

The Radical Reformation Revisited

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I

Sebastian Franck, the first historian ever to attempt to make sense of the Radical Reformation, expressed his inability to capture the movement in any kind of synthetic fashion with the following words: "Even though all sects are divided among themselves, the Anabaptists are especially torn and disunited, so much so, indeed, that I can say nothing with certainty or any degree of finality about them."¹ What Franck lacked — an all-encompassing interpretive model — was quickly supplied by others, Heinrich Bullinger in particular. Thus, although the latter also noted the proliferation of factions in the Anabaptist movement, he could nevertheless write: "In the years of our Lord 1521 and 1522 there arose a number of restless spirits on the banks of the Saal River up in Saxony. The most prominent amongst these were: Nicholas Storch, Heinrich Pfeiffer, Melchior Rinck and Thomas Muentzer. And when, as we mentioned earlier in this history, Muentzer made his way into our territory, Grebel, Mantz and a number of other restless spirits sought him out, imbibed Anabaptism from him, and began to teach it in Zurich."² The sect may have broken into innumerable factions; the common source, however, had meanwhile been established. Not only the common source — the model was Thomas Muentzer. Indeed, any lingering doubt that this was the correct model had already been dispelled by the Anabaptist uprising in Muenster of 1534-35. From that point onwards Muentzer and Muenster had become virtually synonymous and were employed interchangeably. Zwickau in Saxony was the source; the Peasants' War and the Muensterite rebellion the ineluctable consequences.

In the history of Anabaptist historiography, the attempts at synthesis probably outnumber the modest disclaimers of the Sebastian Francks. Nonetheless, nearly every synthesis has produced its antithesis; and the last essay on the subject, a collaborative effort by three scholars is entitled: "From Monogenesis to Polygenesis: the Historical Discussion of Anabaptist Origins."³ I would, of course, much prefer to have been cast in

the role of Sebastian Franck, modestly disclaiming any ability to synthesize the Radical Reformation. But, alas, I follow after them and am therefore constrained by the logic of events to be their antithesis. I do so with much fear and trembling, knowing full well that if past history is any guide at all, my synthesis will go the way of all others. Then again, however, it may defy the fickle tides of *fortuna* and even *historia* and prevail. Or (heaven help us), we may have finally reached Hegel's point of the reconciliation of all opposites wherein thesis and antithesis will merge in eternal unity and the blissful contemplation of itself.

To understand the Radical Reformation we must see it in a context larger than that of the Reformation, indeed I think it imperative to begin with the late medieval Roman Catholic Church, its view of society and its critics. For the context within which these critics aspired toward reform was the same for all — it was the belief that they were functioning in a Christian society, the notorious *corpus christianum*. In such a society, ideal and reality should have come together. They did not, however, and it was precisely at the point of separation — and therefore also of tension — that the problem arose.⁴

Luther's decision to enter the monastery in 1506 conveniently focuses the problem for us. In a later reflection on that decision, he remarked: "Afterwards I regretted the vow and others tried to dissuade me. But I stuck to it, and on the day before St. Alexis day I invited my best friends to a farewell, that they might accompany me on the morrow. When they would have restrained me, I said, 'To-day you look on me for the last time.' So, with tears, they came with me. My father, too, was angry about the vow, but I stuck to my decision. I never dreamed of leaving the monastery. I had quite died to the world."⁵

It is the last sentence that is important in our context, for the world to which Luther had "quite died" was believed to be a Christian world. About a year after he had entered the monastery he took the irrevocable vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, which made the "death" permanent. By means of these vows he was "rebaptized" to a higher life.⁶ The transition that Luther made here gives some indication as to the differences that existed — or were perceived to exist — between the clerical and the lay branches of this Christian society.

There were a number of levels on which these differences became apparent. In the first place, any ordained cleric had received — at ordination — a *character indelebilis* which set him apart from the rest of Christendom. It enabled him to perform the miracle of the Mass, to absolve the penitent, and to perform the other sacraments. Already Gregory VII (1073-85) wrote, in 1081:

Furthermore, every Christian king when he approaches his end asks the aid of a priest as a miserable suppliant that he may escape the prison of hell,

may pass from darkness into light and may appear at the judgment seat of God freed from the bonds of sin. But who, layman or priest, in his last moments has ever asked the help of any earthly king for the safety of his soul? And what king or emperor has power through his office to snatch any Christian from the might of the devil by the sacred rite of baptism, to confirm him among the sons of God and to fortify him by the holy chrism? Or — and this is the greatest thing in the Christian religion — who among them is able by his own word to create the body and blood of the Lord? From this it is apparent how greatly superior in power is the priestly dignity.⁷

This long-standing belief in the superiority of the clergy through ordination was given official formulation in 1439 by Pope Eugenius IV in the papal bull *Exultate Deo*, in which ordination was said “indelibly to impress upon the soul a character, that is, a certain spiritual mark which distinguishes the recipient from the rest.” Such a person, the Council of Trent declared in 1563, could not again become a layman.

Aside from the distinction between ordained clergy and laity, the Church made a further distinction between “secular” as opposed to “regular” clergy. The adjective “religious” was applied properly only to the latter — the monks and nuns who lived by a “rule” — *regula* — hence the term “regular” as opposed to those who lived in the *seculum* — the world. As a consequence, a different set of morals was enjoined upon the monks and nuns since they were considered “religious” in a sense in which the secular clergy were not.⁸

Since it was assumed that Christians in that “Christian” world could not live truly Christian lives, they came under a different set of standards, or obligations, known as *praecepta evangelica*. These were the moral expectations of the Decalogue, also identified with natural law, or the law written on the conscience of mankind of which St. Paul spoke in the first chapter of Romans. The “religious” orders, however, were called on to follow the “counsels of perfection,” or *consilia evangelica*, the higher morality of the Gospels, especially that of the Sermon on the Mount. These were symbolized in the vows of obedience, poverty and chastity. Since the “counsels of perfection” could not be fulfilled in the world, Christ’s words: “Come out from among them and be ye separate,” became the motto of monasticism. In this context, the only truly Christian vocation was that of the clergy, and here in particular that of the monks and nuns.

In this fashion the moral imperatives of the Sermon on the Mount were neutralized for the vast majority of medieval Christians. Yet, within the model of the *corpus christianum* — essentially a theocratic model buttressed with arguments drawn largely from the Old Testament⁹ — the medieval theologians sought to retain the Christian ideal at least in the monastic institutions. (Given the importance of monasticism for the validity of medieval Christian society, it is little wonder that corrupt

monastic institutions came in for the most severe criticism. Christian Humanists found them an especially vulnerable target.) For the vast majority of the Christians, however, the Church institutionalized the means of grace through a sacramental system which allowed them to live "worldly" lives. Consequently, an apparent ambivalence ran through medieval Christian society. While a Christian ideal continued to exist — supposedly achieved in the monastery — to which anyone might aspire, the vast majority, even of the clergy, did not live up to it, indeed were deemed incapable of living up to it. Therefore, not even the objective grace present in the sacraments could eradicate the tension thus created. And when the monasteries and secular clergy became increasingly corrupt in the High and Late Middle Ages, the tension reached the breaking point.

The dilemma confronting medieval Christendom had not always been so acute. In early Christianity, at a time when Christians constituted only a small minority of the larger society, ideal and reality had been more nearly integrated, or at least were increasingly so perceived by the critics of the Church. With the union of church and state under Constantine — to take a point in the church's development many if not most of her opponents regarded as decisive¹⁰ — and the gradual universalization of the Roman Church in the West, ideal and reality within the Church began to come apart. There continued to be those, of course, who sought to attain the ideal within the Church, but these came more and more, like the early Church within society at large, to constitute a minority. As we have noted, over the years the Church had attempted to come to grips with this problem. Since it would not sacrifice the concept of a universal Western Christian society, it was forced to defuse the moral imperatives of Christianity for the great mass of the faithful by shifting the burden onto the monasteries, institutionalizing the means of grace, and building a treasury of merits¹¹ by means of which holy men and women of this Christian society shared in the salvation of those hindered by the cares of the world. Reformers, who from time to time rose up to criticize the Church, were themselves usually absorbed by the Church and their reform aims institutionalized within new monastic orders. (Here, after all, they served a useful purpose in this 'Christian' society.) Where this was not the case, such would-be reformers often ended their careers ostracized from the body Christian. As the years passed, however, the rift between this Christian ideal and the level of its realization in society became a chasm so great as to become intolerable.

The response to this phenomenon was essentially twofold.¹² On the one hand, men such as Joachim of Fiore took a prophetic approach, arguing that the present age would be superceded by the "Age of the Spirit." While not directly critical of the Church, this argument for a

coming "age of the Spirit" or "third status" of history where Christian ideal and reality would be integrated under the aegis of the Holy Spirit, certainly implied that the present "Christian" era left a great deal to be desired. Others, on the other hand, looked backwards, arguing that the present Church had fallen from its apostolic purity. One should therefore attempt to recapture the ideal model. This latter position was by far the more dangerous one to the Church because it led to an investigation of the historical development of the Church in order to determine where and why it had gone wrong. It was, in contrast to the official position of the Church which argued for direct continuity between St. Peter and Boniface VIII, for example, filled with an increasing awareness of change, indeed change in the sense of deterioration, of apostacy. Having rejected this "apostate" church, these opponents sought authority in the Bible with which to confront the Church. To them Scripture and tradition were not mutually reinforcing pillars of authority within the Church; rather, they had come to be diametrically opposed to one another.

This "myth" of a pure apostolic church — as Gordon Leff has called it¹³ — generally focused on the Donation of Constantine as the turning point in the development of the Church.¹⁴ By accepting property and a coercive jurisdiction from the emperor, the Church — since it had by that very act of acceptance foresworn Christ — had become apostate. Virtually the same argument was used by no less a defender of imperial power and independence than Dante. In his *De Monarchia*¹⁵ he wrote:

But neither was it by means of divine law: for the whole of divine law is enshrined in the Old and New Testaments, and I have looked in vain within those shrines for any command to priests of either old or new dispensations to take care of temporal affairs. On the contrary, I find that the priests of the old dispensation were specifically excluded from temporal affairs by God's commands to Moses; and those of the new dispensation by Christ's commands to his disciples . . .¹⁶

Indeed, he continued, Christ, in the presence of Pilate, "expressly renounced the kind of power we are discussing: 'My kingdom,' he said, 'is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight that I should not be given over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from here.'"¹⁷

It was Marsiglio of Padua, however, who developed the concept of the pure apostolic church on the basis of the New Testament most fully. In his *Defensor Pacis* he made it clear that "the Christian faithful are not obliged to observe all the commands or counsels of the Old Law or Testament which the Jewish people were required to observe."¹⁸ Then, on the basis of Christ's explicit statements, which he consciously opposed to the decretals of the popes,¹⁹ he proceeded to develop the contrast be-

tween the primitive church and the church of his own day. Typical are such remarks as: "But it is quite clear that they abuse the word in giving it such meaning contrary to the truth and intention and usage of the Apostle and the saints, who called such things not spiritual, but carnal and temporal."²⁰ On the basis of his investigation he concluded that the true church was the congregation of the faithful, a voluntary, non-coerced association which stood in subjection to the temporal powers. Its priests ministered rather than exercised power, suffered rather than asserted their rights, and showed contempt for the world, pursuing the life of apostolic poverty instead.

All of this had changed, however, Marsiglio continues,

with a certain privilege of the Roman emperor Constantine, whereby he granted to St. Sylvester, the Roman pontiff, coercive jurisdiction over all the churches in the world and over all other priests or bishops. And since all the Roman popes, as well as the other priests or bishops, admit that this grant is valid, they must consequently concede that the same Constantine originally had this coercive jurisdiction over them, especially since no such jurisdiction over any clergyman or layman is known to belong to the pope by virtue of the words of Scripture.²¹

To fortify his position even more, Marsiglio quoted Bernard of Clairveaux who had observed: "'This is Peter, whom no one ever saw bedecked with gems or silks or garments of gold, or mounted on a white horse, or attended by a soldier, or guarded by pugnacious servants. Yet even without these he considered himself sufficiently well equipped to observe the commandment: 'If you love me, feed my sheep.' For in these things,' that is, secular splendor and powers, 'you have succeeded not Peter, but Constantine.'"²²

When the great Italian Humanist philologist, Lorenzo Valla, exposed the Donation of Constantine as an eighth or ninth century papal forgery in a brilliant rhetorical treatise of 1444,²³ the turning point in the history of the Church came to be seen somewhat differently, since blame for the Church's apostacy could, after all, not be placed on a forgery. Instead, the document itself now came to represent the Church's perversion, and that at the very center of its power. Circulated in manuscript form during Valla's lifetime, the treatise was not published until Ulrich von Hutten, the German humanist and leader of the Knights' Revolt, had it printed in 1518. Luther's reaction to it may well have been that of many others. On February 24, 1520, he wrote Spalatin, the secretary to Frederick the Wise:

I have at hand Lorenzo Valla's proof (edited by Hutten) that the Donation of Constantine is a forgery. Good heavens! what darkness and wickedness is at Rome! You wonder at the judgment of God that such unauthentic, crass, impudent lies not only lived but prevailed for so many centuries, that they

were incorporated in the Canon Law, and (that no degree of horror might be wanting) that they became as articles of faith.²⁴

Like Dante and Marsiglio, Valla too argued that Christ had rejected a temporal kingdom; indeed, he put the very words Christ had used in his rejection into Pope Sylvester's mouth, thereby clearly implying that Sylvester would never have done what the ninth century papal forgers claimed he had. Thus, Valla has Sylvester say:

Should I, the foremost priest, give such an example for the rest of the Church, I who am the vicar of Christ? What! you want to make me king, or rather Caesar, that is ruler of kings! When the Lord Jesus Christ, God and man, king and priest, affirmed himself king, hear of what kingdom he spoke: 'My kingdom,' he said, 'is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight.'²⁵

Sylvester, therefore, at least in the eyes of Valla, had not succumbed to the temptations of temporal power. It was the papal forgers and their papal superiors of the ninth century who were the real villains, using nefarious means to seize illegally what Christ had specifically forbidden them in his Word and by his example.

While the above critics of the Church wanted essentially to restore a proper balance and division between *regnum* and *sacerdotium*, the great Dutch Christian Humanist Desiderius Erasmus took a much more all-encompassing and, in an *apparent* sense, much more radical approach to the problem. Writing in his *Enchiridion* of 1502, he observed:

There are too many who think that the expression 'world' refers only to those who have embraced the monastic state. In the Gospels, for the Apostles, and for Augustine, Ambrose, and Jerome, the expression means the infidel, enemies of the faith and the cross of Christ. It consists of all those who place their care in tomorrow, who strive after riches and sensible pleasures. This world has not known Christ who is the true light of the world. *It was from this world that Christ separated not only His Apostles, but all men who would be worthy of Him. How then can we say that this world, everywhere condemned in Scripture, should be associated with Christendom and in its name flatter and maintain our own voices?*

Too many theologians, Erasmus continued, only made matters worse "by adapting the words of Scripture to the justification of their own crimes." Thus, not only had they confused the secular and the sacred, the world — from which Christ had commanded all of his followers to be separated — with Christendom, they had then proceeded to justify this non-Christian world "by adapting the words of Scripture to the justification of their own vices." No wonder, he continued, that "it is indeed a sad state of affairs when we have given to vices the names of virtues, when we are more diligent in defending our vices than in correcting them, and when we even turn to Scripture to condone them."²⁶

Aside from apparently rejecting the concept of the *corpus christianum*, Erasmus also argued that Christ's ethical teachings applied to all Christians. "How much more consonant with Christ's teachings," he wrote to Servatius Rogerus in July of 1514, "it would be to regard the entire Christian world as a single household, a single monastery as it were, and to think of all men as one's fellow-canons and brethren, to regard the sacrament of baptism as the supreme religious obligation, and to consider not where one lives, but how one lives."²⁷ The distinctions which the Church had gradually come to make between the Christian world and the monasteries were therefore illegitimate, for Christ's teachings applied to all Christians. The distinction the Church should have maintained was the one between "the world" and Christendom. It had not done so, however, and as a consequence had been forced to adapt the words of Scripture to somehow justify the crimes of this so-called Christian world. Thus the sacred and secular had come to be irreparably confused, vices had been transformed into virtues and Scripture had been twisted to justify this condition.

