Dialogue on the Two Natures in Christ
THE PETER MARTYR LIBRARY
Series One

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This book has been brought to publication with the generous support of
Northeast Missouri State University
and is published jointly by
The Thomas Jefferson University Press
and Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, Inc.
Kirksville, Missouri, U.S.A.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Vermigli, Pietro Martire, 1499–1562.
[Works. English. 1994]
The Peter Martyr library. Series one / general editors, John Patrick
Donnelly and Joseph C. McLelland
p. c.m. — (Sixteenth century essays & studies : v. 30–31)
Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

Contents: v. 1. Early writings, creed, scripture, church / translated by
Mariano Di Gangi and Joseph C. McLelland ; edited, with an introduction
and notes, by Joseph C. McLelland — v. 2. Dialogue on the two natures in
Christ / translated and edited with an introduction and notes by John
Patrick Donnelly.
ISBN 0-940474-33-6 (v. 2: alk. paper)
1. Theology, Doctrinal—History, 16th century. 2. Bible—Criticism,
interpretation, etc. — History—16th century. 3. Reformation. I. Donnelly,
John Patrick, 1934—. II. McLelland, Joseph C. III. Title. IV. Series.
BR350.V37 1994
270.6—dc29 94-18802
CIP

Composed at Northeast Missouri State University
Kirksville, Missouri 63501

Cover Art and Title Page by Teresa Wheeler, NMSU Designer
Manufactured by Edwards Brothers, Ann Arbor, Michigan
Text is set in Galliard Oldstyle 10/13; display in Hadfield

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United States of America.
The paper in this publication meets or exceeds the minimum requirements of the American
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Abbreviations Used in this Volume


CR  Corpus Reformatorum. Edited by C. G. Bretschneider and H. E. Bindseil. Halle, 1834–.

DS  H. Denzinger and A. Schönmetzer, Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum (Barcelona: Herder, 1963), no. 75. This work cited DS, with its standard citation numbers rather than by pages.


ST  Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae.

WA  D. Martin Luthers Werke, Weimar Ausgabe.
HIS WORK BEGAN MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS AGO when Robert Kingdon invited me to join him and Antonio Rotondò for dinner in Madison, Wisconsin. There we discussed my doing a critical edition of Vermigli’s *Dialogus de utraque in Christo natura* for the Corpus Reformatorum Italicorum series. I spent the summer of 1970 in various European libraries comparing the five Latin editions of the *Dialogus* and establishing a critical text. During the next several years I worked at running down Vermigli’s many patristic references, but gradually my time and energy became absorbed in other projects. When the Corpus Reformatorum Italicorum and its publisher, Sansoni of Florence, ran into financial difficulties, I shelved my notes. Meanwhile I was cotranslator of two Latin works, and I became convinced that a translation of the *Dialogus* would be of greater value than the publication of a critical edition of the Latin text. The notes to a translation could provide almost all the scholarly information usually supplied by a critical edition, and the potential readership would be much broader.

Over the years I have incurred debts to many scholars for their help with this project. For two weeks in the summer of 1970 I enjoyed the hospitality of Professor Philip McNair and Darwin College as I compared the various editions in the *Dialogus* in the rich collections of Cambridge University. The start of Peter Martyr Library, whose driving force has been Joseph C. McLelland, gave me the impetus to take down my earlier work from the shelf and begin again. Marcus Haworth, S.J., Professor Emeritus of Classical Languages at Saint Louis University, kindly read the whole manuscript, caught many errors of omission and commission, and often provided me with a better turn of phrase. Roland J. Teske, S.J., Professor of Philosophy at Marquette University, has given me much help with passages from Saint Augustine. The aid of his colleague, William E. Dooley, S.J., was invaluable in locating references to Aristotle and his commentators as well as in deciphering and translating Greek quotations in the difficult Greek type font employed by Vermigli’s publisher. Frederick Brenk, S.J., of the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome, helped
me with classical allusions. Professor Oliver Olson of Marquette’s Department of Theology provided information about the participants of the Lutheran-Reformed controversy over the Eucharist. Marquette’s Committee on Research funded much of my research costs, while Marquette Jesuit Associates helped with the cost of publication. A note of thanks is owed to the Zurich Zentralbibliothek for permission to publish the title page of the first edition of Vermigli’s *Dialogus*. Special thanks are due to the General Editor of the Peter Martyr Library, Joseph C. McLelland of McGill University, and to its Managing Editor, Robert V. Schnucker of Northeast Missouri State University. The errors and shortcomings of this work, of course, remain my own. It is hoped that in this work a Jesuit priest, whose Eucharist beliefs are closer to those of Johannes Brenz and whose Christology largely agrees with Vermigli’s, has carried out the role of the honest broker between the two contenders in the *Dialogus*.

