking” and “moving” characteristics, both in the external realm and in the internal one. The internal realm, the heart, is the real decisional center of the human being. Because the unregenerate human being has a certain freedom in the external realm, but no freedom in the internal one, the heart must be converted. This is done only when it is exposed to the Word of God through the influence of the Holy Spirit, not opposing but assenting to his influence.

4. Conclusions

This perspective suggests some conclusions. First, in order to understand difficult passages like the ones mentioned above, Melanchthon’s definition of the relation between the will and the heart must be taken into account. Second, due to the close connectedness between the concepts of “will” and of “heart,” the will imparts its “seeking” and “moving” characteristics in the internal realm. Thus Melanchthon speaks interchangeably about the heart and the will.

¹⁴³ Personal translation of the Lat. “Cumque ordimur a verbo, hic concurrunt tres causae bonae actionis, verbum Dei, Spiritus sanctus, et humana voluntas assentiens nec repugnans verbo Dei.” *Ibid.*, 21: 658. Bayer misquotes Melanchthon, stating that he spoke about the will as being “the third cause of justification” and then, in note 30, referencing the quotation above, regarding the “three causes of good works.” Oswald Bayer, “Freedom? The Anthropological Concepts in Luther and Melanchthon Compared,” *The Harvard Theological Review* 91, (1998), 379.

¹⁴⁴ Melanchthon and Preus, *Loci Communes*, 1543, 43.

Third, the internal realm, the heart, is the real decisional center of the human being. Because the unregenerate human being has a certain freedom in the external realm, but no freedom in the internal one, the heart must be converted. This is done only when it is exposed to the Word of God through the influence of the Holy Spirit, not opposing but assenting to his influence. When the heart is converted, its movement directs the whole being towards God.

Fourth, Melancthon's discernment regarding the place of the heart and of the will is in no way opposed to the *Sola Scriptura*, *Sola fide* and the *Sola gratia* formulated by Martin Luther. Melancthon expounded a unique understanding of the Christian freedom of the will. Only by understanding the place of the heart, and its relation to the will, one can clarify Melancthon's interpretation of the role of the will in the process of human salvation.