

CLASSICS
OF THE
RADICAL
REFORMATION

Later Writings of the Swiss Anabaptists 1529–1592



Later Writings of the Swiss Anabaptists 1529–1592

**Anabaptist Texts in Translation
Classics of the Radical Reformation**

This is a preview. Get the entire book here.

Dedicated to
Werner O. Packull:
scholar, teacher, colleague, and friend

ANABAPTIST TEXTS IN TRANSLATION

Anabaptist Texts in Translation is a publication series sponsored by the Institute of Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies (IAMS) at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ontario, and published in cooperation with Pandora Press. The aim of the series is to provide English-speaking readers with reliable translations of significant Anabaptist texts.

1. *Later Writings by Pilgram Marpeck and his Circle. Volume 1: The Exposé, A Dialogue, and Marpeck's Response to Caspar Schwenckfeld.* Trans. Walter Klaassen, Werner Packull, and John Rempel, 1999.

2. *Biblical Concordance of the Swiss Brethren, 1540.* Trans. Gilbert Fast and Galen A. Peters; introduction Joe Springer, ed. C. Arnold Snyder, 2001.

3. *The Earliest Hymns of the Ausbund: Some Beautiful Christian Songs Composed and Sung in the Prison at Passau, Published in 1564.* Trans. with introduction by Robert A. Riall, ed. Galen A. Peters, 2003.

4. *Later Writings of the Swiss Anabaptists, 1529-1592.* Trans. H. S. Bender, C. J. Dyck, Abraham Friesen, Leonard Gross, Sydney Penner, Walter Klaassen, C. Arnold Snyder, and J. C. Wenger, ed. C. Arnold Snyder, 2017.

Classics of the Radical Reformation

Classics of the Radical Reformation is an English-language series of Anabaptist and Free Church documents translated and annotated under the direction of the Institute of Mennonite Studies, which is the research agency of the Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, and published by Plough Publishing House.

1. *The Legacy of Michael Sattler*. Trans., ed. John Howard Yoder.
2. *The Writings of Pilgram Marpeck*. Trans., ed. William Klassen and Walter Klaassen.
3. *Anabaptism in Outline: Selected Primary Sources*. Trans., ed. Walter Klaassen.
4. *The Sources of Swiss Anabaptism: The Grebel Letters and Related Documents*. Ed. Leland Harder.
5. *Balthasar Hubmaier: Theologian of Anabaptism*. Ed. H. Wayne Pipkin and John Howard Yoder.
6. *The Writings of Dirk Philips*. Ed. Cornelius J. Dyck, William E. Keeney, and Alvin J. Beachy.
7. *The Anabaptist Writings of David Joris: 1535–1543*. Ed. Gary K. Waite.
8. *The Essential Carlstadt: Fifteen Tracts by Andreas Bodenstein*. Trans., ed. E. J. Furcha.
9. *Peter Riedemann's Hutterite Confession of Faith*. Trans., ed. John J. Friesen.
10. *Sources of South German/Austrian Anabaptism*. Ed. C. Arnold Snyder, trans. Walter Klaassen, Frank Friesen, and Werner O. Packull.
11. *Confessions of Faith in the Anabaptist Tradition: 1527–1660*. Ed. Karl Koop.
12. *Jörg Maler's Kunstbuch: Writings of the Pilgram Marpeck Circle*. Ed. John D. Rempel.
13. *Later Writings of the Swiss Anabaptists: 1529–1592*. Ed. C. Arnold Snyder.
14. *Jakob Hutter: His Life and Letters*. Trans., ed. Emmy Barth Maendel and Jonathan Seiling.
15. *The Great Article Book: A Hutterite Defense of Doctrine and Practice*. Trans., ed. Emmy Barth Maendel.

Later Writings of the Swiss Anabaptists 1529–1592

TRANSLATED BY

Harold S. Bender, C. J. Dyck, Abraham Friesen,
Leonard Gross, Walter Klaassen, Sydney Penner,
C. Arnold Snyder, and J. C. Wenger

EDITED BY

C. Arnold Snyder



PLOUGH PUBLISHING HOUSE

This is a preview. Get the entire book here.

Published by Plough Publishing House
Walden, New York
Robertsbridge, England
Elsmore, Australia
www.plough.com

Plough produces books, a quarterly magazine, and Plough.com to encourage people and help them put their faith into action. We believe Jesus can transform the world and that his teachings and example apply to all aspects of life. At the same time, we seek common ground with all people regardless of their creed.