Erasmus's close friend Thomas More was as devastating in his criticism of the Church when he had Raphael Hythloday say in his *Utopia*: "But preachers, who are indeed clever men, seem to have followed your counsel. Seeing that men will not fit their ways to Christ's pattern, the preachers have fitted His teaching (as though it were a leaden rule) to human customs, to get agreement somehow or other. The only result I can see is that men become more confirmed in their wickedness."²⁸ Thus, rather than having converted paganism to Christianity, Christian theologians had merely adjusted — adapted, as Erasmus said — Christ's teachings to a pagan world, covering it with a veneer of virtue.

But Erasmus was not as radical as he might appear from these passages: his Neoplatonic frame of reference made it possible for him to bring together the ideal Christian world he was so fond of depicting with the deformed Christian world around him. Proceeding from the assumption (so clearly enunciated by Plato in his allegory of the cave and repeatedly used by Erasmus in his own writings²⁹) that the archetypal ideas emanate from the mind of God and human ideas and institutions are shadowy reflections of these archetypal ideas, Erasmus could maintain that no matter how deformed Christian society might be in his day, it was still a shadow, a reflection of the archetypal truths of Christ. What was important in this context was that Christians be motivated to move from this shadowy world of "reality" to the "real" world of Christ's ideas, to move from the visible to the invisible. Take, for example, his remark about baptism in the *Enchiridion*:

Do you really think that the ceremony of itself makes you a Christian? If your mind is preoccupied with the affairs of the world, you may be a

Christian on the surface, but inwardly you are a Gentile of the Gentiles. Why is this? It is simply because you have grasped the body of the sacrament, not the spirit.³⁰

It was because of this perspective that he was continually saying, as he did in the *Enchiridion*:

Therefore, my brethren, put on Christ. Take as your rule that you no longer wish to crawl upon the ground with the beasts, but to rise upon those wings that sprout in the minds of those who love. Advance from the body to the spirit, from the visible to the invisible, from things sensible to things intelligible, from things compound to things simple.³¹

Thus, while Erasmus might, in ideal terms, speak of the separation of Christ and Christianity from the world, in this world of Neoplatonic shadows the lines of demarcation had been blurred. Nonetheless, the present reality was still a shadow of the ideal and therefore *related in kind* — they were not mutually exclusive positions separated by an unbridgeable chasm. Therefore, the important thing to do was to attempt to move Christendom ever closer to the ideal through education, exhortation and example. However, should someone come along and read Erasmus without the latter's Neoplatonic frame of reference, he might easily arrive at a perspective with radical consequences for the *corpus christianum*.

With the appearance of Luther and the Reformation this quarrel was also transferred to the Protestant scene. The reason for this lies in the very nature of the Lutheran reform movement as contrasted with those which had preceded it. That contrast may be symbolized in two opposing statements: the one from Erasmus, the other from Luther himself. In the introduction to his *Enchiridion* Erasmus had written: "Let this book lead to a theological life rather than a theological disputation." Luther, however, who had been trained as a scholastic theologian and was therefore primarily concerned with the propositional truths of Christianity, remarked at one point in his career, and frequently thereafter: "Truth and quality of life are to be distinguished. Life is as wicked with us as with the papists. This Wycliff and Hus, who attacked the life [of the papists], have not seen."

Whereas Erasmus and the other critics of the Church had seen the contrasts in lifestyles between Christians in apostolic times with those of their own age, Luther had been alerted to doctrinal deviations. Having resolved the crisis of his own spiritual life through a new understanding of the "righteousness of God" as depicted by St. Paul in Romans 1:17, he began to apply his new understanding, characterized by his intention to "let God be God," to everything else. As he himself observed in his 1545 retrospective: "There and then the whole face of scripture was changed; I ran through the scriptures as memory served . . ."³² And as the "face of

scripture changed," a whole new theology was born, for as Philip Watson has observed: "In his reforming work, Luther was not seeking simply to correct an error here and there, but his task, in his view, was such as to 'alter the whole religion of the Papacy.' The Christian faith is a unity, and if 'one little error' corrupts the whole, then the correction of error in any part cannot leave the rest unaffected."³³ Luther's release had come through the Scriptures, therefore he hoped in turn to "free it up" so that it could run its course and change the world while he and Philip drank their beer in the Wittenberg garden.

Prior to his conversion Luther had read the Bible through Nominalistic eyes. As he saw it later, this theology was a "theology of glory", emphasizing man's ability to propitiate a just and angry God. It was anthropocentric rather than being theocentric. In scholastic theology, the culprit was Aristotle; in Christian Humanism, it was Plato. It was imperative, therefore, to free theology from philosophy, to free revelation from reason. In like manner the spiritual realm was to be separated from the temporal. Mixing the sacred with the secular and in the process thoroughly eradicating the line of distinction between the two, as the Roman Catholic Church had done, must be halted. God must be restored to his rightful place in the scheme of things.

Luther based this separation squarely on the New Testament, which he called primarily Gospel. He distinguished this from the Old Testament which he called primarily law. Accordingly, the spiritual realm was the ideal realm of perfection, of the spiritual and the true church, while the temporal realm was the realm of imperfection where reason and natural law were to reign. The Christian, however, while saved by faith in this Gospel, still lived in the temporal realm. Saved by the imputed righteousness of Christ, he nonetheless still remained a sinner. Even in the temporal church, therefore, perfection was not to be expected. In any case, no one knew who God's elect were except God himself who had chosen them. Therefore the only true church was the spiritual church. The temporal church would have to continue to contain the "wheat" and the "tares". It is thus not too surprising that even though he toyed with the idea of establishing an *ecclesiola in ecclesia* in his 1526 introduction to the German Mass, he never moved from speculation to implementation. Some scholars, like Leif Grane,³⁴ have indeed argued that Luther, prior to 1525, was thinking *vorkonstantinisch* but that he was forced to accommodate himself to the territorial church after the Knights' Revolt and the Peasants' War. I have serious reservations about that assertion, however, because of Luther's doctrine of predestination and his attitude toward Karlstadt during the period of the so-called "Wittenberg Unrest". Be that as it may, his views do have some similarities with those of the later Swiss Anabaptists.³⁵

While Luther may therefore have rejected the Catholic Church's solution to the tension in Christianity, he replaced it with another theology that explained the tension differently but did not resolve it either. This may be symbolized by his doctrines of the separation of the two realms, the Christian as *simul justus et peccator*, and the true church as a spiritual entity while the temporal church continued to contain the wheat and the tares. It was precisely during these early years of crisis — 1521-1525 — that his doctrine of the two realms was worked out. This was also the period in which Thomas Muentzer broke with him.

Our first Reformation confrontation, then, is between Luther and Muentzer. The relationship of these two, in which Muentzer was initially the disciple and Luther the mentor, has been variously interpreted. Generally, the reasons for their estrangement have been seen in Muentzer's rejection of Luther's Law/Gospel dichotomy, in his growing acceptance of a mystical perspective while Luther freed himself more and more from it, in the influence on his thought by the Zwickau Prophets, or in his prophetic/revolutionary impulses.³⁶ During the last few months, however, I have come to the conclusion that all of these are fundamentally flawed perspectives. At best they are merely partial explanations that have been made to stand for the whole. The problem is more complex, as I am in the process of demonstrating elsewhere. Here we will have to deal with the matter in a more summary fashion.

Until the Leipzig Disputation of July 1519 between Martin Luther and his Catholic opponent, John Eck, Thomas Muentzer was apparently an ardent follower of the great reformer. Even Muentzer's encounter with the mystical theology of Johannes Tauler, where he was struck by the latter's emphasis on the presence of the Holy Spirit in the true Christian, on the repeated emphasis on the interior life of the spirit (e.g., "This prayer of spirit we lift up incessantly toward Heaven, and it lifts the soul with it straight up to God. And it is equally true to say, that the soul penetrates into its own most sacred and interior depths, where alone it may form a union with God. Thus St. Augustine says: 'The soul has within itself a hidden abyss, and the things of time and of this world have no place therein, but only what is high above them and above all that concerns the body and its activities.'"),³⁷ and the necessity of integrating faith and action, did not lead him into opposition to Luther, for the latter had himself just recently written to Spalatin: "If you should find pleasure in a pure, thorough theology in the German language very similar to that of [Christian] antiquity, then get a hold of the sermons of Johannes Tauler, out of whose totality I am sending you a kind of sample. For I have not found, either in Latin or German, a more wholesome theology, nor one in greater conformity with the Gospel."³⁸ Therefore, the Leipzig Disputation, which Muentzer attended, could only have confirmed his growing

conviction that Luther was on the right track. Indeed, no sooner had the debate come to an end than Muentzer ordered a number of books from the Leipzig book dealer, Achatius Glov,³⁹ which allowed him to pursue the problems raised by the disputation. These problems were: first, where and when the Roman Catholic Church had gone wrong; secondly, was Augustine as important for a "correct" understanding of Christianity as Tauler and now Luther made him appear to be;⁴⁰ and, thirdly, since Luther had called "many of the articles of John Hus or the Bohemians . . . fully Christian and evangelical,"⁴¹ what was their importance in the emerging reformation of the Church? Stimulated by these questions, Muentzer purchased Eusebius' *History of the Church*, a volume of Augustine's letters and sermons, and another volume on the acts of the councils of Constance and Basel, both councils that had dealt with the problem Hus and his followers had posed to the Church.

Whereas Muentzer had been in agreement with Luther to this point that the deformation of the Church had begun some four to five hundred years earlier,⁴² probably around the time of the forgery of the Donation, he obviously changed his mind shortly after the disputation, certainly before he wrote his first treatise, *The Prague Manifesto*, in September of 1521. In that document he spoke of the "apostolic church" and its imminent resurrection in Bohemia. As we shall see, however, it was a view of the apostolic church quite different from the one we have seen portrayed by the late medieval and Renaissance critics of the Church. Somewhat later, in his *Protestation* and his *Sermon Before the Princes*, he pinpointed the deformation of this "apostolic church" as having begun in the "time of the death of the disciples of the apostles, for soon thereafter [she] became an adulteress."⁴³ His authority for this observation was Hegesippus whose fragmentary writings he knew only through Eusebius' *History of the Church*. If Eusebius' history provided Muentzer with an entirely new perspective on the development of the Church, it also in all probability provided him with his concept of the apostolic church.

How did Eusebius portray this apostolic church — and his history is saturated with both the term and the concept — and how does it compare with Muentzer's view? One of the first things that strikes the reader about Eusebius' portrayal of the apostolic church is the way in which life and Christian ideals had been integrated. It thereby strengthened and confirmed the message he had already received from his reading of Tauler's sermons. Permit me to quote only a few of the many phrases of this nature that dot the pages of Eusebius' history: "His life conformed so closely to the Christian ideal . . ."⁴⁴ ". . . but when she came to know Christ's teachings, she reformed her ways . . ."⁴⁵ Of Origen Eusebius wrote: ". . . he felt that he must keep the gospel sayings of the Saviour urging us [to do

the same] . . ."⁴⁶ Eusebius even quoted Philo as confirmation of the "apostolic lifestyle," as he called it.⁴⁷

It should not surprise one, then, that Muentzer should come away from a reading of Tauler and especially of Eusebius stressing the *Christfoermigkeit* of the believer's lifestyle. At the same time, this was an emphasis we have also seen in the earlier critics of the Church; in Muentzer it brought into sharp relief once again the differences between this "apostolic church" and the attempts to deal with the tensions created by the increasing separation of reality and ideal in the Roman Catholic Church of the sixteenth century and the same tensions he was beginning to note in Luther's reformation as well.

Aside from seeking to conform its life to Christian ideals, this apostolic church had also, according to Eusebius, manifested a profusion of prophetic gifts,⁴⁸ miraculous occurrences,⁴⁹ visions, dreams,⁵⁰ and other proofs of God's grace and favor. These were all gifts made possible by the clear and evident presence of the Holy Spirit in the believers of the apostolic church.⁵¹ The exercise of these gifts of the Spirit, however, took place, according to Eusebius, only in "fit" Christians, only in "acceptable" persons,⁵² whose lives had been so ordered as to conform visibly with the Christian ideal. In this aspect Eusebius must also have acted as reinforcement and confirmation of what he had already read in Tauler.

In this apostolic church, further, Christians shared their goods,⁵³ "faith and confession" had preceded baptism,⁵⁴ people had relied less upon the written word — for the canon had not yet been fully established — than upon the "voice of the living God" operative through the Holy Spirit, who, as long as he had been allowed to reign, had kept the apostolic church pure.⁵⁵ But then, as Eusebius, quoting Hegesippus, argued: "When the sacred band of the apostles had in various ways reached the end of their life, and the generation of those privileged to listen with their own ears to the divine wisdom had passed on, godless error began to take shape, through the deceit of the false teachers, who now that none of the apostles was left threw off the mask and attempted to counter the preaching of the truth by preaching the knowledge falsely so called."⁵⁶ While the early church had been filled with true prophets, the post-apostolic church had begun to be subverted by false prophets who, as Eusebius, quoting the early Christian writer Apollonius, wrote: ". . . rake in the shekels not only from the rich but from poor people, orphans and widows. If they have the courage of their convictions, let them take their stand on this and settle the question, on this condition, that if convicted they will for the future refrain from transgressing, *for the fruits of the prophet must be carefully examined, for from the fruit the tree is known.*"⁵⁷ When this happened, the "wheat" came to be mixed with the "tares" and the Holy Spirit withdrew from the Church.

Once this picture is clearly in the reader's mind, there can be no doubt that Muentzer derived his view of the apostolic church from Eusebius, as he did his view of its decline and fall. His emphasis on the necessity of the conformity of the believer's life to Christ's teachings,⁵⁸ his stress on the legitimacy of dreams, visions and prophecy as manifestation of the presence of the Holy Spirit, indeed his argument that the apostolic church had become an adulteress once false prophets had entered its ranks and the Spirit had been forced to withdraw all came to him from a reading of Eusebius.

Since this apostolic church had become an adulteress early in the second century, neither the Constantinian transformation nor the forged Donation play any role whatever in Muentzer's view of the decline of the Church. Much more important for the context into which he places his newly discovered view of the apostolic church and its development is his interpretation of Christ's parable of the wheat and the tares, an interpretation he may well have derived from Augustine's sermon on that parable. For, like Augustine, Muentzer also mixes this parable with the preceding parable of the seed and the sower to explain the problems within Christendom.