John Patrick Donnelly, S.J.

Marquette University
Introduction

Eucharistic Controversy and the Reformation

The Eucharist during the Reformation era, far from being a source of unity among Christians as intended by Christ, often functioned as the apple of discord. Most of the major colloquies or ecumenical efforts to reach doctrinal agreements broke up, often after notable progress on other differences, when discussion turned to the Eucharist and to the way that Christ is present in the Lord’s Supper.

If Church historians have to point to one historical event at which Protestant unity broke down, the most obvious choice would be the discussions on the presence of Christ in the Eucharist at the Colloquy of Marburg on 3 October 1529, between Martin Luther (supported by Philip Melanchthon and Johannes Brenz) and Huldrych Zwingli (supported by Johannes Oecolampadius and others).

The most important and successful effort to heal divisions between Catholics and Protestants was the Colloquy at Regensburg (Ratisbon) in 1541 during which Melanchthon and Martin Bucer were able to work out a compromise with Cardinal Gasparo Contarini and Catholic representatives on many disputed issues, including justification, only to see the Colloquy collapse into mutual recrimination when it took up the Lord’s Supper.

In France the most important effort to avert civil war and achieve religious unity was the Colloquy of Poissy of 1561, where the two most important
Dialogue on the Two Natures in Christ

Protestant theologians were Theodore Beza and Peter Martyr Vermigli. Discussion went ahead rather smoothly until, as Vermigli wrote to Heinrich Bullinger, Beza told the assembly that “the body and blood of the Lord is as far from the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper as the highest heaven is from earth.” The cardinals and bishops made such an uproar that Beza could finish his speech only with great difficulty. Vermigli related to Bullinger that the Cardinal of Lorraine then made an address on the Eucharist which downplayed Catholic doctrine and approached the views of Luther and Johannes Brenz (1499–1570). Lorraine asked Beza and Vermigli to subscribe to this teaching, but they refused. Lorraine asked the two to sign the Augsburg Confession, with its statement of the real presence. Beza and Vermigli again refused. Vermigli rose and replied to Lorraine in Italian, arguing that the words of institution should not be taken literally and supporting his position by quotations from the early Church. This provoked an angry rebuttal from the learned General of the Jesuits, Diego Lainez. The Colloquy quickly broke down thereafter and civil war soon followed, but before leaving Poissy and Paris Vermigli wrote a declaration on the Eucharist that was frequently reprinted in his works.¹


Toward the end of the sixteenth century a new effort to heal differences between Protestants was made at Montbéliard in 1586. The giants of the Reformation era had long since gone to their reward. The two chief spokesmen were Theodore Beza (1519–1605) for the Reformed or Calvinists and Jacob Andreae (1528–1590) for the Lutherans. Andreae had earlier been largely responsible for healing doctrinal divisions among Lutherans and achieving a far-ranging doctrinal consensus in the Formula of Concord of 1577. But the Colloquy of Montbéliard also broke down and further embittered Beza and Andreae, who had once enjoyed cordial relations. Both sides published contradictory accounts of the Colloquy and claimed a theological victory. It is worth noting that in all the four failed efforts at consensus reviewed here the secular rulers applied pressure on the theologians to reach a compromise, but the theologians stuck to their principles.

Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499–1562)