Plough is the publishing house of the Bruderhof, an international community of families and singles seeking to follow Jesus together. Members of the Bruderhof are committed to a way of radical discipleship in the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount. Inspired by the first church in Jerusalem (Acts 2 and 4), they renounce private property and share everything in common in a life of nonviolence, justice, and service to neighbors near and far. To learn more about the Bruderhof's faith, history, and daily life, see Bruderhof.com. (Views expressed by Plough authors are their own and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Bruderhof.)

Copyright © 2019 by Plough Publishing House
All rights reserved.

ISBN: 978-0-874-86281-2

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data pending.

This is a preview. Get the entire book here.

Table of Contents

Preface	ix
List of Illustrations and Abbreviations	xi
Introduction	
C. Arnold Snyder	1
I Martin Weninger, Regarding Church Attendance and Separation (before 1535)	16
II Two Writings by Wilhelm Reublin	27
Confession of Faith, J. Kautz and W. Reublin (1529)	41
Strasbourg Preachers' Reply	45
Letter from W. Reublin to Pilgram Marpeck (1531)	48
III Hans Fischer Responds to Questioning (1548)	57
IV Interrogation of Jakob Maler (1553)	68
V Agreement Made by the Brothers and Elders at Strasbourg, Assembled because of the Question of the Origin of the Flesh of Christ (1555)	76
VI Letter of Zylis and Lemke to Menno Simons, Concerning Avoidance [Shunning] (1557)	84
VII The Strasbourg Discipline (1568)	92
VIII [Thomas Meyer], Concerning the Christian Ban (before 1575)	100
IX Prefaces to Three "Swiss Brethren" Hymnals	118
<i>Ein außbundt Schöner geistlicher Lieder</i> (ca. 1555)	130
<i>Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng</i> (1564)	132
<i>The Ausbund</i> (1583)	135

X	Letter to the Magistrates in Bern (1585)	139
XI	Introduction to <i>Codex 628, Berner Burgerbibliothek</i>	153
XII	A Short, Simple Confession	170
XIII	Concerning Separation	446
XIV	Anabaptist Supplication to the Zurich Magistrates (1589), Andreas Gut	532
	Concerning the Anabaptist Supplication, [Johann Rudolf Stumpf]	543
XV	Answer from the Swiss Brethren to the Polish [Brethren] (1592)	549
	Appendix: Authors and Works Cited and Copied in <i>Codex 628</i>	564
	Scripture Index	575
	Name and Subject Index	589
	Translators	608

PREFACE

The project that led to the *Later Writings of the Swiss Anabaptists* was conceived more than two decades ago, when a sabbatical leave from Conrad Grebel University College in 1993/1994 allowed me to explore some of the historical treasures located in the Staatsarchiv in Zurich. The discovery that Swiss Anabaptist communities in the later decades of the sixteenth century were actively writing, copying and circulating manuscripts of surprising length and sophistication led to the decision to transcribe, translate, and publish some of these little-known and under-studied sources.

Initial encouragement to pursue publication came from Karl Koop and then John Rempel, successive directors of the Classics of Radical Reformation series. The members of the editorial advisory group connected with CRR publications in those days, especially John D. Roth and Gerald Mast, immediately engaged with the project and provided welcome support and very helpful feedback as this proposed translation volume took shape and then ground on, year after year. Likewise, Barb Gingerich and Mary Schertz, dedicated members of the Institute of Mennonite Studies, continued to encourage the completion of the translation project. After all these years of delays and changes, I am very pleased that this volume can be included in the CRR series, now under the leadership of Jamie Pitts of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Sincere thanks to all involved.

It was clear from the start that completing this volume would require a team of dedicated translators. The task of translating the massive *Codex* 628 was taken on by Leonard Gross, Abraham Friesen, Walter Klaassen, and the present writer. This work was completed in fairly timely fashion, but some years would pass before the whole could be annotated, edited and provided with appropriate introductions. Early in the project Sydney Penner, then a young student on his way to graduate work at Oxford and an academic career, collaborated with me on translating some smaller pieces, as part of his summer work at Pandora Press. Most recently, he contributed his expertise in Latin by translating some epigrams that were found (somewhat incongruously) in the 1575 Anabaptist writing on the ban (chapter VIII below). In the late stages of preparation, the translation of the Swiss Brethren answer to the Polish Brethren (chapter XV below) was skillfully emended by Willem de Bakker. There were, in addition, pieces already translated and published that we decided should be updated and re-published as part of

this collection. These pieces were translated originally by Harold S. Bender, C. J. Dyck, and J. C. Wenger. Their work is here posthumously and gratefully acknowledged, with added thanks to the *Mennonite Quarterly Review* for allowing the editing and re-publication of these documents.