In his sermon, after paraphrasing the parable and referring back to his sermon of the previous day on the parable of the seed and the sower, Augustine explained that Christ was the sower of the good seed and the devil the sower of the tares. The time of harvest, Augustine continued, was the end of the world; Christ's field, the whole world. Then he proceeded to explain that the "wayside," the "stony ground," and the "thorny ground" of the previous day's parable were "the same as these 'tares.' They received only a different name under a different similitude." In parables and similitudes, Augustine explained, "one thing may be called by many names; therefore there is nothing inconsistent in my telling you that that 'way side,' that 'stony ground,' those 'thorny places' are bad Christians, and that they too are 'tares.'" Having said this, Augustine exhorted his hearers to be "good soil" and to *bring forth fruit accordingly*. All this he had said yesterday, he observed, but today he wished to address the tares; *"but the sheep are the tares. O evil Christians, O ye, who in filling only press the Church by your evil lives; amend yourselves before the harvest come . . ."* Thereupon Augustine turned to the wheat — those Christians whose lives were good and who sighed because they were "few among many, few among very many. The winter will pass away," he promised them, "the summer will come; lo! the harvest will soon be here. The angels will come who can make the separation, and who cannot make mistakes." Therefore, the good Christians ought not to concern themselves with the harvest but rather deport themselves in accordance with Christ's dictum: "let him that thinketh he

standeth, take heed lest he fall." For, Augustine continued, "do you think, my Brethren, that these tares we read of do not get up into this seat? . . . I tell you of a truth, my Beloved, even in these high seats there is both wheat, and tares, and among the laity there is wheat, and tares. Let the good tolerate the bad; let the bad change themselves, and imitate the good. Let us all, if it may be so, attain to God; let us through His mercy escape the evil of this world."⁵⁹

There can be no doubt whatever to any student of Muentzer's writings that these parables served him as important vehicles for interpreting the Christian faith, society and the end times. Already in *The Prague Manifesto* he proclaims that "the fields are white unto harvest," therefore the time to separate the wheat from the tares has arrived.⁶⁰ And God has charged none other than himself to harvest the crop. But this end time, this time of harvesting, is also clearly brought into conjunction with the revival — not a patchwork reformation⁶¹ — of the "new apostolic church." "For behold," Muentzer tells the Bohemians, "the new apostolic church will be reborn in your country. Thereafter it will arise everywhere else."⁶²

Let me cite just one salient passage from Muentzer's exposition of Daniel before the Saxon princes:

It is indeed true that Christ, the son of God, and his apostles, yes and before him his holy prophets, established a true and pure Christianity, they threw purified wheat onto the field, which is the precious Word of God planted in the hearts of the elect, as Matth. 12, Mark 4, Luke 8, as well as Ezechiel 36, wrote. But the lazy, careless servants of the same church did not care to continue this with assiduous watchfulness; they sought to satisfy personal desires rather than care of the things of Christ, Philip. 2. Because of this neglect they have allowed the godless, that is the tares, to damage the church by mightily infiltrating it, Psalm 79, where the cornerstone mentioned here, was still small, of which Isaiah spoke in chpt. 28.⁶³

Aside from the fact that, as Augustine himself had bemoaned, tares had permeated even the highest echelons of the Christian church, it was the rejection of the Holy Spirit by the tares in that church that had precipitated its rapid decline: "Yes," Muentzer declared in the same treatise, "they finally even reenacted the passion with him [the Holy Spirit], after the time when the dear disciples of the apostles died. They held the Spirit of Christ for something to be despised — and do it still — as is written in Psalm 68. They have clearly stolen him like thieves and murderers, John 10. They have robbed the sheep of Christ of the true voice and have made the crucified Christ into a deceptive, fantastic god . . ."⁶⁴

Without the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, Muentzer continued, it was impossible to tell the wheat from the tares. ". . .

Nevertheless they are blind in their folly. Nothing else has misled them — and still continues to mislead them to this very day — than the false belief that, without any experience of the reception of the Holy Spirit, who is master of the fear of God, and despising the wisdom of God, they can separate the good from the bad [the wheat from the tares].”⁶⁵ Therefore, only when the Holy Spirit reenters the church as the result of the renewed planting of a purified “wheat” — the pure Word of God which had come back with Hus and now Luther — and the resulting growing conformity of life and precept, then the “new apostolic church” would arise. And when it did, this would be a sign of the end times; when the fields would be ripe unto harvest then the wheat and the tares, because of the renewed presence of the Holy Spirit, would once again be separated.

Now, if Muentzer regarded the wheat as the seed sown in the elect by Christ, as he clearly did, then Tauler with his mystical approach to salvation could obviously become very meaningful to him. This seed, planted in everyone in the world — the divine spark in the abyss of the soul — must be allowed to flourish; to do that one must eradicate the tares in one’s own life. Similarly, now that the end times were here and the pure Word of God was once more beginning to be preached, together with the manifestations of the Holy Spirit, one could once again begin to establish the “new apostolic church” and, in the process, separate the wheat from the tares. And even though Augustine had written that the angels would do this at the end of the world, Thomas Muentzer argued that the angels “who are to sharpen their sickles for the harvest, are the earnest servants of God who execute the zeal of the heavenly wisdom.”⁶⁶ That he considered himself foremost amongst such “earnest servants of God” no serious student of Muentzer can doubt.

Muentzer’s mysticism is merely something that helps him explain how faith — the wheat sown by the sower — can come to fruition. It does not constitute the whole of his thought, as Hans-Juergen Goertz, for example, has mistakenly attempted to prove. Nor does Hussite or Joachist influence constitute the central aspect of his thought. To the extent that these influences did play a part in his development they merely constitute parts that must be fitted into a greater whole. That whole is made up essentially of the context provided by the parables of the seed and the sower and that of the wheat and the tares, by Eusebius’ portrayal of the apostolic church, and by Muentzer’s own conviction, fully enunciated in his first treatise, that the fields were ripe unto harvest and that God had chosen him to be at least one of the reapers. Therefore the reformation Muentzer envisaged as taking place with the rebirth of the “new apostolic church” would resemble the church described by Eusebius.

But there was one fatal aspect to this renewal which made an ultimate revolution nearly inevitable. Muentzer, like Augustine in his

sermon, made no clear distinction between the church and the kingdom of God of the end times. Indeed, like Augustine, he saw Christendom as containing tares as well as wheat, the tares being, as Augustine had put it, "bad Christians." Like Augustine, who exhorted these "bad Christians" to reform their ways before the harvest came, Muentzer too exhorted his Christian society — the priests, primarily responsible for the conditions, the princes, even the Hussites and Luther, as well as the masses, to whom he turned last of all — to conform to the wheat. For, after all, they too were elect in whom the good seed had been sown. But while Augustine did not think he was living in the end time of the harvest and therefore counselled toleration of the tares, Muentzer saw himself in the time of harvest. Indeed, he deemed himself the principal reaper. If, then, the tares in Christendom would not conform, the judgment was inevitable. And it would fall heaviest on those who sought to forestall the arrival of the "new apostolic church," whether they did so by physical force or false teachings.

It should not be surprising, therefore, that Muentzer gradually came into conflict with Luther. His view of the Holy Spirit in relationship to the written Word, his prophetic posturing, as Luther conceived it, but especially his attempt to erect a kingdom of God on earth all made Luther extremely suspicious. However, he was aware that God had on occasion used extraordinary measures and *Wundermaenner* to accomplish his ends and Luther was willing to wait and see what fruits this prophet would bear. When it was all over and Muentzer had paid for his failure with his life, Luther was convinced that God had spoken. Muentzer had been a false prophet. Reflecting upon these events in his Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount, he later observed, from the perspective of his doctrine of the separation of the two realms:

... we see the whole world seeking its own advantage in the Gospel. This has brought on the rise of so many sects, whose only aim is their own advantage and aggrandizement, together with the extermination of others. So it was with Thomas Muentzer and the peasants and those who followed him. Even right Christians are sometimes tempted in this direction when they see how wickedly things are done in the world, even in their own government, so that they would like nothing more than to jump in and rule themselves. But this is not to be and no one should think that God wants us to rule with temporal law and punishment, for the Christian's being shall be separated from this. They shall not even concern themselves about such things but leave them to those who have charge of these matters, ... as Christ has taught: 'Give to Caesar what is Caesar's.' For we have been placed in a higher realm, which is a holy and eternal kingdom, in which one has no need of the things belonging in the world, but where everyone is a lord in Christ both over the devil and the world, as I have said elsewhere.⁶⁷

The attempt to reform Christendom might have died with

Muentzer's execution and the suppression of the peasants' revolt. It did not, however, for even though the discussion of the relationship between *regnum* and *sacerdotium*, church and state, began to change, the old attempts to reform Christian society radically arose again and again, usually under the auspices of the immanent end of the world.

II

The same tension that lay at the root of all the late medieval and Renaissance reform movements — the tension between Christian ideals and Christian reality — lay at the heart of the Zwinglian reform movement as well. As early as July 2, 1522, in a petition to the Bishop of Constance requesting permission for priests to marry, Zwingli wrote:

We are aware that our life [in this instance with regard to priestly celibacy] differs all too widely from the pattern of the Gospel, but is the Gospel on that account to be abolished and done away with? Ought we not rather to devote ourselves vigorously to correcting our faults according to its standards and to subduing our feebleness, since it is the one thing, could we only believe it, from the inspiration of which salvation will come to us, according to the commands of Christ when he sent forth his Apostles to preach the Gospel with these words: 'Preach the Gospel (not your own theories or decrees or the regulations which some chance shall happen to dictate) to every creature.' And he added: 'Whosoever believeth' (when the Gospel has been preached, of course), 'and is baptized, shall be saved,' and on the other hand, 'Whosoever believeth not, shall be damned.'⁶⁸

These fateful last words shall hold our attention later. Here Zwingli and his fellow Zurich priests were concerned specifically with the priestly charge to be celibate, a charge, they said, "that your most Reverend Father is not unaware how unsuccessfully and scantily the prescriptions in regard to chastity that have come down to our times from our predecessors have been kept by the general run of priests, and oh, that they could have vouchsafed us strength to keep their commands as easily as they gave them!"⁶⁹ But since this was a command that had arisen from human tradition and was at variance with the Gospel, which permitted clerical marriage, they asked to be freed from the burden of clerical celibacy and the shame, as the petition put it, of "continuing in fornication with a bold brow."⁷⁰

Unlike Luther, who focused on the alien and imputed righteousness of Christ as the only means of salvation and who spoke of the believer as *simul justus et peccator*, Zwingli from the very outset stressed the necessity of the integration of faith and works in the Christian's life. Emphasizing the *imago dei* within as had Augustine, Zwingli argued "that man is created in the divine image and after the divine likeness."⁷¹ While the fall may have deformed this image, it had not destroyed it.

Citing Paul's famous passage in which he differentiated between the old Adam and the new creation in Christ, "the inward man [who] is renewed day by day," Zwingli commented: "Note that if it is renewed, that means that it had already been created and formed and set up, and having decayed and crumbled, it is now restored to its first estate, in which we perceive the original creation of the divine image."⁷² Nonetheless, this did not lead him to argue, as did the Humanists and Catholics, that man could at least do some good works. "For," he observed, "if the image is our own, then we are an image of ourselves. And if it is of God, how can we call it our own?"⁷³ Therefore it is God's image in us, now renewed through the hearing of the purified Word and the work of the Holy Spirit, over which sin was to have no dominion. While "the outward man is always subject to the law — that is, to the weakness — of sin, . . . we should see to it that this inward man [this *imago dei* now set free] is not dominated by the outward in such a way as to serve the flesh and its lusts."⁷⁴

Writing to his future stepson in early 1523 Zwingli could therefore say:

By this we learn that those who are born again of the Gospel do not sin: for 'whosoever is born of God sinneth not,' and whosoever believes the Gospel is born of God. Hence it follows that those who are born again of the Gospel do not sin, that is, sin is not imputed to them to death and perdition, for Christ has redeemed them at the price of his death . . .

But such confidence in Christ does not make us idle. On the contrary it equips and constrains us to do good and to live rightly, for such confidence is not of man. For in most things the human mind depends upon the external senses. But how can it come to put its confidence in something which none of the senses can perceive? In view of this, we can very well see that such faith and confidence in Christ can derive only from God. Now *where God works, you need have no fear that things will be done rightly.*

Therefore those who have rightly understood the mystery of the Gospel will exert themselves to live rightly . . . And, [Zwingli concluded], the young man should see to it, that he studies to grow up a man of God, righteous in life and as nearly like God as possible.⁷⁵

It was during the years that Zwingli developed these views that he surrounded himself with a number of close followers who met with him from time to time to discuss his sermons, the progress of the Reformation in Zurich and its environs, as well as other related matters as they arose. Some of these were Felix Mantz, Conrad Grebel and Andreas Castelberger in Zurich and an increasing number of priests in the surrounding villages, like Simon Stumpf in Hoengg and Wilhelm Roebulin from Swabia active in Wytikon. Mirroring Zwingli's emphasis on the new faith and the changed lifestyles that should result from its acceptance, their preaching began to worry both the Catholic Church and the political establishment in Zurich. And when, in late 1522, the representatives of

the Bishop of Constance, who had jurisdiction over Zurich, began to denounce Zwingli and his followers in a thinly-veiled manner before the town councils, Zwingli requested an opportunity to justify his preaching. This led to the First Zurich Disputation of January 23, 1523, and was concerned primarily with proving or disproving Zwingli's essential orthodoxy.

In the process of establishing the congruence between his theology and the teachings of the Bible — at the same time attacking the Roman Church as based largely on human tradition — Zwingli gave a description of the true church as he saw it. He described it in the following manner:

But there is another Church which the popes do not wish to recognize; this one is no other than *all right Christians*, collected in the name of the Holy Ghost and by the will of God, which have placed a firm belief and an unhesitating hope in God, her spouse. That Church does not reign according to the flesh powerfully upon earth nor does it reign arbitrarily, but depends and rests only upon the word and will of God, does not seek temporal honor and to bring under its control much territory and many people and to rule other Christians. That Church cannot err. Cause: she does nothing according to her own will or what she thinks fit, but seeks only what the Spirit of God demands, calls for and decrees. That is the right Church, the spotless bride of Jesus Christ governed and refreshed by the Spirit of God. But the Church which is praised so highly by the Papist errs so much and severely that even the heathens, Turks and Tartars know it well.⁷⁶

The First Zurich Disputation was a victory for Zwingli and his cause, and it was a victory because the mayor and the town councils so decided. In the words of the mayor:

[The] council and great council of this city of Zurich, in order to quell disturbance and dispute, upon due deliberation and consultation have decided, resolved, and it is their earnest opinion, that Master Ulrich Zwingli continue and keep on as before to proclaim the holy Gospel and the correct divine Scriptures with the Spirit of God in accordance with his capabilities so long and so frequently until something better is made known to him. Furthermore, all your secular clergy, spiritual guides and preachers in your cities and counties and estates *shall undertake and preach nothing except what they can defend by the Gospels and other right divine Scriptures; . . .*⁷⁷

Well, here was not only an official affirmation of Zwingli's orthodoxy, here was also a magisterial mandate to preach "nothing except what [one] could defend by the Gospels!" Was this regarded as *carte blanche* by Zwingli's followers to go ahead with what they conceived to be Zwingli's program of reform? It would appear so, especially in the villages surrounding Zurich where men like Simon Stumpf and Wilhelm Roebelin began to advocate the abolition of the tithe — Stumpf, indeed, telling his peasant parishoners that they need no longer pay it. In the city of Zurich itself, meanwhile, Grebel and others carried on what Heinold Fast has called "reformation by provocation,"⁷⁸ confronting the old clergy

in their church services, disrupting them in the process while advocating Zwingli's teachings. Because of the radical direction some of his followers were taking, Zwingli felt compelled, on July 30, 1523, to publish a sermon he had preached on "Divine and Human Justice." In it, for the first time, he differentiated four groups in Zurich with regard to the implementation of divine justice in society. First, he singled out the evangelical believers — his followers and the majority — who understood this divine justice "as one ought." They knew that only Christ could fulfill God's high demands and set a consistent example in this regard.