It is against this background of longstanding sacramentarian controversy that we must approach Vermigli’s Dialogue on the Two Natures in Christ, the last work of his distinguished career as theologian. But the Dialogue must
also be viewed in the context of his own life and theological development. Peter Martyr, as Vermigli is usually known in English, was trained as an Augustinian canon at the University of Padua, where he mastered Aristotelian philosophy and received a solid grounding in the scholastic theologians. During his twenty years as priest and prior in Italy he read widely, gradually became disillusioned with the Roman Church, and was won over to Protestantism. Rightly fearing increasing repression after the breakdown of the Colloquy at Regensburg, he fled to Zurich in 1542. His first stay there was short, because no suitable position was available; instead he accepted an invitation to teach theology at the famous Academy in Strasbourg side by side with Martin Bucer (1491–1551). Bucer was learned, energetic, original, and irenic; his Eucharistic teaching tried to mediate between Luther and Zwingli. Clearer minds could and did call this trying to square the circle, but Bucer’s style was so prolix and opaque and his teaching so conditioned by political considerations that it was often hard to see precisely where he stood. On one point Bucer was certainly clear: theological divisions among German Protestants made them vulnerable to the rising military might of the Catholic emperor Charles V. The emperor’s victory in the First Schmalkaldic War forced Martyr to leave Strasbourg and accept an invitation from the government of Edward VI to teach at Oxford. Bucer soon followed him and took the chair of theology at Cambridge. In his lectures at Strasbourg and initially at Oxford Vermigli was understandably cautious on issues that divided Protestants, but the reaction to his Oxford lectures on 1 Corinthians, whose eleventh chapter is the earliest and most important Eucharistic text in the Bible, forced his hand. Among those attending his lectures was Richard Smith, whom Vermigli had replaced as regius professor. The lectures resulted in an outcry for a public disputation on the Eucharist. Smith, fearful of the government, fled,² but the Catholic position was defended by other theologians in May 1549. The government had the records of the debate published together with Martyr’s more systematic account of his Eucharistic theology, the Tractatio.³ The next year an English translation of the Tractatio was published in London. The first two continental editions of this, Vermigli’s first book, appeared in Zurich in 1552 and 1557. In 1557 there were also French and Italian translations published in

² Later Vermigli wrote a book against Smith on priestly celibacy and religious vows.
³Tractatio de sacramento Eucharistiae... (London: [R. Wolfe], 1549). Bound with it was Disputatio de eodem Eucharistiae sacramento.... The first edition of the Tractatio must have come to the attention of the Lutheran Johannes Brenz because Bucer was apologizing to Brenz for its teaching as early as 15 May 1550. An English translation of the Tractatio is in McLelland and Duffield, Life, Early Letters, 173–289.
Geneva. The publication history of these writings alone indicates that Vermigli’s teaching took a distinctly Reformed rather than a Lutheran stance. Gradually Vermigli’s influence on Archbishop Cranmer grew. It is in no small measure because of this influence that the Edwardian Forty-Two Articles, which later as the Elizabethan Thirty-Nine Articles became the main doctrinal statement of Anglicanism, took a definitely Reformed position on the Eucharist, and ruled out both the Catholic and Lutheran positions.4

The death of Edward VI and the accession of Mary Tudor in 1553 forced Vermigli to leave England and return to his old teaching position in Strasbourg. But conditions in Strasbourg had changed. Bucer had died in England, and the clergy of the city were now led by Johann Marbach, who favored a strict Lutheran position on the Eucharist. Several times Marbach tried to impose on Vermigli a Lutheran confession dealing with the Lord’s Supper. He refused to submit to this pressure, and in his 1556 statement to the Strasbourg Senate he recapitulated his doctrine, rejected a Lutheran doctrine of the real physical presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and repudiated the teaching that Christ’s body can be in more than one place.5 This last point was to be the crucial issue in the Dialogus published six years later. Rather than face a public quarrel with the cards stacked against him, Vermigli decided to leave Strasbourg and take the teaching position at Zurich which had become open on the death of Conrad Pellican. Except for the sojourn to Paris for the Colloquy of Poissy, Vermigli spent the last years of his life, 1556 to 1562, at Zurich.

Before leaving Strasbourg Vermigli wrote his longest and most important statement on Eucharist theology, Defensio doctrinae veteris et apostolicae in sacrosancto Eucharistiae sacramento.6 The work is directed against Stephen Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, an old rival of Cranmer and then an important figure in Mary Tudor’s reestablishment of Catholicism. Gardiner was an accomplished patristic scholar, and Martyr took up the challenge at the insistence of John Jewel and other English friends who had followed him into exile. Martyr wrote to John Calvin in December 1558 that the work was going to press.7 Calvin greatly valued Martyr’s Eucharistic writings and later wrote