In the later stages of preparation, as the historical introductions and notations were being prepared, good colleagues and friends James Stayer, John D. Roth, Martin Rothkegel, Karl Koop, and David Neufeld generously read many drafts, most of them far too long, and provided thorough and thoughtful responses, suggestions and corrections. I owe them all more than a simple thank-you can express.

This project has been supported financially along the way. Thanks to the Heritage Historical Library, Aylmer, Ontario, for its financial support in 2003, which allowed the work to move forward. More recently, funds in support of the final publication were generously granted by the Schafer-Friesen Research Fellowship, located at Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana. Thanks are due to Laureen Harder-Gissing, director of the Institute of Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies, Conrad Grebel University College, for her collaboration and support for the inclusion of this volume in the Anabaptist Texts in Translation series. Christian Snyder and Beth MacIntosh of Pandora Press also helped this project through to completion, and Stephen Jones greatly improved the final product with expert editing.

At the beginning of this project two decades ago Werner O. Packull, my departmental colleague at Conrad Grebel University College, was at the peak of his productive years, publishing his monumental *Hutterite Beginnings* in 1995. I learned very much, and continue to learn, from his published work, including the book on Peter Riedemann that he completed with Karin Packull's collaboration in 2007 and published with Pandora Press. Werner was unfailingly generous with his time and expertise, and helped me with this project and others in countless ways. I learned a great deal from the personal conversations and exchanges we enjoyed and took for granted in our days as teaching colleagues. I particularly came to cherish Werner's quiet humor and gentle, irenic spirit. We miss his cheery *Grüss Gott!*, his customary greeting and blessing to us.

This book is dedicated to Werner Packull with the greatest of affection, respect and gratitude. *Gott sei mit dir.*

Arnold Snyder, March 16, 2017

Illustrations and Abbreviations

Illustrations

Codex 628 (1590)	154
The “Simple Confession” (1590)	178
Textual Borrowing in the “Frankenthal” Strand of Manuscripts	180
Textual Relationship between the Simple Confession, Codex 628 (1590) and the Zurich “Simple Confession” (1588)	184
Growth of Marpeck’s “Two Swords” Argument for Religious Toleration	188
Concerning Separation: Why We Do Not Attend Their Churches	450

Abbreviations

- ARG** *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*
- CWMS** *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1956).
- Franck, *Chronica***
Sebastian Franck, *Chronica, Zeitbuch unnd Geschichtsbibel* (Strasbourg, 1531). References will be to the edition published in Ulm, 1536 (photo-reprint, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969).
- Frankenthal *Protocoll***
Protocoll. Das ist / Alle Handlung des Gesprechs zu Franckenthal inn der Churfürstlichen Pfaltz / mit denen so man Widertäufer nennet / Auff den 28. May angefangen / und den 19 Junij dises 1571 jars geendet.
- Hutterite *Chronicle***
The Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren, I (Rifton, NY: Plough Publishing House, 1987).
- Jecker, *Ketzer-Rebellen-Heilige***
Hanspeter Jecker, *Ketzer-Rebellen-Heilige. Das Basler Täuferium von 1580-1700* (Liestal: Verlag des Kantons Basel-Landschaft, 1998).

Klaassen and Klassen, *Writings*

Walter Klaassen and William Klassen, eds., *The Writings of Pilgram Marpeck* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1978).

Leu and Scheidegger, *Zürcher Täufer*

Urs B. Leu and Christian Scheidegger, eds., *Die Zürcher Täufer, 1525-1700* (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 2007).

LW *Luther's Works*, American Edition (55 vols.; ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann; Philadelphia: Muehlenberg and Fortress, and St. Louis: Concordia, 1955-86).

ME *Mennonite Encyclopedia*

MGBI *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter*

MH *Mennonitica Helvetica*

MQR *Mennonite Quarterly Review*

Ottius, *Annales* Joh. Heinrico Ottius, *Annales Anabaptistici*, (Basel, 1672).

Pipkin and Yoder, *Hubmaier*

H. Wayne Pipkin and John H. Yoder, eds., *Balthasar Hubmaier* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1989).

QGT IV Manfred Krebs, ed., *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer, IV, Baden und Pfaltz* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Verlag, 1951).

QGT VII *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer, VII Band, Elsass, I. Teil*, eds. M. Krebs and H. G. Rott (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlag, 1959).

QGT VIII *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer, VIII Band, Elsass, II. Teil*, eds. M. Krebs and H. G. Rott (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlag, 1960).

QGTS I *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer in der Schweiz, I, Zurich*, ed. L. von Muralt and W. Schmid (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1952).

QGTS II *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer in der Schweiz, II, Ostschweiz*, ed. Heinold Fast (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1973).