Since divine justice would become visible in society as Christians became more like God, Zwingli opposed the radicals who, although also eager to see this divine justice implemented in society, understood it in what he called a legalistic fashion as *having* to be implemented in daily life. And although he himself had written in the thirty-ninth article in preparation for the First Zurich Disputation that "all their [i.e. civil] laws shall be in harmony with the divine will, so that they protect the oppressed, even if he does not complain,"⁷⁹ and had told the clergy in article LXVI: "All the clerical superiors shall at once settle down, and with unanimity set up the cross of Christ, not the moneychests, or they will perish, for I tell thee the ax is raised against the tree,"⁸⁰ he now chided his radical followers that they did not take seriously enough human weakness and the fact that Christ had accomplished everything for us. Furthermore, he told these radicals that the tithe belonged properly in the jurisdiction of the civil magistrates, while such questions as the Mass did not. In the latter case, he asserted, in contrast to questions regarding the tithe, "they [the magistrates] would have to allow us to preach the clear Word of God and allow things to be ordained accordingly."⁸¹

But Zwingli was also opposed to those — apparently a good number of whom sat in the city councils — who were indifferent to the Gospel and wished to water it down into a mere civil religion. And Catholics, of course, would oppose him in any case.⁸² Thus, while he was now against an immediate implementation of this "divine justice" in society, believing it could probably never be achieved fully in any case, given the great disparity in the individual's level of commitment, he nevertheless did not argue, as did Luther, that the temporal realm ought to be ruled by reason and the principles of natural law. This was, after all, a Christian society.

Given this increasingly apparent divergent approach to the reform of society between Zwingli and the more radical of his followers, it is no wonder, then, that at the close of the Second Zurich Disputation held on October 26-27, 1523, which dealt with the Catholic Church's doctrine of the Mass and its use of images, these radicals should object when Zwingli turned the implementation of the reform of the Mass, which he had just recently excluded from their jurisdiction, over to the civil magistrates

with the following words: "So, then my lords, you who have sufficiently attended to Holy Scriptures so that you rightly understand God, you have the responsibility to act in the manner of King Nebuchadnezzar as described in the book of Daniel [4:24-33], to command among us that only Christ be honored, worshipped and called upon."⁸³ In response, Simon Stumpf was heard to object: "Master Ulrich! You do not have the power to reserve judgment to my lords. The Holy Spirit has spoken."⁸⁴ But "my lords" and Master Ulrich dismissed Stumpf and the other radicals, and changes in the Catholic Mass were not made until Easter of 1525, with evangelical pastors continuing to observe the catholic ritual, the only disclaimer being that the Mass did not constitute a renewed sacrifice. This delay, as Fritz Blanke has observed, makes understandable the increased impatience of Grebel and his friends.⁸⁵

The latter wrote of this decision to his influential brother-in-law, Joachim von Watt, on Dec. 18, 1523, in the following terms: "Now I shall tell you in dealing with the Mass how each council or body referred this knot for its unravelling to eight councillors: Zwingli, the commentator, the Abbot of Kappel, the Prefect of Embrach, and I know not what other tonsured monsters. These, while disregarding the divine judgment against the Mass, prescribed a middle way (I know) with a diabolical shrewdness. Tomorrow that matter will be referred to each council, and thus Mass must needs be said."⁸⁶ His conclusion with regard to what he considered to be Zwingli's accommodating attitude was that the latter was not acting in accordance with his pastoral office and its duties.

While Grebel and his radical friends appear to have been in agreement with Zwingli, at least to the point that one should proceed with the institution of the reformation in cooperation with the civil authorities, this consensus was based on the assumption that the authorities would either whole-heartedly endorse the reforms or be compelled to do so. Now, however, they were viewed at best as temporizing and that with the tacit consent of Zwingli, even though he seemed to have spoken differently earlier on. Under these circumstances, what were they to do?

It was apparently during this time of growing estrangement that Grebel and Mantz came to Zwingli with a proposal to remedy the situation. As Zwingli himself described what took place in his "Refutation of Baptist Tricks":

They addressed us therefore after the following manner. It does not escape us that there will ever be those who will oppose the Gospel, even among those who boast in the name of Christ. We therefore can never hope that all minds will so unite as Christians should find it possible to live. For in the Acts of the Apostles those who believed seceded from the others, and then it happened that they who came to believe went over to those who were now a new church. So then must we do: they beg that we make a deliverance to this effect — they who wish to follow Christ should stand on our side.

They promise also that our forces shall be far superior to the army of the unbelievers.⁸⁷

What they wanted was obviously the church Zwingli had himself described in the First Zurich Disputation with the words: "this is no other than *all right Christians*, collected in the name of the Holy Ghost and by the will of God, which have placed a firm belief and an unhesitating hope in God, her spouse." Since that church had not come into being but seemed rather to be in the process of being compromised away, they were now willing to secede from the unbelievers in order to achieve it. Apparently, if one can believe Zwingli, they still thought the "true believers" would constitute a majority.

Zwingli, however responded that "the example of the apostles was not applicable here, for those from whom they withdrew did not confess Christ, but now ours did."⁸⁸ Now they lived in a Christian society and even though there were those who lived unrighteously, even these "asserted and contended that they were Christians," and the church could endure them. Christ himself had addressed such new beginnings as theirs, commanding that the "wheat and the tares be allowed to grow until the day of harvest." And he still "hoped boldly [that] more would return daily to a sound mind who now had it not." Even if this were not to happen, however, the pious "might ever live among the impious." In any case, secession was to be avoided because of the confusion it would cause. It would be enough to preach the pure Word "which all ought to know, unless they wished to be wanting to their own salvation."⁸⁹

It was precisely this "pure Word," preached by the early Zwingli, that his radical disciples now saw being compromised in order to accommodate it to the prevailing Christian society. They, on the other hand, as their famous letter to Thomas Muentzer makes clear, want the new Christian insights arrived at by Zwingli and passed on to them to be used to transform and reshape the Church and society. Therefore they wrote:

In respecting persons and in manifold seduction there is grosser and more pernicious error now than ever has been since the beginning of the world. In the same error we too lingered as long as we heard and read only the evangelical preachers who are to blame for all this, in punishment for our sins. But after we took Scripture to hand too, and consulted it on many points, we have been instructed somewhat and have discovered the great and harmful error of the shepherd, of ours too, namely, that we do not beseech God earnestly with constant groaning to be brought out of this destruction of all godly life and out of human abominations, *to attain to the true faith and divine practices. The cause of all this is false forbearance, the hiding of the divine Word, and the mixing of it with the human. Aye, we say it harms all and frustrates all things divine . . .*⁹⁰

The faith of the apostles had to lead to apostolic practices and apostolic

ordinances and institutions, and if this meant a radical transformation of the *status quo*, then so be it.

Under these conditions Zwingli's radical followers also began to consider the problem of baptism. As we noted in the earliest passage we quoted from Zwingli, the latter had written:

[He] sent forth his Apostles to preach the Gospel with these words: 'Preach the Gospel (not your own theories or decrees or the regulations which some chance shall happen to dictate) to every creature.' And he added: 'Whosoever believeth (when the Gospel has been preached, of course), 'and is baptized, shall be saved,' and on the other hand, 'Whoever believeth not, shall be damned.'

Aside from once again seeing Zwingli himself stress the integration of faith and practice early in his reformation career, did he mean by this that faith ought to precede baptism? Apparently so, for not only did he concede to Balthasar Hubmaier that instruction ought normally to precede baptism,⁹¹ but in his first major attack on the Anabaptist position in 1525, he remarked: "We must now examine equally carefully the question of signs in order to expose a mistake which once deceived me as found in certain writers. For some have taught that signs are given for the confirmation of an existing faith in that which we have already learned and to which we are pledged . . . " However, now

Against those who unthinkingly accept the idea that signs confirm faith we may oppose the fact of infant baptism, for baptism cannot confirm faith in infants because infants are not able to believe. For some time I myself was deceived by the error and thought it better not to baptize children until they came to years of discretion. But I was not so dogmatically of this opinion as to take the course of many today, who although they are far too young and inexperienced in the matter argue and rashly assert that infant baptism derives from the papacy or the devil or something equally nonsensical.⁹²

Zwingli's radical disciples, however, struggling with the problem of how to constitute a church of "people who live rightly," as Zwingli had himself put it, and how to implement the biblical practices irrespective of human consequences, could not go back but were compelled to move forward and create a new paradigm of the Christian society that would allow the specific biblical insights derived from Zwingli to retain their integrity. It was no wonder that under these circumstances they wrote to Muentzer and Karlstadt seeking confirmation of the legitimacy of their approach to the problem. Nor was it any wonder that, after having written Muentzer that "the Christian church is the congregation of the few who believe and live rightly,"⁹³ and having told him that "The Scripture describes baptism for us thus, that it signifies that, by faith and the blood of Christ, sins have been washed away from him who is baptized,

changes his mind, and believes before and after; that it signifies that a man is dead and ought to be dead to sin and walks in newness of life and spirit, and that he shall certainly be saved if, according to this meaning, by inner baptism he lives his faith."⁹⁴ they moved to rebaptize one another at a Bible study meeting in the house of Felix Mantz's mother on January 21, 1525. This came after a series of last-ditch meetings between Zwingli and members of the established church and town councils on the one hand, with representatives of the radicals on the other. The last meeting took place on January 17. A few days later, the new church had been established.

The subsequent arguments, carried on by both sides, were largely concerned with justifying the respective positions. Zwingli, on the one hand, had somehow to discredit adult baptism — because it was the most palpable sign of the new model of the church — and justify the old model of the Christian society into which everyone was initiated by infant baptism. The argument centered around the problem of baptism, but the issues were much larger: two fundamentally different ways of institutionalizing the Christian faith were at stake. And the radical approach, now becoming visible in new institutions, was revolutionary.

Therefore Zwingli, if he wished to retain the old model, must needs come to the defence of infant baptism. And he did so with a vengeance even his staunchest admirers have found distasteful. In the beginning, toward the end of 1524, he defended it by arguing that when baptism was first instituted by John it was done in anticipation of Christ, not as a response to faith in Christ. Hence, children might be legitimately baptized. Later, in May of 1525, he began to differentiate between an "inner" and an "outer" baptism. Based ultimately on his doctrine of election which, as he asserted in his last tract against the Anabaptists, "abides firm and is above baptism and circumcision; nay, above faith and preaching,"⁹⁵ (one wonders whether also above Christ, as in the case of Martin Celarius) and which allowed him to claim the salvation of "pious pagans,"⁹⁶ he could maintain that "Peter and Paul and James did not administer any baptism but that of water and external teaching. They could not baptize with the Spirit, for God alone baptizes with the Spirit, and he himself chooses how and when and to whom that baptism will be administered."⁹⁷ Felix Mantz responded by arguing that "John baptized only those, as is clearly seen, who repented, who shunned the evil fruit, and who did good." These he pointed in the direction of Christ. The apostles, he continued, had done the same after Christ had instituted true baptism after his resurrection.⁹⁸ Rejecting Zwingli's separation of "inner" and "outer" baptism, Mantz fastened on a passage in Acts 10 where Cornelius and some others had been filled with the Holy Spirit and then baptized. As he put it: "After receiving this teaching and the descent of the Holy

Spirit which, by speaking in tongues, was evidenced to those who had heard the word of Peter, water was then poured over them. This, meant," Mantz continued, "that just as they were cleansed within by the coming of the Holy Spirit, so they were also baptized with water externally to signify the inner cleansing and dying to sin."⁹⁹

As the debate continued, Zwingli moved to a more all-encompassing argument which not only dealt with the specific disagreement over baptism but also implied the context within which the specific argument took on meaning: it was the argument that brought circumcision and infant baptism into relationship by means of his convenantal theology. Touched on in his 1525 treatise "On Baptism,"¹⁰⁰ it became the central argument in his "Refutation of Baptist Tricks" in 1527. There he pronounced: "The children of Christians are no less sons of God than the parents, just as in the Old Testament. Hence, since they are sons of God, who will forbid their baptism. Circumcision among the ancients (so far as it was sacramental) was the same as baptism with us. As that was given to infants so ought baptism to be administered to infants."¹⁰¹ Thus, while he had earlier told the radicals that "the example of the apostles was not applicable here," with regard to the church, the Old Testament model now was. In this connection the words of Sebastian Franck take on interest when he stated in his letter to John Campanus of 1531:

And when they have nothing with which to defend their purposes, they run at once to the empty quiver, that is, to the Old Testament, and from it prove (the legitimacy of) war, oath, government, power of magistracy, tithes, priesthood; and praise everything and ascribe this all forcibly to Christ without his will.¹⁰²

The subsequent debates between the Swiss Brethren and the Reformed theologians confirm the belief that it was ultimately the model of the Christian society that was at issue. For the brethren, arguing for a responsible as opposed to what they believed to be an irresponsible Christianity, focused their attention on the act of conversion. The message of Christ and the apostles, they said, had been a call to repentance and conversion. "Those who are thus converted," they argued in the second of these debates, "have been buried with Adam and baptized in Christ, raised to newness of life, and have a good conscience. And such people may be recognized by the manner in which they express their faith. We recognize as binding the commission and message of those who have changed their ways, have become better, who believe, have had their sins forgiven, and who witness to these things in their baptism. They have put on Christ, no longer living for themselves, but for Christ. Those who sign such a commitment with their own hand are invited to become members of the church. In such a church one may legitimately

exercise the ban . . . "103 Conversion therefore led to a changed lifestyle and, consequently, to separation from the world. "Is this church separated from the world," they continued, "and acts according to the precepts of Christ, she is a true church. Is she still in the world. [i.e., are the 'wheat' and the 'tares' still coexisting in her,] we cannot recognize her as such . . . The Scriptures state that he who is at peace with the world cannot be acceptable before Christ. For in the primitive church only those were joined to and planted in the church who had repented and changed their ways."104 Furthermore, they told the Reformed pastors, "While you boast that you are the true church but still retain the temporal regiment mixed in it and even declare this regiment has placed you in office, we declare, in opposition and as revealed to us through the Word of God, that we are the true church according to the order of the time of the apostles, if we separate ourselves from all sin and unrighteousness."105

With regard to Christian ideals, the Reformed pastors responded: "You are one with us in your belief that there is only one holy and Christian church, that is, one fellowship of the saints; and where one teaches repentance, remorse and conversion of life, castigates sin, etc., there is the true church. But that you declare that no unclean thing, no sin nor filth shall be found in it, we cannot accept."106 Since they too, like Zwingli, rejected the apostolic model, they turned increasingly to the Old Testament. So strongly were they aware of their need to do this that they demanded, as the major condition for the third debate of 1538, that the Anabaptists accept the Old Testament to be as authoritative in matters Christian as the New. In this they were not successful, however.

What does all this mean? Did Zwingli change his mind and turn on his earlier "correct" insights, as his radical followers repeatedly charged and later Mennonite historians have asserted? Or did he retain, consistently throughout, his views on these matters, especially with regard to the Christian society, as Robert Walton and others have argued? To escape the horns of the dilemma posed by the problem whether or not there was a "turning point in the Zwinglian Reformation," and who turned, permit me to suggest the following solution. With regard to the Scientific Revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Thomas Kuhn has argued persuasively that the old Ptolemaic model of the universe could only tolerate so much specific scientific evidence which, by implication, seemed to contradict the model. There thus came a point in time when the mass of new specific scientific evidence began to demand a new explanatory model. Nicholas Copernicus' heliocentric theory of the universe was the first to do this, though not with the mass of confirming scientific evidence that was to be accumulated in its defence between 1543, the publication date of his *De Revolutionibus*, and Sir Isaac Newton's *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* of 1687. Similarly,

what was happening in the Reformation at large and in Zwingli's early reformation career specifically, was that the old model of the Christian society was coming increasingly under attack for its failures. The beginning of biblical scholarship in the Renaissance, Medieval and Renaissance critics, and especially Luther's new teachings all began to feed new specific Christian ideas into this old model. And one can well imagine that the new ideas were all-consuming. In this way, then, Zwingli too, hoping to realize in society the new Christian ideas he had arrived at, began his work in Zurich. In the process, however, he came up against certain powers in that Christian society who, for one reason or another, either refused to accept his ideas, postponed their implementation in society, or modified them to suite their own purposes. What was one to do under these circumstances, especially when one's radical followers were arguing, with increasing persistence, that these same specific Christian insights must be followed to their logical conclusion, even if this entailed a revolutionary revision of the relationship between church and state and therefore also of the *corpus christianum*? This would appear to have been the dilemma that became increasingly apparent to Zwingli, a dilemma he seems not to have been aware of earlier, consumed as he was by his new insights. When he did become aware of this tension he consciously chose to retain the old model of the Christian society — indeed he appears never consciously to have rejected it — and was gradually forced to modify and adjust his specific insights. That he did so on a number of crucial instances is beyond dispute. That he then also developed a biblical argument basically drawn from the Old Testament for the retention of the old model should also be clear.