\[\text{Footnotes:} \]
4See Articles xxviii and xxix. It was John Jewel, Martyr’s dear friend and the recipient of the prefatory letter of the Dialogus, who revised the Thirty-Nine Articles. He wrote Martyr that the Articles “do not differ from you by a nail’s breath; for as to the ubiquitarian theory, there is no danger in this country”: see The Works of John Jewel, edited for the Parker Society by John Ayre (Cambridge, 1850), iv: 1246.
5The statement is printed in McLelland and Duffield, Life, Early Letters, 320–321.
6Vermigli’s Defensio doctrinae veteris et apostolicae… was published in Zurich in 1559 by Christopher Froschauer, his favorite publisher. The Defensio runs 821 folio pages. There is a translation of a brief Epitome of the Defensio in McLelland and Duffield, Life, Early Letters, 286–318.
that refutation of the Lutheran teaching on the local presence of Christ’s body “received its finishing touches from Peter Martyr, who left nothing more to be done.”8 The study of the writings of the Church Fathers involved in refuting Gardiner stood Martyr in good stead when he turned to refuting Johannes Brenz in the Dialogus, where his patristic erudition is the most striking feature.

Prior to writing the Dialogus Martyr had written against Catholics, as has been noted, but he was reluctant to engage in polemics against Protestants. Most of his writings were based on his lectures and took the form of commentaries on Scripture plus a commentary on Aristotle’s Ethics. Much of this material was published from his lecture notes after his death. He had attacked the veteran Zurich professor Theodore Bibliander, mainly over predestination, but this controversy, which ended in Bibliander’s dismissal, was largely kept quiet.9 Hostility to certain Lutheran teachings, especially regarding the Eucharist, had been building in Vermigli for several years. Undoubtedly his bitter experiences with Marbach had fed his frustration, but personal motives were secondary.

The Supper Dispute Renewed

After the Marburg Colloquy of 1529 polemics over the Eucharist between the Lutheran and Reformed wings of Protestantism abated considerably, but in the 1550s Reformed doctrine made inroads into Germany in a form that owed more to Calvin than to Zwingli. It affirmed that Christ was really but not physically present in the Eucharist. Many Lutherans were alarmed and labeled the new teaching crypto-Calvinism. The new doctrine was almost indistinguishable from the teaching of Melanchthon in his last years. Strict Lutherans began to attack crypto-Calvinism, and a new phase of the Supper Dispute was on.

The opening salvo was the Farrago ... de coena Domini of Joachim Westphal (1510–1574) published in 1552. The new attack centered on the way or mode that Christ was present in the Eucharist. Many Lutherans were alarmed and labeled the new teaching crypto-Calvinism. The new doctrine was almost indistinguishable from the teaching of Melanchthon in his last years. Strict Lutherans began to attack crypto-Calvinism, and a new phase of the Supper Dispute was on.

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8John Calvin, Opera quae supersunt omnia, ed. Baum, Cunitz, and Reuss, CR edition (Brunswick: Schwetschke, 1877), 17: 391.

9"Cumulum addit Petrus Martyr, ut nihil prorsus desiderari queat"; ibid., 9: 490.

About the Translator

John Patrick Donnelly, S.J., received his Ph.D. in history from the University of Wisconsin–Madison in 1972, where he wrote a dissertation on Peter Martyr Vermigli under the direction of Robert M. Kingdon. Since 1971, he has taught at Marquette University in Milwaukee, where he is professor of history. His research has centered mainly on the Jesuits and on Peter Martyr Vermigli. In addition to six articles and chapters in books dealing with Vermigli, he has published *Calvinism and Scholasticism in Vermigli’s Doctrine of Man and Grace* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), and with Robert M. Kingdon, *A Bibliography of the Works of Peter Martyr Vermigli*, Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies, XII (Kirksville, Mo.), 1990. He has previously translated from Latin various works of Thomas More (1982), Robert Bellarmine (1989), and Girolamo Savonarola (1994). He has held various offices in professional societies, including President of the Sixteenth Century Studies Conference (1977) and President of the Society for Reformation Research (1990–1991). He currently serves on the editorial boards of *The Sixteenth Century Journal* and *Archive for Reformation Research*. He is co-general editor of the Peter Martyr Library.
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Design by Tim Rolands
Cover and title page by Teresa Wheeler, Northeast Missouri State University designer

Text is set in Galliard, designed by Matthew Carter and released in 1978 by Mergenthaler Linotype.
Display is set in Hadfield.

Printed and bound by Edwards Brothers, Ann Arbor, Michigan
Distributed by Thomas Jefferson University Press & and Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, Kirksville, Missouri