QGTS III *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer in der Schweiz, III, Aargau, Bern, Solothurn*, ed. Martin Haas (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 2008).

QGTS IV *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer in der Schweiz, IV, Drei Täufergespräche in Bern und im Aargau*, ed. Martin Haas (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1974).

Rempel, *Kunstbuch*

John D. Rempel, ed., *Jörg Maler's Kunstbuch. Writings of the Marpeck Circle* (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2010).

Roth and Stayer, *Companion*

John D. Roth and James M. Stayer, eds., *A Companion to Anabaptism and Spiritualism, 1521-1700* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2007).

STAZ Staatsarchiv Zürich

Wolkan, *Lieder* Rudolf Wolkan, *Die Lieder der Wiedertäufer* (Berlin, 1903; reprint: Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1965).

Introduction

C. Arnold Snyder

A full century ago, the historian Cornelius Bergmann observed that when the Swiss Anabaptists were faced with renewed attacks in 1585—attacks spearheaded by the Bernese magistrates and supported by Zurich and Basel—they no longer were the relatively helpless and “simple” people they had been sixty years earlier. By 1585 the Anabaptists in Switzerland were employing a wider array of intellectual tools in their defense.¹ Bergmann, who studied the Anabaptist movement in Zurich from its beginnings up to 1660, could make such an observation because he had the benefit of a long-range historical view. Historians of Swiss Anabaptism since Bergmann have, with few exceptions,² truncated the investigation of Anabaptism in Switzerland, focusing instead on Swiss Anabaptist *origins* in Zurich and the first five to ten years of its existence.³ This discussion was initiated by

-
- 1 “... sie 1585 nicht mehr so hilflos und ‘einfältig’ vor der Tatsache der Aarauer Beschlüsse standen wie in der ersten Zeit nach den Reformationsjahren.” Cornelius Bergmann, *Die Täuferbewegung im Kanton Zürich bis 1660* (Leipzig: Nachfolger, 1916), 61. Bergmann’s work has retained its value as one of the few studies of Anabaptism in Switzerland (primarily Zurich) ranging from the beginnings of the movement, into the seventeenth century.
 - 2 One exception is John D. Roth, whose study of Swiss Brethren development carried into the seventeenth century, but did not focus only on Switzerland. “By the end of the century, the Swiss Brethren were not writing systematic theology. But their experience with the disputations had forced them to respond to a series of difficult theological questions—especially those related to the authority of the Old Testament, church discipline, the relationship between faith and works, nonresistance, and the role of the Christian magistrate so that their understandings of these topics were clearly more nuanced than they had been a half-century earlier.” John D. Roth, “Marpeck and the Later Swiss Brethren, 1540-1700,” in John D. Roth and James M. Stayer, eds., *A Companion to Anabaptism and Spiritualism, 1521-1700* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 356.
 - 3 Most recently, see Andrea Strübind, “Anabaptism in Switzerland,” in Amy Nelson Burnett and Emidio Campi, eds., *A Companion to the Swiss Reformation* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2016), 389-443. Although the title is promising, the chapter itself is a demonstration of the truncated view of Swiss Anabaptism that has come

Mennonite historians who identified Swiss “founders” of the Anabaptist movement,¹ then dominated in the 1970s by the monogenesis/polygenesis debate² and a social-historical reading,³ and more recently by debate about whether early Swiss Anabaptism should be characterized as a “religious” or a “social” movement, or both.⁴

After detailing the Schleithem Articles of 1527, most historians of Anabaptism in Switzerland writing in the past century have found less and less to say, particularly about Anabaptist spiritual or religious thought past the 1530s.⁵ Robert Friedmann, for example, concluded that the *Ausbund* (the Swiss Brethren hymnal), the *Confessio Thomas von Imbroich*,

to dominate the general historical narrative. The story of Anabaptist beginnings in Zurich is told again in copious detail; the historical, theological, and spiritual development of Anabaptism in the Swiss Confederation over the latter part of the century remains unexamined.