His radical followers, on the other hand, like the scientists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, slowly but surely moved from the specific new insights to the formulation and institution of a new model, a model that consisted of the separation of church and state, the creation of a voluntary church, an emphasis on newness of life or discipleship, love and nonresistance, and other matters. That some of these specific insights should come only gradually and then not uniformly, and only after the model had been fully formulated, should come as no surprise.

This explanation should also assist us when we come to address ourselves to the question of the influence of outsiders like Thomas Muentzer, Karlstadt, Erasmus *et al* on the Swiss Brethren movement. First, however, I think we must insist that in order to demonstrate the "influence" of one person or group over another, it is not enough to show that they held similar specific ideas, not even enough to prove that the one group derived these ideas from the other. We must also come to grips with the respective intellectual models within which these ideas took on significance. This is especially true if we encounter such a fully formul-

ated and integrated model as the concept of the free church which we find in Zwingli's erstwhile radical followers.

What, then, can we say in conclusion? First, I believe that the above description of the course of events in Zurich makes it clear that in virtually every respect (and we could have named more than we have, as in the matter of the Eucharist, original sin, etc.) the Swiss Brethren were disciples of the young Zwingli. The latter's repeated later assertion that "they came out from us but were not of us," and Bullinger's misguided attempt to foist the entire blame for their emergence upon Thomas Muentzer, have to be rejected categorically. They not only "came out from him," *they remained in many ways the young Zwingli!* But when the Zwinglian dilemma became apparent to both them and Zwingli, they chose to reject the old model in favor of one more in line — at least so they believed — with the biblical teachings they had received from Zwingli. The story is complete in itself. Muentzer did not influence them in this, nor did Karlstadt, nor did Erasmus. The latter may on occasion have acted as confirmation in specifics, but certainly not in terms of the larger model. Erasmus' Neoplatonism allowed him to hold up the biblical (New Testament) ideal in tension with the deformed reality as a shadow of the ideal. Muentzer, although he spoke of an "apostolic church," set that church into the apocalyptic context of the parable of the wheat and the tares where the fields were ripe unto harvest. While he castigated the practice of infant baptism as responsible for the deformation of the church, he never moved to implement anything else in his Allstedt liturgical reforms. Nor does Karlstadt's influence appear decisive in this development since it was virtually in place by the time the Brethren wrote to Muentzer and Karlstadt in September of 1524.

It appears to me, therefore, that one must take these conflicting intellectual or theological paradigms into consideration, and rather than speak in terms of "influences" as most scholars have one ought to speak in terms of points at which these different perspectives, through various writings and personalities, came into contact, perhaps even conflict, with one another. Let us briefly glance at one such confrontation between Muentzer and the Swiss Brethren which presents us with two clearly demarcated paradigms as well as many points at which the two sides came into contact.

Grebel's letter to Muentzer of September 1524 presents us with evidence for the first contact. In it Grebel observes that he has read Muentzer's *Protestation* as well as some of his liturgical works.¹⁰⁷ Reading this tract with Grebel's eyes could have been a real experience, for Muentzer begins by positing a radical enmity between the Holy Spirit and the world, with an appeal to apostolic Christianity as confirmation of how it was and how it should be. He then proceeded to depict how that

apostolic church had become corrupt, how the right baptism had been forgotten and the correct entrance to Christianity perverted and Christianity betrayed by false teachers who were unable to differentiate between things sacred and profane. Baptizing uninstructed children, they further eroded these lines of demarcation so that it was not long until the Roman Church took over their ceremonies from the heathen. This perverted Roman Christianity came to the Germans, who were not allowed to learn the truth. If, however, our eyes could be opened we would recognize our own blindness, especially in matters of a fraudulent faith and a false concept of good works. Rejecting a faith arrived at merely by recalling the words of Christ, Muentzer preached a bitter Christ who required his followers to walk in his footsteps. Therefore he did not wish merely to patch up the old structure, but rather wished to build a new house. And he concluded by once again pointing to a fraudulent faith and a misunderstood baptism as the twin pillars upon which the deformed church had been built.¹⁰⁸

From this tract Grebel and his friends could indeed think Muentzer on their side, for they could not have divined the larger and eschatological context within which he wrote. That they suspected something was amiss, at least from their perspective, is quite apparent from their criticisms. Muentzer, they said, should drop the Mass and return to the usage of the apostles; he should establish a "Christian church with the help of Christ and his rule," as we find it instituted in Matt. 18:15-18 and applied in the Epistles; and he should not attempt to protect the Gospel "by the sword." In the second letter they also hint that Muentzer might be rejecting baptism altogether.¹⁰⁹ What more might they have said had they known the model of the church with which he worked?

What we have here, it seems to me, is an *Auseinandersetzung* on the part of the Swiss Brethren with a Muentzer only very partially read and incompletely understood. Rather than showing influence, it demonstrates independence in both its affirmation and criticism, for both derive from their own perspective, a perspective all but fully formulated by the time they encounter Muentzer.

There is another point of contact, and it probably took place between Hubmaier and Muentzer in the fall of 1524 while Muentzer was in the environs of Basel, a city in which the latter also had dinner with Oecolampadius. Walter Elliger in his 1975 biography of Muentzer makes a convincing case for the latter's authorship of the *Verfassungsentwurf*, which Johannes Fabri claimed to have found among Hubmaier's papers after his execution. From it, Elliger argues, on the basis of thought and word similarities, the "Artickelbrief" of the South German peasants was formulated.¹¹⁰ The implications this may have need more careful study,

but if true it makes the later meeting of Hubmaier with Hans Hut, Muentzer's erstwhile disciple, in Nicolsburg even more intriguing.

Whereas Swiss Anabaptism had reached a point at which a *Scheidung der Geister* was beginning to take place between September of 1524 and the formulation of the Schleithem Confession of 1527, Muentzer's movement, because of its involvement with the Peasants' War and its defeat, was forced to make accommodations. Muentzer himself, in his last letter to his followers in Muehlhausen, placed the blame for the failure of the struggle on the peasants whom he accused of not really understanding what he had been preaching about; for, instead of seeking the glory of God and the welfare of Christendom, the peasants had sought to satisfy their own selfish desires. At this point it could well be argued, indeed has been argued, that Muentzer rejected war as a means of inaugurating the kingdom of God on earth for the future.

Now if, as sixteenth century observers nearly universally believed, the Swiss Anabaptists were revolutionaries, then indeed their differences with Muentzer tended to fade into the background. For if one imputed revolutionary motives to the Swiss Anabaptists, at the same time taking into account their strong condemnation and rejection of contemporary Christian society, one would naturally have to assume that they intended to overthrow the existing order and establish their own, like Muentzer. The differences between Muentzer's position and the more Protestant position of the Anabaptists would still be present, it is true, but in their demand for moral reform in the Christian realm they had both, in contrast to Luther and Zwingli, stressed man's ultimate free will.¹¹¹

On the other hand, were one to divest Muentzer of his revolutionary potential, as he himself seems to have done after the defeat of the peasants at Frankenhausen, one would have to accept the coexistence of the "Christians" and "unbelievers," as the Swiss Anabaptists did. The kingdom of God, which Muentzer wanted to inaugurate with the sword of the elect, would then have to await the pleasure of Christ's return, when the saints would be "victors with Christ," as in the thought of Hans Hut, who seems indeed to have set the date of this second coming in 1528, three and a half years after the defeat of the peasants. And as Hans-Dieter Schmidt, Gottfried Seebass and Werner Packull have demonstrated,¹¹² it is this Hut who determined the Anabaptism of Southern Germany for a good many years to come. It was in Southern Germany that Hut's brand of Anabaptism came into contact and conflict with Swiss Anabaptism, or derivatives thereof — the Hut-Hubmaier Nicolsburg conflict, to name perhaps only the most important. Indeed, taking perhaps the most important symbol of Anabaptism — adult baptism — it seems quite clear that Hut filled it with a meaning very different from that of the Swiss. But when the three and a half years had come and gone without the second

coming having taken place, another crisis set in among Hut's followers, leading eventually, in many instances, to greater conformity with the Swiss model.

But the question remains: can we really speak of Hut as an Anabaptist? I think the words of Menno Simons are of some consequence in this regard. In his "Reply to False Accusations" he observed:

But if they should say that we are one church with the Muensterites, because they and we were baptized with the same baptism externally, then we would reply that if outward baptism has the power to make all those who are thus baptized with one baptism into one church, and that it causes all those who are thus baptized to share in the unrighteousness, wickedness, and corruption of every individual, then our adversaries may well consider what kind of church or body they have. For it is evident and well known to everybody that perjurers, murderers, highwaymen, homicides, sorcerers, and such like, have received the same baptism as they have. If we then are Muensterites because of our baptism, they must be perjurers, murderers, highwaymen, thieves, and scoundrels on account of their baptism. This is not to be ignored or denied.¹¹³

Does the external act of baptism therefore make Hut an Anabaptist? Or do his ideas make him, as Gottfried Seebass has called him, "Muentzer's Erbe?" I think the answer is obvious, for even Packull admits that Hut's "conversion" was in fact no conversion at all and that he filled baptism with a theology alien to that of the Swiss Brethren. Heinrich Heine himself, a little over a century ago, observed, probably with respect to himself, "A man may be baptized but not converted!" If that is the case with Hut, then why call him an Anabaptist and thereby muddy the waters? Hubmaier, who confronted Hut and his covert revolutionary ideas at Nicolsburg, said the following: "That is why the baptism that I teach and the one that Hut has presented are so far removed from one another as heaven is removed from the earth, the Orient from the Occident, Christ from Belial."¹¹⁴ In Packull's book, *Mysticism and the Early South German-Austrian Anabaptist Movement 1525-1531*, this attempt to subsume everything under the term Anabaptism leads to pervasive unclarity of thought and subsequent confusion. Had he kept these two poles clearly in mind and honored the separate integrity of each movement's development, he could have avoided these problems. In this case he should have allowed such disparate wise men as Menno Simons and Heinrich Heine to be his guide. For a man may indeed be baptized and yet not converted. And Hut appears to have been a classic example of that truth.

III

Whereas in the first part we focused on the struggle between Luther

and Muentzer, and in the second between Zwingli and the Swiss Brethren, the struggle in Muenster and the Netherlands is between a paradigm not unlike that of Muentzer, yet apparently independently arrived at, and another similar to that of the Swiss Brethren, yet also independently arrived at. Although we will reach somewhat farther afield as occasion demands, I wish to focus this confrontation primarily on the writings of Bernard Rothmann, the spokesman for the Muenster Anabaptists on the one hand, and Menno Simons after whom eventually all Anabaptists were named, on the other.

Our story begins in Muenster. The date is early August, 1533, the occasion, a debate between Rothmann and his supporters on the one hand, and both Roman Catholic and Lutheran theologians on the other. The issues, once again, were infant baptism and the Mass. Rothmann was the main spokesman for the opposition.

But we are getting ahead of ourselves, for Rothmann's arguments have a history. Educated at the universities of Cologne and Wittenberg, Rothmann had moved rapidly from Catholicism to Lutheranism, through Zwinglianism to advanced radicalism. Apparently he saw this as a kind of progressive revelation which, as we shall see, confirmed his growing conviction that he was living in the time of the restitution of all things. In Wittenberg he had come to know Melanchthon and, while discussing Reformation issues with him, had also discussed the advanced views of one John Campanus.¹¹⁵ The latter, who had endeared himself to both Luther and Melanchthon after the Marburg Colloquy of 1529 by insisting that he held the key to reconciling the differences between Luther and Zwingli on the Eucharist, wrote a book entitled *Contra Totum Post Apostolos Mundum* one year later.¹¹⁶ While no copy of the original Latin has survived, we do get a glimpse of Campanus' views from a *pro et contra* letter written him by Sebastian Franck from Strassburg in 1531 and apparently widely circulated in the Netherlands. After congratulating Campanus "for preferring to maintain thyself alone against all rather than err with all or the larger part" of the world in this matter, Franck continued:

Indeed, I do not doubt but what all the highly famous doctors whose works are still available are [those] wolves which Peter (Acts 20:29) spiritually anticipated would fall in upon the flock and which John [I, ch. 2:18] calls antichrists, men who even in the days of the apostles fell away from them and indeed had never really been with them. This is proved by their works, especially [those] of Clement, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Chrysostom, Hilary, Cyril, Origen, and others which are merely utter child's play and quite unlike the spirit of the apostles, that is, utterly filled with commandments, laws, sacramental elements and all kinds of human inventions . . . Right after [the apostles] everything unfolded in a contrary fashion. Baptism was changed into infant baptism; the Lord's Supper into misuse and a sacrifice. What they have written is nothing but a shame and a disgrace.¹¹⁷

But Franck was totally against any attempt to restore, revive or reinstitute the primitive practices of the Church which Campanus apparently advocated. Thus Franck continued:

Therefore, my brother Campanus, it is indeed a very hard word and one which angers many and hardens those who are not from God. It pleases me and wins me [over], however, so that I hold with thee, because thou writest against all the doctors of the church and their offspring since the time of the apostles, nay, more, against the whole word. For this is my conviction also. *But that thou dost have great zeal for the outworn church is, I know for a certainty, in vain. For thou wilt not gather the people of God nor ever bring their polity and sacraments to the light of day.* Cease therefore from thy enterprise and let the church of God remain in the Spirit among all peoples and pagans; let them be herein instructed, governed, and baptized by the Doctor of the New Covenant, namely, the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁸

After Wittenberg, Rothmann had also spent some time in Strassburg during May of 1531. There he stayed fourteen days in the home of Wolfgang Capito where he met the Silesian Spiritualist, Caspar Schwenkfeld. (The Strassburgers, incidentally, were very much aware of the fact that by this time Rothmann was familiar with the ideas of both Sebastian Franck and Melchior Hoffmann.) The ideas he was exposed to in Strassburg, however, were primarily Zwinglian and concerned his views on the Lord's Supper. As late as the summer of 1532 his views had apparently not officially moved beyond those of Luther and Zwingli. In August of 1533, however, Heinrich Roll, one of the so-called *Wassenberger Predikanten*, arrived in Muenster and quickly became involved with Rothmann in reforming the city.¹¹⁹ It is clear that they, especially Roll, came to exercise a considerable influence over Rothmann.

Roll was thoroughly familiar with Campanus' book, if we can trust the editor of his writings in the *Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica*,¹²⁰ and had published Franck's 1531 letter to Campanus. He and his partners, however, had also been strongly influenced by the ideas of Melchior Hoffman, all influences to which Rothmann had himself already been exposed.

Melchior Hoffmann, the furrier from Schwaebish-Hall, had begun his reformation activity as a Lutheran lay missionary in Livonia in 1523. He remained there until 1526, was in Stockholm from 1526-1527, Luebeck in the spring of 1527, Schleswig-Holstein later in the same year and again in December of 1529, in East Frisia in the spring of 1529, the summer of 1530 and winter of 1532-33, in Strassburg during the summer of 1531 until December of 1531, to which he returned in 1533. During the summer of 1531 and again in 1532 he was in the Northern Netherlands, including Amsterdam. Without a doubt he was one of the most important influences in the early rise of Dutch Anabaptism. By 1528, however, his figurative interpretation of the Scripture, his chiliastic speculations and

his spiritualistic interpretation of the Eucharist, as well as an unmistakable penchant for appealing from increasingly skeptical governing authorities to the more volatile masses, had alienated Luther from him. As so many others before and after him had done who had lost the favor of Luther, Hoffmann made his way to Strassburg in the summer of 1529. At first welcomed by Bucer and Capito, the latter soon became suspicious of his radical tendencies. Thereupon Hoffmann turned to the "poor in spirit lying in the dust." These included followers of Hans Denck and the group gathered around the visionary prophets, Lienhart and Ursula Jost. He absorbed Denck's universalism, rejected infant baptism and was himself rebaptized. Under the influence of Caspar Schwenkfeld, he developed his doctrine of the "heavenly flesh of Christ," according to which Christ had not taken his flesh from the virgin Mary. And from the Josts he accepted the idea that the world had to prepare itself for the return of Christ through an act of great cleansing.

Thus, rather than see the church from the perspective of the Swiss Brethren, that is, as an institution created by Christ and his apostles, Hoffmann and his followers began to see everything from the vantage point of the coming New Jerusalem. For this was, as Muentzer had already asserted, the time of harvest, of the separation of the wheat and the tares. The extent to which this perspective began to dominate the thinking of these people becomes apparent in Rothmann's early 1534 tract on the "Obscurity of the Scriptures," where he declared that the apparent obscurities and contradictions in the Bible could readily be reconciled or explained by those who discerned the times rightly.¹²¹ Similarly, in his last tract "Concerning Worldly and Temporal Power," he told his readers that once they knew how the world would end, that is, know the time of the restoration of all things, then they would know how to act.¹²²

This preoccupation with discerning the times was not yet obvious in the August 1533 debate, however. There Rothmann rejected infant baptism as well as any kind of sacramental power in the Eucharist, challenging both his Catholic and Lutheran opponents to defend their practices on the basis of *scriptura sola*, a fundamental Lutheran principle. Indeed, at first glance one might be inclined to argue that Rothmann began here with positions very similar, if not identical with, those of the Swiss Brethren, that he based them on the New Testament but gradually shifted more and more to an Old Testament context to accommodate the changing conditions in Muenster. This would be an oversimplification, however, and does not take into account all the other influences he had already been exposed to.

It is fortunate, therefore, that Rothmann followed up the debate with a lengthy treatise entitled "Bekennntnis von den beiden Sakramenten."¹²³ In it he dealt with virtually every argument thus far raised in

the ongoing debate in favor of infant baptism. He also had a clearly articulated rationale for believer's baptism, arguing that baptism was a sign, an external sign, that pointed to the reality of a preceding inner experience. Anyone who accepted the outer sign without having experienced the inner transformation which it symbolized was a hypocrite, just like Judas, who gave Christ the sign of friendship when he kissed him in the garden without having the inner reality of love.¹²⁴ Therefore, Rothmann continued, baptism was a "sign of one's dying to the world, the washing away of one's sins, and the putting on of Jesus Christ." As such it was also the entrance into Christ's holy church, an entrance only the few would take.¹²⁵ Opening the church to everyone by means of infant baptism, therefore, had destroyed it. Like Campanus, however, and unlike Franck, he wished to restore the church of the apostles together with the apostolic ordinances.¹²⁶

In the process of making his case, Rothmann rejected the Zwinglian argument that circumcision, the sign of the covenant in the Old Testament, was to be equated with infant baptism in the covenant of the New Testament. While Adam, Abraham and the rest of the Old Testament patriarchs had all been saved on the basis of the same faith as theirs, one had nevertheless to differentiate between the Old and the New Testaments. These differences Rothmann saw from within the context of Melchior Hoffmann's figurative interpretation of the Bible.

The Old and New Testaments, Rothmann asserted, did indeed run parallel. The Old Testament, however, consisted of pictures, of types, of the New, all of which came to an end when Christ and true reality appeared. Circumcision, thus, being a fleshly or tangible sign of God's covenant with Abraham, had now to be seen as a type of the spiritual and true covenant Christ wished to establish with his followers. "In short," he observed, "it is not right, nor will it stand the test, if we take the figures (types) of the Old Testament and simply impose them upon the truth of the New, that flesh in the Old is made to signify flesh in the New, that the essence is made to conform to the figure (or type), that the truth is subordinated to the picture, that the spirit must answer to the letter."¹²⁷

While in this early treatise it was the truth in Christ that allowed one to interpret the Old Testament types correctly, a subtle shift took place somewhat later in Rothmann's thinking. This becomes apparent in his major treatise "Restitution rechter christlicher Lehre," of November 1534.¹²⁸ The reason for this must be sought in the January, 1534, appearance in Muenster of the apostles of Jan Matthijs — Jan of Leyden and Gerard Boekbinder — who shortly thereafter baptized Rothmann and the *Wassenberg Predikanten*. On February 23 the prophet Matthijs himself entered Muenster with several hundred other Melchiorite followers.

And with them came Melchior Hoffmann's apocalyptic vision of the end times.

Like Muentzer under the influence of the visions and dreams of the Zwickau Prophets, Hoffmann, under the influence of the Strassburg prophets, wrote Frederick I of Denmark in 1530 that "Now we are once again entering an age like the one at the time of the apostles, when God poured his Holy Spirit over all flesh so that sons and daughters prophesied, the old saw visions and dreams, and the presence of the Spirit was made manifest in manifold other gifts."¹²⁹ These Strassburg prophets, so lauded by Hoffmann, had seen in a dream that he was to be the new Elijah, and a young disciple of his, Cornelius Poltermann, the new Enoch. As Obbe Philips wrote later in his "Confession" after he had left Menno and his own brother, Dirk: "At that time it was prophesied that Strassburg would be the New Jerusalem, and after Melchior was in prison for half a year, according to the prophecy of the old man in East Frisia, he would leave Strassburg with 144,000 true preachers, apostles, and emissaries of God, with powers, signs and miracles, and with all such strength of the Spirit that no one could resist them."¹³⁰ In order that this prophecy be fulfilled, Hoffman had returned to Strassburg in the spring of 1533. There he was in fact imprisoned, but the rest of the vision never materialized. And even before, as Obbe Philips continued, "the half year of Melchior's prophesied imprisonment came to an end there arose a baker of Haarlem named Jan Matthijs, who had an elderly wife whom he deserted, and he took with him a brewer's daughter who was a very pretty slip of a girl and had great knowledge of the gospel. He enticed her away from her parents with sacred and beautiful words and told how God had shown great things to him, and she would be his wife. He carried her secretly to Amsterdam and brought her to a clandestine place."

When he got there, Obbe Philips continued, "he professed to have been greatly driven by the Spirit and [told] how God had revealed great things to him which he could tell to no one, that he was the other witness, Enoch."¹³¹ When, therefore, the New Jerusalem failed to make its debut in Strassburg at the time appointed by Hoffmann and his prophets, Matthijs could the more easily assert his own prophetic credentials. He gathered twelve apostles around himself, commissioned them and sent them out to convert the world. Two of these, as we have already seen, were sent to Muenster in January of 1534. Proclaiming this to be the true New Jerusalem, Matthijs himself arrived there a month later with some 200 followers. With them the apocalyptic message of the end times entered Muenster and began to supplant Rothmann's earlier emphasis on the restitution of the apostolic church and its ordinances.

While Rothmann had, as we have seen, earlier stressed that it was the truth in Christ which allowed one to understand the Old Testament

types correctly, with the emphasis now on the end times and the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth, a different emphasis becomes apparent. The key is his changed understanding of the importance of the Old Testament for an understanding of the New.

In his treatise on "The Restitution of true Christian Doctrine" he now rejects those who would say that the Old Testament is of no concern to the Christian. While he still sees the testaments as parallel and the Old as prefiguring the New in that it presents types of what is in the New, he now begins to see a much more integral relationship between the two, "for Christ and his apostles knew of no other scriptures from which to discern God and his will than what they took from the Old Testament, namely Moses and the Prophets."¹³² And many of the promises given by the prophets, especially those concerning the kingdom of God, remained as yet unfulfilled. Even what Paul and the apostles taught about Christ and the Christian life they drew from the Old Testament. "We say this," Rothman asserted, "not because we wish to diminish the importance of the New Testament," but in order to oppose those who assert that the Old Testament does not apply to them. For just as we have only one God so we possess only one gospel.¹³³

And this one gospel knew of only one plan of salvation. Seen in the context of the cosmic struggle between God and Satan, Rothmann spoke of three separate phases of this plan in terms of "falls from grace" and God's attempts at restitution. The first fall had taken place in the garden of Eden. It ended with God's punishment in the flood. While a new beginning took place with Noah, a second fall took place almost immediately so that God was forced to choose a new people in Abraham. Although he confirmed these as his people through the laws of Moses, the children of Israel also proved to be fickle. Therefore since even God's chosen people failed Moses and the prophets, God finally sent his son in order to restore all things in Christ. And indeed the apostolic church got off to a good start, endowed as the apostles were with the fullness of Christ's power. Had the church remained true to Christ's and the apostles' teachings, it would have retained its power and glory. However, already beginning in the midst of the apostles and coming to full fruition with the rationalistic, philosophical theology of the Church Fathers, which began to replace the simple faith of the untutored apostles about one hundred years after Christ's ascension, another fall took place.¹³⁴ For some fourteen hundred years the truth of the Gospel had lain hidden, but it was now in the process of being restored by Martin Luther. Not only had the latter begun to restore the Gospel, he had also recognized the pope as the antichrist and had pointed to the "babylonian captivity" of the church. "We said above," Rothmann continued,

that the apostacy occurred over a period of time, the same will be true of the

restitution. But whereas the apostacy began with the learned and was passed in a most gruesome fashion to the untutored, God has begun the restitution with the learned. He will bring it to completion, however, in a most glorious fashion through the common people for he alone desires the honor. Therefore behold, whereas the restitution began with Erasmus, Luther and Zwingli, the complete truth was gloriously restored by us through Melchior, Jan Matthijs and our brother Jan of Leyden, who are regarded unlearned by the world's standards.¹³⁵

What was this restitution to look like? While Rothmann still spoke on occasion in terms of the restoration of the apostolic church and its ordinances in their midst at Muenster,¹³⁶ he began to emphasize more and more the kingdom of God on earth, of which there had been no true knowledge for the last fourteen hundred years. During this entire time the devil, through his wicked people, had deprived Christ of his kingdom. But now the new apostolic church had been restored through adult baptism in Muenster. The church thus restored had been fully prepared to suffer, as had the true believers during the time of the apostles. But in the very midst of their suffering God had revealed the time of the harvest to them, the day of God's wrath. "It was (God knows)," he remarked in his "Restitution,"

our heartfelt desire when we were baptized to suffer for Christ's sake, whatever might befall us. But it pleased God, and continues to please him, to do otherwise, [revealing to us] that we and all true Christians may at this time not only defend ourselves against the might of the godless with the sword, but that since he has given the sword into the hand of his people, to wreak vengeance on all that is evil and all who act wickedly, over the whole world. For he wishes to renew it [the world] so that only righteousness will reign in it. And this shall be fulfilled . . . The time is at hand.¹³⁷

Just as there had been a time for suffering followed by the "babylonian captivity" of the church, during which the wicked had ruled, the time of God's wrath was now in the offing. While it was a time of wrath for the wicked, a time in which they would be paid back in equal if not in double measure as they had meted out when they ruled, it would also be a time of succor for God's persecuted children. Both the prophets and Christ had warned the Jews that they had not recognized the day of their judgment, therefore Christians should pay attention to the signs of the times now. "God has taught us," Rothmann asserted, "that we can recognize that this is the time of the restitution of all things both from Scripture and history. That is, that this is the time of harvest in which the Lord wishes to redeem his people, gather them into his kingdom, and make an end to the godless, using the same method the latter used against God and his servants . . ." ¹³⁸ This kingdom, with the correct use of the Christian magistracy, had already begun at Muenster and would spread to the entire world.¹³⁹ Later, in his tract "On Vengeance," he stated that Jan of

Leyden was the new David who was preparing the way for Christ, the new Solomon. Nor should one wait for God to pass judgment and exterminate the godless, as some might think. "God wishes to come, it is true," he declared. "But the servants of God must execute God's vengeance first and repay the unjust godless as God has commanded them."¹⁴⁰

As in the case of Muentzer, the "apostolic church" had gotten swallowed up in apocalyptic speculation and the fervor of the end times. Discerning these times had become the all-consuming passion and the central aspect of Rothmann's work. Once discerned, it became the justification for all their action in Muenster. But they too, like Muentzer ten years before them, did not discern aright! And many even within the movement responded in the same way that Luther responded to Muentzer's failure to back up his prophetic voice with signs and wonders when it counted most, in the heat of battle. In his short history of Meuntzer, which appeared almost immediately after the defeat of the peasants and Muentzer's execution, Luther wrote:

Grace and peace! I have allowed this terrible story and manifest judgment of the eternal God, which he has caused to befall the teachings, writings, and seditious mobs of Thomas Muentzer, that murderous and bloodthirsty prophet, to be disseminated in order to warn, to frighten, and to admonish, as well as to strengthen and console those who have had to witness and suffer this tragedy, in order that all may understand how God damns seditious spirits and revolutionaries and has a mind to punish them in his wrath.¹⁴¹

The response of Menno Simons to the uprising at the old cloister (Oldeklooster) and the Muenster debacle a short while later (April and May of 1535) was somewhat milder but just as condemning. Writing in his "Against the Blasphemy of Jan of Leyden," in 1535, he observed of the Muensterites: "This is the true nature of all false teachers. They desert the pure doctrine of Christ and begin to traffic in strange doctrine . . ."¹⁴² Then he proceeded to reject, in a rather fuller manner, the things he summarized in his "Reply to False Accusations" of 1552. There he wrote:

We do not like to reprove and judge those who are already reprovved and judged by God and man; yet since we are assailed so fiercely with this matter and without basis in truth, therefore we would say this much in defense of all of us — that we consider the doctrine and practice of those of Muenster in regard to king, sword, rebellion, retaliation, vengeance, polygamy, and the visible kingdom of Christ on earth a new Judaism and a seductive error, doctrine and abomination, far removed from the Spirit Word, and example of Christ. Behold, in Christ Jesus, we lie not.¹⁴³

While Menno went on to say, in the same tract of 1552, that "I can fearlessly challenge anybody that none under heaven can truthfully show

that I ever agreed with the Muensterites in regard to these points," for "From the beginning until the present moment I have opposed them diligently and earnestly, both privately and publicly, with mouth and pen, for over seventeen years,"¹⁴⁴ the "Blasphemy of Jan of Leyden" was not published until 1627. It was obviously written in 1535, however, as a response to Rothmann's "On Vengeance," and that well before Menno left the Catholic Church. Why was it not published? Was it circulated in manuscript form, as the editors of Menno's *Complete Writings* assert?¹⁴⁵ Or are we to assume with James Stayer and W. J. Kuehler that Menno placed his tract against Jan of Leyden in a "drawer" where it was discovered among his papers in the seventeenth century?¹⁴⁶ Indeed, what was Menno's relationship to Muenster?

It is generally agreed that Menno was baptized and commissioned by Obbe Philips who, in turn, had been baptized and commissioned by Willem Kuyper and Bartholomew Boekbinder, two of Jan Matthijs' twelve apostles. In his "Confession" of c. 1560, written, as we have noted earlier, after he had disassociated himself from Menno and his own brother Dirk, he described his baptism and commissioning as follows:

During these events there came to us in Leeuwarden in Frisia two of these commissioned apostles, namely, Bartholomew Boekbinder and Dietrich [Willem] Kuyper. And when some of us gathered together with others, about fourteen or fifteen persons, both men and women, they proposed and proclaimed to us peace and patience with some words and instructions, and therewith they began to reveal the beginning of their apostleship and the compulsion of the Spirit, and how John Matthijs had come to them with such signs, miracles and agitation of the Spirit that words failed them to describe it enough to us, and they said we should not doubt but that they were no less sent forth with power and miracle than the apostles at Pentecost. These same words I have reflected on a hundred times.