- 1 As, for example, Harold S. Bender, *Conrad Grebel, c. 1498-1526. The Founder of the Swiss Brethren Sometimes Called Anabaptists* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1950).
- 2 James Stayer, Klaus Deppermann, and Werner Packull, “From Monogenesis to Polygenesis: The Historical Discussion of Anabaptist Origins,” *MQR* 49 (April 1975), 83-121; Martin Haas, “Der Weg der Täufer in die Absonderung,” in Hans-Jürgen Goertz, ed., *Umstrittenes Täuferum, 1525-1975. Neue Forschungen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977), 50-78.
- 3 As in Hans-Jürgen Goertz, *The Anabaptists* (London: Routledge, 1996).
- 4 I am one of the historians guilty of spilling excessive ink on Anabaptist beginnings in Switzerland, arguing that early Swiss Anabaptism must be seen as both a religious and a social movement. See Arnold Snyder, “The Birth and Evolution of Swiss Anabaptism (1520-1530),” *MQR* 80 (October 2006), 501-645, and the more abbreviated “Swiss Anabaptism: The Beginnings, 1523-1525,” in Roth and Stayer, *Companion*, 45-82. My reassessment of the early Swiss Anabaptist story was, in part, in response to the work of Andrea Strübind, *Eifriger als Zwingli: Die frühe Täuferbewegung in der Schweiz* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2003). See the review of Strübind’s work by James M. Stayer, and Strübind’s response, in *MQR* 78 (April 2004), 297-313.
- 5 This point was already being made in 1959. Hans J. Hillerbrand noted then that “... the time *post* 1533 is the most neglected in sixteenth century Anabaptist history and needs further study.... There has been a tendency to lump together testimonies and Anabaptist confessions from various periods of the sixteenth century.” See “Remarkable Interdependencies between Certain Anabaptist Doctrinal Writings,” *MQR* 33 (January 1959), 73. For an example of a truncated description of Swiss Anabaptism, see C. Henry Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites*, fifth edition, revised and enlarged by Cornelius Krahn (Newton, KS: Faith and Life Press, 1981), 3-18.

the *Dordrecht Confession* of Anabaptists in the Netherlands, and the *Froschauer Bible* were the books that “constituted the spiritual equipment of the brotherhood in Switzerland as far as the records go.”⁶ Archival findings have allowed modifications to Friedmann’s conclusion at this point, particularly since they reveal that Swiss Anabaptists communicated extensively by circulating handwritten writings rather than by circulating printed books.⁷ Surviving manuscripts demonstrate that Anabaptists in Switzerland, although lacking “outstanding leaders” as Friedmann said, nevertheless had at their disposal more “spiritual equipment” than was previously thought.

A narrative that describes a Swiss Anabaptism crystallized into final shape in 1527 by the Schleithem Articles—while partially justified—does not adequately describe the dynamic negotiations and changes in different Anabaptist communities in Switzerland as the decades of the sixteenth century unfolded, and as these communities responded to the changing social, political, and religious realities that surrounded them. Swiss Anabaptism was born and grew within the particular and peculiar contexts provided by the Swiss Reformation as it developed in the various states and territories of the Confederation.

When the Reformation emerged in Swiss lands, it came perilously close to ripping the Confederation apart along confessional lines. It soon came to war, but after the Second Kappel War in 1531, at which Zwingli lost his life, a workable stalemate was negotiated and the Confederation managed to survive. The Protestant states (Zurich, Bern, Basel, Schaffhausen, St. Gallen, Appenzell, and Graubünden [Grisons]) remained, but the expansion of Protestantism ceased; the Catholic states regained some lost ground, but otherwise also had to be content with the status quo. Although the Protestant states all moved to institutionalize a recognizably

6 Robert Friedmann, *Mennonite Piety Through the Centuries* (Goshen, IN: Mennonite Historical Society, 1949), 35-36. Friedmann does point out that “it is evident from the hymns which have been preserved, that the inner life of the Swiss brotherhood was much richer than might be supposed on the basis of the above books.” *Ibid.*, 36.

7 Even in the earliest period, Hubmaier aside, Swiss Anabaptists did not rely on print to spread their message, but rather relied on personal contacts and the circulation of handwritten sources. See Alejandro Zorzin, “Die Verbreitung Täuferischer Botschaft in der Anfangszeit der Schweizer Brüder,” in *MH* 31 (2008), 11-25.

“Swiss” version of reform by the next century, as independent states each progressed along this path at its own speed and with its own emphases.

The Confederate states continued to meet together to resolve internal and external issues. One of the internal issues on which all the states agreed, regardless of confession, was that the Anabaptist movement was a threat to the political and religious order, and should be prosecuted as such. The rate and intensity of persecution and prosecution varied with the state in question,⁸ but thanks to their outlaw status in Switzerland the Anabaptists “never thrived numerically” there.⁹ Anabaptism’s opportunity for greater political influence had come and gone, it could be argued, with the brief rise and fall of the peasants’ resistance in 1525. From that point on, Anabaptists played the role of dissenting religious and social nonconformists, living a semi-underground existence in villages and rural areas, viewed with continual suspicion by the magistrates as possible disturbers of the peace.