They also comforted us and said we need have no anxiety nor fear as we had long had because of the great tyranny since no Christian blood would be shed on earth, but in a short time God would rid the earth of all shedders of blood and all tyrants and the godless — which at that time did not please me too well in my heart and mind although I did not dare to contradict this because it was then the time that none dared to say much in opposition. . . .¹⁴⁷

To what extent Obbe's apprehension was genuine at the moment or to what extent it was carried back later as the result of his reflections upon the course of events must, I think, remain unanswered. But whether or not he was apprehensive, he did allow himself both to be baptized and commissioned by these apostles of Jan Matthijs. Eight days later, another apostle named Peter Houtzagher came by and baptized Obbe's brother Dirk. Although Obbe was absent at the time, he reports that he was told that many "Zwinglians" — Dutch Sacramentarians — had opposed Houtzagher's boasts (probably with regard to the kingdom and their

prophetic calling). In spite of this, however, Dirk had allowed them to baptize him!

However serious these doubts may have been at the time, they became greater when Houtzagher and a few other leaders were executed in Amsterdam on March 26 after having marched through the city, calling God's wrath down upon it with drawn sword.¹⁴⁸ Obbe described his reaction to the death of these three, whom he called "dear friends," as follows:

Now, as they were captured in the midst of these outcries, they and some fifteen or sixteen other teachers and brethren were taken as insurrectionists and Anabaptists to Haarlem where they were all condemned and tortured to death. Some were smothered and put on a pike; then the others were beheaded and set on the wheel. This I myself thereafter saw and stood among the executed with some brethren who had traveled with me because I was curious to know which in the heap those three were who had baptized us and had proclaimed such calling and promise to us. But we could not identify them, so frightfully were they changed by the fire and smoke, and those on the wheels we could not recognize either, nor tell one from the other.

See, dear friends, so did it come to pass with the first commission among us and such was the reliability of their prophecies.

Now one may really wonder what the courage of our hearts was when we thought of the highly daring and boastful words, which I did not read in a book nor receive or hear in round-about ways, but which I received from their own mouths. O God! Their message to us was entirely opposite: and all they told us would come upon the world, the tyrants and the godless on earth, *that* came upon us and upon them first of all, for we were the very first who were persecuted and put to death . . .¹⁴⁹

And yet, as Obbe remarked a little farther along, "we poor people could not yet open our eyes, for it all happened so crudely that we were not able to put our hands on the lies and obscurities."¹⁵⁰

While they had not been able to put their hands on the lies and obscurities, he did assert that they had firmly taught against violence. He observed, however, that "it did us no good, for most of the folks were inclined to this."¹⁵¹

The execution of these leaders was followed by even more spectacular failures of the prophets in Amsterdam, Oldeklooster and Muenster. At Oldeklooster a radical group of insurrectionists under the direction of Jan van Geel and Pieter Simons captured the cloister but were overcome and executed. This took place in April of 1535. And Pieter Simons may have been Menno's "poor brother" whose "mistake" he later acknowledged to Gellius Faber, the Reformed pastor at Emden. The other major tragedy was the fall of Muenster and the executions that followed.

The question of Obbe and Dirk Philip's relationship to those involved in these affairs is of some consequence for Menno's relationship to

them as well. For while their baptism and commissioning went back to Jan Matthijs, Menno's went back to them — after the defeat of Muenster to be sure — but nonetheless back to them. Because of this line of succession, Obbe finally felt compelled to reject his calling and leave the movement. Was Menno tainted by Muenster as well? Did he turn away from the radicals only after his brother had been executed? In other words, did the failure of the revolution change Menno into a Mennonite?

In his "Reply to Gellius Faber" Menno argued that he had written and spoken against the Muenster "doctrine and practice . . . in regard to king, sword, rebellion, retaliation, vengeance, polygamy, and the visible kingdom of Christ on earth" for the last seventeen years. He could, he continued, "fearlessly challenge anybody that none under heaven can truthfully show that I ever agreed with the Muensterites *in regard to these points*." He says nothing, however, about other Melchiorite or even Muensterite ideas. It is common knowledge, of course, that he shared Hoffmann's views regarding the heavenly flesh of Christ.¹⁵² He appears also, at least in 1535 in his tract against Jan of Leyden, to have shared his figurative interpretation of the Old and New Testaments, for he uses words to explain their relationship that are strikingly similar to those used by Bernard Rothmann in his first tract on the two sacraments. There Rothmann had written: "In short it is not right, nor will it stand the test, if we take the figures of the Old Testament and simply impose them upon the truth of the New, that flesh in the Old Testament is made to signify flesh in the New, that the essence is made to conform to the figure, that the truth is subordinated to the picture, that the spirit must answer to the letter." And in that very first tract against Jan of Leyden Menno wrote: "Now we should not imagine that the figure of the Old Testament is so applied to the truth of the New Testament that flesh is understood as referring to flesh; the image, the being; and the letter, the Spirit."¹⁵³ The interpretive scheme is that of Hoffmann, the words virtually those of Rothmann.

Heinold Fast has pointed to another instance of this dependence. He states that Menno's

'Foundation of Christian Doctrine' [of 1539], the most important book that Menno wrote, is a collection of individual tracts on different themes dear to the Anabaptists. It begins with the sermon given below on Matth. 1,15: 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent and believe the gospel!' Compare the first part of the sermon ['Concerning the Day of Grace'] with Melchior Hoffmann's dedication [of the Commentary on Revelations] to Frederick I [of Denmark] and Bernard Rothmann's 'On Vengeance'. The parallels amaze one and demonstrate that Hoffmann imparted important eschatological impulses not only to the Muensterites, but also to the Mennonites. At the same time, however, it quickly becomes apparent in what aspects Menno differed from his predecessors.¹⁵⁴

There can be little doubt, therefore, that Menno received important impulses for his thought from Hoffmann and perhaps also from the early Rothmann. If, then, as many scholars have argued, his "Against the Blasphemy of Jan of Leyden" was a response to Rothmann's tract "On Vengeance," indeed, as Stayer has observed, "was patterned on that tract,"¹⁵⁵ why was it not entitled "Against the Blasphemy of Bernard Rothmann"? Was Menno aware, as the villain of the piece, Jan of Leyden, himself confessed at his trial, that "Jan Matthijs was the person who originally advocated and introduced the use of the sword and force against the authorities" in Muenster and elsewhere and that Rothmann had at first opposed him in this?¹⁵⁶ How many of Rothmann's other writings did he have in his possession when he wrote his tract against Jan of Leyden in 1535, for it would nearly appear that by using Rothmann's own emphasis of 1533 on Christ as the full truth in the New Testament, which alone allowed one to interpret the types of figures of the Old Testament correctly, he was using the early Rothmann against the Rothmann of the tract "On Vengeance," who had been misled by the false prophets, Jan Matthijs and Jan of Leyden. Is that also why he took as his motto, from his very first tract on, the words: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ"? Is that why he said, once again in his very first tract — and that at the very outset:

Grace, peace and mercy from God the Father, through Jesus Christ, be with all *true brethren of the covenant scattered abroad.*

The eternal, merciful God who has called *us* from darkness into His marvelous light, yes, has led *us* into the kingdom of His beloved Son, Jesus Christ, must keep *us* upon the right way, that Satan by his wiles may not deceive *us* and no root of bitterness spring up among *us* to make confusion and many be defiled, as also happens to some these days. It must be that sects arise among *us* that those who are approved be made manifest.

Let none stumble at this but let all give heed to the Word of God and abide by it, that they may be delivered from the strange woman, as Solomon says (by which woman we should understand all false teachers), even from the stranger which flattereth with her words; which *forsaketh the guide of her youth*, and forgetteth the covenant of her God.

*This is the true nature of all false teachers. They desert the pure doctrine of Christ and begin to traffic in strange doctrine . . .*¹⁵⁷

Did they have the pure doctrine of Christ to begin with, had they deserted it, and was Menno now calling them back to it? In his "Foundation of Christian Doctrine" he wrote: "Seeing then that Satan can transform himself into an angel of light, and sow tares among the Lord's wheat, such as the sword, polygamy, and external kingdom and king, and other like errors on account of which the innocent have to suffer much, therefore we are forced to publish this our faith and doctrine."¹⁵⁸ Menno is not writing against all of those at Muenster, but only their

leaders, the false teachers. He sees the struggle as an internal one, he associates himself with the members of the covenant, but he wants to bring them back to their beginning — to the foundation which was, and is, alone Christ. He therefore calls those who have been “misled” by the false prophets “erring children,” “apostate children,” who have allowed themselves to be “seduced.”¹⁵⁹

This position has a great similarity to that of Luther in his *The Liberty of a Christian Man*, where he wrote:

For this reason, although we should boldly resist those teachers of traditions and sharply censure the laws of the popes by means of which they plunder the people of God, yet we must spare the timid multitude whom those impious tyrants hold captive by means of these laws until they are set free. Therefore fight strenuously against the wolves, but for the sheep and not also against the sheep. This you will do if you inveigh against the laws and the lawgivers and at the same time observe the laws with the weak so that they will not be offended, until they also recognize tyranny and understand their freedom. . . .¹⁶⁰

To argue, as Christoph Bornhaeuser does in his recent book on Menno, that the latter was an adherent of the revolutionary wing and only broke with it after the fall of the Old Cloister therefore appears to me to be far-fetched. (Stayer even calls it “daring and probably irresponsible.”) Even if the tract against Jan of Leyden was not published at the time it was written, no one who had been a fellow traveler of the Muensterites could have turned around so suddenly and so convincingly opposed what he had just believed in. It is much more reasonable to assume, as Menno himself argued in his autobiographical statement, that he arrived at his convictions gradually over a period of years beginning in 1524, after reading widely both in the writings of the Reformers and in the Bible, and that he left the Roman Catholic Church only in 1536, after which he was baptized and commissioned. Had he been a secret Muensterite during these years, why did he not simply give up their ideas after 1535 and remain a priest? This would have been easy for him since he did not leave the Church in any case until early 1536. Why should he choose to join the movement when it was in disarray, had been discredited and was being more actively persecuted than ever before, when he had not joined it earlier? After his own conversion from the Young Hegelian faith back to Christianity in 1852, Wilhelm Zimmermann, who had earlier considered all Anabaptists revolutionaries, now described Menno’s departure from the Catholic Church as follows: “How deeply must this man have been gripped by and convinced of the truth of what he recognized to be the heart of the teaching of this Christian party, since he not only laid down his remunerative pastorate but also stepped into the ranks of the Anabaptists at precisely the time they were to suffer their greatest shame and

persecution."¹⁶¹ This judgment seems to me to be much saner than that of Bornhaeuser. Menno did not go underground; he had been underground. He now came to the fore and that at the worst possible time.

The internal *Auseinandersetzung* we have noted above continues in the writings of Menno Simons. He polemicizes against David Joris and his followers, against the Batenburgers and others within. That same *Scheidung der Geister* takes place in the conference at Bocholt in the summer of 1536, which Menno did not attend. The fall of Muenster seems to have made it imperative that the lines of demarcation be clearly drawn in the future.

There is, of course, much more that could and should be said on this issue. I should like, however, in conclusion, to attempt to bring together some of the things I have presented in this paper. What I would like to suggest, then, is an approach to the Radical Reformation that focuses on these three confrontations as being of pivotal importance to the total movement: that is, the confrontations between Luther and Muentzer, Zwingli and the Swiss Brethren, and Rothmann and Menno Simons. The subsequent contacts between the various other groups and individuals of the Radical Reformation, it seems to me, have to be seen in terms of these pivotal confrontations. It is in the first two confrontations that polarized responses to the problem of reform in a predominantly hostile environment are developed, and that during roughly the same time span. The term "response" probably fits the case of the Swiss Brethren better than Muentzer. For it does not seem to be the case that Grebel and his friends, along with Zwingli, early on decided in favor of a "free" or "believers" church; to a large extent Zwingli's radical followers were forced to accommodate Zwingli's universal ideal, which they apparently originally shared with him, to an increasingly hostile environment. Did this accommodation take place before their ideological insights drawn from the New Testament, or did they find confirmation in the New Testament for the accommodations forced upon them? And this question, which I shall not attempt to answer here, has to be answered from a perspective broader than that of intellectual history. And yet, into this larger framework, the Swiss Brethren undeniably inserted concepts and principles arrived at earlier in concert with Zwingli.

In the case of Muentzer, an accommodation of his views does not seem to have taken place. From the beginning his intention seems to have been to reform Christendom radically. The question of a turning point, appropriate in the case of the Swiss Brethren, I believe inappropriate with regard to the relationship between Luther and Muentzer, as I prefer to see this relationship as a process of clarification. But there does come a turning point in Muentzer's career, and this turning point has to do with his decision to take the "sword from the princes" and put it into the hands

of the people, a turning point that comes with the rejection of his cause by the princes. His views of the radical nature of the kingdom of God do not change, merely the method of its inauguration. But once this revolutionary method had failed, accommodations had to be reached. These came through Hans Hut, in that he argued that Christ, by his second coming in 1528, would inaugurate the kingdom. When even this failed, further accommodations had to be reached.

But the ideas that filled Muentzer and Hut's concept of the kingdom of God on earth were derived from sources other than those of the Swiss Brethren, and so even after these accommodations had been reached, ideological idiosyncrasies remained to separate the various groups. At various points in their respective developments these conflicting aspects met in points of encounter.

In Muenster we seem to have a microcosmic version of the larger struggle between the followers of the Swiss Brethren and the followers of Muentzer. Here, beginning with a basically New Testament paradigm under Rothmann, a scheme not unlike that of Muentzer began to emerge under the aegis of Matthijs and his radical followers. With Menno, the struggle for a recovery of the original position begins once more. Bornhaeuser would argue that this was the result of the massacre of the revolutionary Anabaptists at Oldeklooster. That position, however, would appear to be untenable. More realistic is Mellink's argument that "these [Menno and Dirk], like Obbe, undoubtedly always had misgivings about the use of force among the Brethren."¹⁶²

While the transmission of ideas was of considerable importance in these developments, perhaps the struggle to evolve a viable alternative form of church organization, an alternative form made necessary by the demand for moral reform among the radicals, was even more important. And although there are differences in this development, there are also similarities. They begin at a common point of departure and, after considerable variations, they end — not universally — but to a large extent at a similar point. And it is this problem, it seems to me, which brings the Radical Reformation together. Eventually, after the issues have been fully clarified and the *Geister geschieden* — say about 1560 or thereabout — a *consensus Mennoniticus* is achieved.

We began these lectures with Luther's entrance into the monastery, an entrance whereby he was "rebaptized" to a higher Christian life. We noted the role the monastery was supposed to play in the medieval church and how, if it failed to fulfill that role, the church was exposed as an illusion. The monastery (and convent) was to be the one place where Christians could live as Christians ought to in that "Christian" society. The Reformers, however, abolished monasteries and convents. Their churches were a mixed bag, as they themselves maintained, containing

both the wheat and the tares. If Christians wished to follow Christ closely, they could, as Zwingli put it, "ever live among the impious." But the institutional incentives which the monasteries and convents were supposed to provide in this connection were lacking. Not only were the apostolic ordinances lacking, the encouragement of those like-minded was also lacking. The reformed churches did not provide for the earnest Christians as the Roman Catholic Church had. Men like Karlstadt and Muentzer, like the Swiss Brethren, felt there was, consequently, far too much tolerance for the "weaknesses" of the people. In a sense, therefore, one can see the attempt to restore the "apostolic church" in the Radical Reformation as an attempt to do for Protestantism what the monasteries and convents, at least in their purified form, had been doing for the Catholic Church.

In this regard there is an intriguing passage in the writings of Bernard Rothmann, a passage that deals with the parallels between the Believers' Church and the Catholic monasteries. It appears in his first tract on the two sacraments.

Monasteries and convents grew out of infant baptism. The baptized infants, knowing nothing about Christ, found it easy to depart from him, where-upon he, Christ, left them. Thus the profession and ordinances of Christ were forgotten and so monks and nuns turned to a different set of professions and ordinances based upon human opinion and their own invented rules and regulations. Once they had set these up they made it very difficult for others to join them. These people, who deemed themselves holy, that is the monks and nuns, themselves term this entrance [into the monastery] a *second or a rebaptism*, by which the first is superceded. By it they are baptized into the service of the patron of their order. Without a doubt it would not have come to such an abomination in what is called Christendom had unknowing children not been baptized. In contrast [to opening the church to everyone through infant baptism] people are not allowed into the monastery until they have reached the age of discretion and have been instructed in the rules and regulations of the order so that they know what is required of them in it. They are even subjected to a year's probation, to a year of testing, before they are allowed to take the vows. And once they have taken these [vows] they can no longer retract them. However, into the holy church, that is into the order and obedience of God, are allowed the dumb [in the sense that they cannot talk] and untutored children who as yet have no inkling of good or evil. And they do this unconcernedly. Yet [when someone argues] that we should trust Christ and be accepted into the church because we wish to be obedient to God's will, they consider this some kind of mockery or hypocrisy.¹⁶³

We have come full circle. From the corrupted monastic institutions to the reformed churches into a renewed monasticism. Erasmus had said: "How much more consonant with Christ's teachings it would be to regard the entire Christian world as a single household, a single monastery as it were, and to think of all men as one's fellow canons and brethren." The

attempt to achieve this, however, led to endless division. In the same passage Erasmus had also pointed to baptism as the "supreme religious obligation." The Anabaptists wanted to make it precisely that by allowing only believers to be baptized. It was all so simple, yet so immensely complicated.

Notes

¹ Sebastian Franck, *Chronica* (Photographic reproduction of the original 1536 Ulm edition; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969), p. 457.

² Heinrich Bullinger, *Reformationsgeschichte* (Frauenfeld: J. J. Hottinger u. H. H. Voegelé, 1838-1840), Vol. I, p. 237.

³ *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Vol. 49 (April 1975), pp. 83-121.

⁴ See the following: Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1960), Vol. II, pp. 999-1000; Gordon Leff, "The Apostolic Ideal in Later Medieval Ecclesiology," *Journal of Theological Studies*, N.S., Vol. 18, April 1967, p. 61; and J. K. Zeman, "Restitution and Dissent in the Late Medieval Renewal Movements: the Waldensians, the Hussites and the Bohemian Brethren," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 44 (March 1976), p. 7.

⁵ The term is used by Preserved Smith, *Life and Letters of Martin Luther* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1911), p. 10.

⁶ *D. Martin Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Weimar: Hermann Boehlaus Nachfolger, 1916), Tischreden, Vol. 4, p. 3707.

⁷ Jeffrey B. Russell and A. Cameron Airhart, eds., *Readings in the History of Christianity* (Goleta: The Alternative Printing Company, 1981), pp. 67-68.

⁸ Friedrich Heer, *The Medieval World* (New York: Mentor Books, 1961), p. 62.

⁹ See especially Walter Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1955).

¹⁰ See Gordon Leff, "The Apostolic Ideal," J. K. Zeman, "Restitution and Dissent," and Walter Klaassen, "The Anabaptist Critique of Constantinian Christendom," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Vol. 55 (July 1981), pp. 218-230.

¹¹ See especially Herbert Luethy's description of the treasury of merits in his *From Calvin to Rousseau: Tradition and Modernity in Socio-Political Thought from the Reformation to the French Revolution* (New York & London: Basic Books, 1970), p. 82.

¹² Gordon Leff includes a third response, that of Mysticism. Since this is a preeminently personal response, we shall consider it only peripherally.

¹³ Gordon Leff, "The Making of the Myth of a True Church in the Later Middle Ages," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, Vol. I (Spring 1971), pp. 1-15.

¹⁴ See the essays cited above by Leff and Zeman as well as Howard Kaminsky, "Chiliasm and the Hussite Revolution," *Church History*, Vol. 26 (March 1957), pp. 43-71.

¹⁵ Dante's *De Monarchia* was placed on the Index of Prohibited Books and not removed until 1921.

¹⁶ Dante Alighieri, *Monarchy, and Three Political Letters* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1954), p. 84.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

¹⁸ Marsilius of Padua, *The Defender of the Peace*, translated with an introduction by Alan Gewirth (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1967), p. 170.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 248.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 180-184.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 186.

²³ Christopher B. Coleman, editor and translator, *The Treatise of Lorenzo Valla on the Donation of Constantine* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1922).

²⁴ Smith, *Life and Letters*, p. 61.

²⁵ Coleman, *Donation*, p. 55.

²⁶John P. Dolan, editor and translator, *The Essential Erasmus* (New York: Mentor-Omega Books, 1964), pp. 74-75.

²⁷*The Correspondence of Erasmus* (Toronto and Buffalo: Toronto University Press, 1975), Vol. II, translated by R.A.B. Mynors and D.F.S. Thomson, p. 297.

²⁸Thomas More, *Utopia* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1949), edited by H.V.S. Ogden, p. 24.

²⁹Dolan, *Erasmus*, p. 71 and p. 170.

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 66.

³¹*Ibid.*, p. 71.

³²*Luther's Works*, Vol. 34, *Career of the Reformer*: iv, edited and translated Lewis W. Spitz (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), p. 336.

³³Philip Watson, *Let God be God* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1947), p. 6.

³⁴Leif Grane, "Thomas Muentzer und Martin Luther," in Abraham Friesen und Hans-Juergen Goertz, hrsg; *Thomas Muentzer* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1978), p. 89.

³⁵See also Martin Brecht, "Herkunft und Eigenart der Taufauffassung der Zuercher Taeufer," *Archiv fuer Reormationsgeschichte*, Vol. 64 (1973), pp. 147-165.

³⁶See the essays collected in Friesen and Goertz, *Muentzer*.

³⁷*The Sermons and Conferences of John Tauler*, translated by Walter Elliott (Washington, D.C.: Apostolic Mission House, 1910), p. 321.

³⁸Quoted by Joseph Bernhart in his introduction to *Der Frankfurter, Eine Deutsche Theologie* (Muenchen: Verlag Hermann Rinn, no date), p. 119.

³⁹Thomas Muentzer, *Schriften und Briefe*, edited by Guenther Franz (Guetersloh: Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1968), pp. 353-355.

⁴⁰*Great Debates of the Reformation*, edited by Donald J. Ziegler (New York: Random House, 1969), pp. 3-34.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁴²See especially John M. Headley, *Luther's View of Church History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963).

⁴³Muentzer, *Schriften und Briefe*, p. 244.

⁴⁴Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, translated by G. A. Williamson (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1965), p. 194.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, p. 244.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 91.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 148, 180, 205, 210, 222, and numerous other instances.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 151, 205, 209, 248, 268, 336, etc.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 170, 210, 236, 290, etc.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, pp. 131, 194, 195, 205, etc.

⁵²*Ibid.*, pp. 210, 198, 111.

⁵³*Ibid.*, pp. 90, 148, 204.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, p. 291.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, p. 87.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, p. 143.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 225, 318, 328.

⁵⁸Walter Elliger, *Thomas Muentzer: Leben und Werk* (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), pp. 302, 601, etc. See als Muentzer, *Schriften und Briefe*, p. 398.

⁵⁹*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathes of the Christian Church*, Vol. VI, *St. Augustine*, edited by Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), pp. 334-335.

⁶⁰Muentzer, *Schriften und Briefe*, p. 504.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, pp. 504-505.

⁶²*Ibid.*, p. 234.

⁶³*Ibid.*, pp. 243-244.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, p. 245.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, p. 249.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, p. 262.

- ⁶⁷WA, 32, 388-389.
- ⁶⁸Ulrich Zwingli, *Selected Works*, edited by Samuel Macauley Jackson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1901), p. 28.
- ⁶⁹*Ibid.*, p. 30.
- ⁷⁰*Ibid.*, p. 36.
- ⁷¹*Zwingli and Bullinger*, translated and edited by G. W. Bromiley (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), p. 59.
- ⁷²*Ibid.*, p. 66.
- ⁷³*Ibid.*, p. 67.
- ⁷⁴*Ibid.*
- ⁷⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 107-108.
- ⁷⁶Zwingli, *Selected Works*, pp. 85-86.
- ⁷⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 93-94.
- ⁷⁸Heinold Fast, "Reformation durch Provokation. Predigtstoeurungen in den ersten Jahren der Reformation in der Schweiz," in Hans-Juergen Goertz, hrsg., *Umstrittenen Taeufertum 1525-1975, Neue Forschungen* (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), pp. 79-110.
- ⁷⁹Zwingli, *Selected Works*, p. 115. He even went on to say in Article XLII: "But if they are unfaithful and transgress the laws of Christ they may be deposed in the name of God."
- ⁸⁰*Ibid.*, p. 117.
- ⁸¹Huldrych Zwinglis *Saemtliche Werke*, hrsg. von Emil Egli (Leipzig: Heinsius Nachfolger, 1908), Vol. II, p. 514.
- ⁸²*Ibid.*, pp. 471-525.
- ⁸³*Great Debates*, p. 63.
- ⁸⁴*Ibid.*, p. 69.
- ⁸⁵Fritz Blanke, *Brothers in Christ* (Scottdale, PA & Kitchener, Ont.: Herald Press, 1961), p. 11.
- ⁸⁶William R. Estep, ed., *Anabaptist Beginnings (1523-1533): A Source Book* (Nieuwkoop: B. De Graaf, 1976), p. 27.
- ⁸⁷Zwingli, *Selected Works*, p. 132.
- ⁸⁸*Ibid.*, p. 133.
- ⁸⁹*Ibid.*, p. 134.
- ⁹⁰*Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, translated and edited by George H. Williams and Angel M. Mergal (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1957), pp. 74-75.
- ⁹¹Zwinglis *Saemtliche Werke*, Vol. I, p. 260.
- ⁹²*Zwingli and Bullinger*, pp. 138-139.
- ⁹³*Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, p. 80.
- ⁹⁴*Ibid.*
- ⁹⁵Zwingli, *Selected Works*, p. 130.
- ⁹⁶*Zwingli and Bullinger*, p. 275. When Luther read this in 1536, he observed: "I am sure that Zwingli, as manifested in his last book, died in great and manifold sins and blasphemy."
- ⁹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 133.
- ⁹⁸*Anabaptist Beginnings*, p. 56.
- ⁹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 57.
- ¹⁰⁰*Zwingli and Bullinger*, pp. 138 and 141.
- ¹⁰¹Zwingli, *Selected Works*, p. 139.
- ¹⁰²*Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, p. 151.
- ¹⁰³*Quellen zur Geschichte der Taeufer in der Schweiz*, Vol. IV, *Drei Taeufergespraechen in Bern und im Argau*, hrsg. von Martin Haas (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1974), pp. 97-98.
- ¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*, p. 95.
- ¹⁰⁵*Ibid.*
- ¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*
- ¹⁰⁷*Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, p. 75.
- ¹⁰⁸Muentzer, *Schriften und Briefe*, pp. 225-240.
- ¹⁰⁹*Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, pp. 78-85.
- ¹¹⁰Elliger, *Thomas Muentzer*, pp. 652-668.

¹¹¹See especially Abraham Friesen, "Social Revolution or Religious Reform? Some Salient Aspects of Anabaptist Historiography," in Goertz, *Umstrittenes Täuferertum*, pp. 57-62.

¹¹²Hans-Dieter Schmidt, "Das Hutsche Täuferertum," *Historisches Jahrbuch*, Vol. XCI, (1971), pp. 327-344; Gottfried Seebass, *Muentzers Erbe: Werk, Leben und Theologie des Hans Hut* (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975); and Werner Packull's review in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Vol. 49, (January 1975), pp. 57-67.

¹¹³*The Complete Writings of Menno Simons*, translated by Leonard Verduin and edited by John C. Wenger (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1956), p. 548.

¹¹⁴*Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer*, Vol. IX, Balthasar Hubmaier, *Schriften*, hrsg., Gunnar Westen u. Torsten Bergsten (Guetersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1962), p. 490.

¹¹⁵See Robert Stupperich, hrsg., *Die Schriften B. Rothmanns* (Muenster: Aschen-dorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1970), p. xiii.

¹¹⁶The Latin originals are all lost. A popular German translation was made in 1532.

¹¹⁷*Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, p. 148.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 155-156.

¹¹⁹They consisted of the following: Klopris, Staprade, Roll, Vinne and Schlachtschaf.

¹²⁰*Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica*, Vol. V, *Nederlandsche Anabaptistica* (geschriften van Hendrick Rol, Melchior Hoffman, Adam Pastor, De Broederlicke ver-eeninge), edited by Dr. S. Cramer (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1909), p. 59.

¹²¹*Schriften B. Rothmanns*, p. 332.

¹²²*Ibid.*, p. 393.

¹²³*Ibid.*, pp. 138-195.

¹²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 154.

¹²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 156.

¹²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 162.

¹²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 168.

¹²⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 210-284.

¹²⁹Heinold Fast, hrsg., *Der linke Fluegel der Reformation* (Bremen: Carl Schuenemann Verlag, 1962), p. 310.

¹³⁰*Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, p. 212.

¹³¹*Ibid.*, p. 214.

¹³²*Schriften B. Rothmanns*, p. 224.

¹³³*Ibid.*, p. 225.

¹³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 217.

¹³⁵*Ibid.*, p. 219.

¹³⁶*Ibid.*, p. 243.

¹³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 282.

¹³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 281.

¹³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 280.

¹⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 292.

¹⁴¹WA, XVIII, p. 367.

¹⁴²*Complete Writings of Menno Simons*, p. 33.

¹⁴³*Ibid.*, p. 547.

¹⁴⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵*Ibid.*, p. 32.

¹⁴⁶James Stayer, "Oldeklooster and Menno," *Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 9, (April 1978), p. 66.

¹⁴⁷*Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, p. 216.

¹⁴⁸Albert F. Mellink, "Das niederlaendisch-westfaelische Täuferertum im 16. Jahrhundert," in Goertz, *Umstrittenes Täuferertum*, p. 210.

¹⁴⁹*Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, p. 219.

¹⁵⁰*Ibid.*, p. 222.

¹⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 223. See also Mellink, *op cit*, p. 211.

¹⁵²See his debate with John à Lasco, *Complete Writings of Menno Simons*, pp. 442-454.

¹⁵³*Ibid.*, p. 42.

¹⁵⁴Fast, *Der linke Fluegel*, p. 149.

¹⁵⁵Stayer, "Oldeklooster and Menno," p. 65.

¹⁵⁶C. A. Cornelius, hrsg., *Berichte der Augenzeugen ueber das Muensterische Wiedertaeuferreich* (Muenster: Theissing'sche Buchhandlung, 1853), pp. 400-401.

¹⁵⁷*Complete Writings of Menno Simons*, p. 33.

¹⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p. 107.

¹⁵⁹*Ibid.*, p. 215.

¹⁶⁰*Luther's Works*, Vol. 31, edited by Harold J. Grimm and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), p. 374.

¹⁶¹See Abraham Friesen, "Wilhelm Zimmermann and the Interpretation of Anabaptism," in *Mennonite Images*, edited by Harry Loewen (Winnipeg: Hyperion Press, 1980), p. 46.

¹⁶²Mellink, p. 211.

¹⁶³*Schriften B. Rothmanns*, p. 163.