That the Anabaptists were virtually all peaceful and pious people, serious about living holy lives in harmony with the biblical witness, was something almost everyone agreed upon. That their religious dissent placed them outside of legal social and political boundaries was not the result of inherently revolutionary impulses, but rather a consequence of the way the Swiss Reformation defined society and the state as a theocracy: necessarily united under one official confession. Religious nonconformity was, by this definition, sedition—that is, a threat to the unified social order.

The process of “confessionalization”—the state’s co-optation of the church and its use of the church as an agent of the state—began in earnest in the Protestant Swiss states after 1531 and proceeded to full

8 The Catholic states executed fewer Anabaptists, but then Anabaptists tended not to seek refuge there, with the exception of Solothurn, since prosecution and execution tended to be swift and decisive in those states. According to Claus-Peter Clasen, of the 73 known and probable executions of Anabaptists in Switzerland, “Sixty-one of these 73 executions, or 83%, took place between 1525 and 1539.” Close to eighty percent of the recorded Anabaptist executions in Switzerland took place in the Protestant states, with the Catholic states executing only 16 Anabaptists from 1525 to 1618. See Claus-Peter Clasen, “Executions of Anabaptists, 1525-1618. A Research Report,” MQR 47 (April 1973), 115-56, *passim*.

9 J. C. Wenger, *Glimpses of Mennonite History and Doctrine* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1959), 37.

implementation in the next century.¹⁰ In light of the compartmentalization of Protestant and Catholic confessions to their respective states, the baptizing movement proved to be one of the significant impediments to the establishment of religious unity and practice in the Swiss evangelical states, offering a grassroots alternative to official Reformed theology and centralized church reform “from above,” and stubbornly refusing to disappear. The confessionalization process followed its own pattern of development within each evangelical state, and so offered different opportunities and limitations to the baptizing communities at different times. There were also different power dynamics between countryside and city in the individual evangelical states. In some territories and states the villages resisted centralized control. In these areas the Anabaptists could survive, protected by family and kinship networks (their *Freundschaft*) that often included local officials charged with policing functions. Anabaptism played a small role within the larger Reformation process, throwing sand in the gears of the church/state machine, but it did play a role—even if that role was primarily contrarian, both theologically and socially.

The conversations (or debates) that took place between the Reformed and the Anabaptists were from the start biblical ones, matters of interpretation and application. As opponents of the move to confessionalization, Anabaptists were called on to justify their resistance to assimilation. Their persistence in presenting biblical arguments over the century did demand and produce responses and biblical arguments in return. The Anabaptist insistence that discipline should be seriously applied in the church pressured the Reformed to continually revisit their decision to lodge social discipline in the hands of the state. Continued Anabaptist criticism of clerical shortcomings prompted the Reformed states to respond with better training and stronger discipline of their clergy. Anabaptist opposition to reading the Old and New Testaments together as

10 As noted in Leu and Scheidegger, *Zürcher Täufer*, 99. John D. Roth offers the following definition, after surveying the literature: “the term ‘confessionalization’ identifies a pattern in early modern Europe in which representatives of the territorial state sought to assert greater control over the daily lives and habits of their subjects by co-opting established forms of religious discipline (confessions, catechisms, visitations, church ordinances, etc.) and by bringing local clergy and religious practices under the authority of a central consistory.” John D. Roth, “The Limits of Confessionalization: Social Discipline, the Ban and Political Resistance Among Swiss Anabaptists, 1550-1770,” *MQR* 89 (October 2015), 518, and n. 4.

one unitary covenant attacked the very heart of Reformed theocracy, and formed the basis for Anabaptist refusal to accept baptism as equivalent to circumcision, to taking up arms, or to swearing oaths. In the latter part of the century, sophisticated Anabaptist pleas for freedom of conscience and religion were grounded in a reading of the Testaments as progressively revelatory, and an insistence that Christian conduct should be ruled by the words and life of Jesus, not by “Moses.” The story of Anabaptism in Switzerland over the course of the sixteenth century is one of stubborn, principled biblical engagement with larger reforming forces that were moving inexorably towards confessional uniformity.

The primary historical sources relating to later Swiss Anabaptism have remained largely unpublished, and therefore relatively inaccessible.¹¹ Thankfully, the Anabaptist archival trove in Switzerland is being mined by more and more historians working in individual regions. Hanspeter Jecker has painstakingly documented the story of Anabaptism in Basel into the seventeenth century;¹² Urs Leu and Christian Scheidegger have done the same for Zurich, in somewhat less detail;¹³ Martin Haas and Hans Rudolf Lavater have done much the same for Bern.¹⁴ All these historians have been accessing local archives and summarizing their findings on later Swiss Anabaptism in numerous publications. In fact, there are substantial published records

11 For an impressive listing of archival sources documenting Anabaptism just in Zurich, see Hans Rudolf Lavater, “... von mir Hans Müller der Arm, das sich Gott über unß alli erbarm!” Zürcher Täuferakten des 17. Jahrhunderts in der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek München (Cgm 6083), MH 32/33 (2009/10), 109-10, especially 110, notes 5 and 6. As Lavater points out, the actual archival deposit relating to Anabaptism in Zurich—particularly for the seventeenth century—goes far beyond what I noted in a preliminary report published in 1995, following a few months of work in the Staatsarchiv, Zürich. See Arnold Snyder, “Research Note: Sources Documenting Anabaptism in Zürich, 1533-1660,” MQR 69 (January 1995), 93-99.

12 Hanspeter Jecker, *Ketzer-Rebellen-Heilige. Das Basler Täuferturn von 1580-1700* (Liestal: Verlag des Kantons Basel-Landschaft, 1998), is an impressive example of the kind of archival source work that is needed elsewhere.

13 Leu and Scheidegger, *Zürcher Täufer*.

14 See Martin Haas, “Die Berner Täufer in ihrem Schweizerischen Umfeld I: Gesellschaft und Herrschaft,” and Hans Rudolf Lavater, “Die Berner Täufer in ihrem schweizerischen Umfeld II,” both in Rudolf Dellsperger and Hans Rudolf Lavater, eds., *Die Wahrheit ist untödlich: Berner Täufer in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Bern: Simowa Verlag, 2007).

documenting Anabaptism in Schaffhausen, territories around St. Gallen and the Graubünden, Bern, the Aargau and Solothurn, extending the story well beyond the Zurich beginnings and past the 1530s into the 1560s.¹⁵ Sources beyond 1560 usually are available only in local archives.

This present volume of translated Anabaptist sources contains a selection of writings circulating in Swiss Anabaptist communities in the “hidden years,” from 1529 to 1592. Although this collection features some interrogations and some short documents that have been translated before, the bulk of the translations published here are of Anabaptist writings for which critical editions or publications in the original German do not exist. In these cases translations were done from transcripts prepared by the present writer from manuscripts (or in some cases, copies of manuscripts) preserved in the archives of Bern and Zurich, where they have remained in relative obscurity.¹⁶ The text that dominates the collection published here, both in terms of length and complexity, is the massive 466-page *Codex 628*, copied in 1590 and containing a wide sampling of material that was circulating in Swiss Brethren circles at the end of the century (Chapters XI, XII, and XIII). Readers of this volume thus have an opportunity to peruse, in translation, some significant archival holdings that document the development of Swiss Anabaptism over the length of the sixteenth century.

The first chapter in this collection contains a small tract written by Martin Weninger, former colleague of Michael Sattler and promoter of separatist Anabaptist teachings in the Schaffhausen, Bern, and Solothurn regions. Although he eventually recanted, his “Regarding Church Attendance and Separation” (ca. 1535) is a lucid defense of Swiss Brethren separatist convictions. This writing was first published many years ago in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*. The translation by J. C. Wenger has been re-worked and is used here with permission.¹⁷ Chapter

15 The four volumes of the *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer in der Schweiz* (QGTS) are indispensable. Of course, these published sources still need to be augmented with work in local archives for a full accounting, since the published materials represent just a fraction of relevant documentation.

16 The author prepared transcriptions of the archival originals translated in chapters III, VIII, X, XII, XIII, and XIV. These transcriptions have not been published.

17 Original in QGTS, II, #141, 108-13. English translation by J. C. Wenger, “Martin Weninger’s vindication of Anabaptism, 1535,” MQR 22 (July 1948), 180-87; edited with permission.

II contains two writings by Wilhelm Reublin, one of the original baptizing leaders joining forces with Conrad Grebel, Felix Mantz, and Michael Sattler. Reublin baptized Balthasar Hubmaier and also worked closely with Pilgram Marpeck in Strasbourg. Although these writings date from an earlier time (1529 and 1531, respectively), they nevertheless provide insight into baptizing currents inside and outside the Swiss Brethren. In a joint confession of faith written in the Strasbourg prison in 1529, Reublin and the spiritualist Jacob Kautz show surprising unanimity of opinion, focusing their criticism on the state church preachers.¹⁸ Such criticism is a noted recurring theme in sixteenth-century Anabaptist writings. By 1531, however, the spiritualist and Swiss Brethren streams had formed separate currents in the Anabaptist stream. In Reublin's letter of 1531 to Pilgram Marpeck, translated by J. C. Wenger and previously published in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, we get a rare view, though not a favorable one, of the Austerlitz Brethren, the first of the communal groups that had emerged and begun to flourish in Moravia three years earlier, in 1528.¹⁹ The relationship between the later Marpeck Covenanters, heirs of the Austerlitz Brethren, and the Swiss Brethren becomes important as the sixteenth century progresses. Reublin's letter indicates important beginnings of that relationship.

Chapters III, IV, V, and VI all date from mid-century, a period for which documentation is relatively scarce for the baptizers in Swiss territories and for the Swiss Brethren generally. Chapter III contains a translation of the interrogation and confession of Hans Fischer (1548). His testimony sheds light on the baptizing movement north of Zurich, more than twenty years after the first baptism in that city.²⁰ Because information for the Zurich region of this period is scarce, Fischer's testimony opens a valuable window into the underground Anabaptist

18 Original in QGT VII, #168, 197-99. Translation by the author.

19 Original in C. A. Cornelius: *Geschichte des Münsterischen Aufbruchs. Zweites Buch.* (Leipzig, 1860), 253-59. Published in English as "A Letter from Wilhelm Reublin to Pilgram Marpeck, 1531," translated by J. C. Wenger, MQR 23 (April 1949), 67-75. This translation has been slightly revised and updated, with permission of the publisher.

20 Hans Fischer, Nov. 21, 1548. Interrogation and Confession. Found in STAZ EI 7-2, #94. Transcription by Arnold Snyder; translation by Sydney Penner and Arnold Snyder. Most of this document has since been published in QGTS III, #290, 125-26.

world of the Zurich *Unterland*, revealing a little of how it functioned and what beliefs were being defended at mid-century. In 1553, in Toggenburg county, a land ruled by the Abbot of St. Gallen, an uneducated Anabaptist leader named Jakob Maler was arrested and interrogated at some length. This previously untranslated document, found in Chapter IV, provides a small window through which we can observe a “simple” rural Anabaptist leader defend his beliefs.²¹

Chapters V, VI, VII, and XV stem from meetings of Swiss Brethren in the city of Strasbourg in 1555, 1557, 1568, and 1592, respectively. There were six known conferences of Swiss Brethren leaders held in Strasbourg from 1554 to 1607; this volume reproduces the conclusions of four of those six.²² Although no comprehensive list of participants exists, it is very probable that Swiss Brethren leaders from Switzerland were represented at all of these conferences; they are explicitly named as being present at several of the meetings. The topics and conclusions addressed by these conferences of Swiss Brethren shed light on how the developing supra-regional tradition was dealing with divisive theological issues, and also re-organizing its church practices.

Chapters V and VI address theological and ecclesiological differences between the Swiss Brethren and the Mennonites to the north. The “Agreement” found in Chapter V is an attempt by the Swiss Brethren to come to a position concerning the incarnation of Christ.²³ It is a response to, and a mild rejection of, the “divine flesh” position held by Menno Simons and other followers of Melchior Hoffman in the north. Chapter VI addresses the question of whether persons—especially spouses—who have been banned (disciplined) should also be shunned (avoided altogether)

21 A critical edition of this document is found in QGTS II, #391, 309-14 (after June 1, 1553). Translation by Sydney Penner and Arnold Snyder.

22 See John S. Oyer, “The Strasbourg Conferences of the Anabaptists, 1554-1607,” MQR 58 (July 1984), 217-29. As Oyer notes, we know of the 1554 conference only because a city scribe claimed it happened; no minutes have survived. The 1607 conference essentially reaffirmed the findings of the 1568 conference. Ibid., 218-19.

23 “Verdragh ghemaect by de Broederen en Ousten tot Straesborgh, vergadert van wegen de wetenschap van de herkomst des vlees Christi” (1555), in S. Cramer and F. Pijper, eds., *Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica* (’s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1910), 226-28. Translated by the author.

until their full repentance and re-acceptance into the community.²⁴ The strict practice was defended and promoted by Leenaert Bouwens, Dirk Philips, and Menno Simons in the north. In the letter Zylis and Lemke wrote to Menno, they argued that married persons should not be subjected to shunning, even if one of them has been disciplined with the ban. Menno rejected this milder view and excommunicated all of the Anabaptists who held it.

Chapter VII contains a document from 1568, previously translated by Harold S. Bender. It is interesting for the light it sheds on the development and change in church polity among the Swiss Brethren.²⁵ Among other things, it is striking how important an authoritative leadership structure has become among the Swiss Brethren of this time, particularly in light of the more egalitarian positions associated with this confessional stream in earlier decades. Chapter XV, chronologically at the end of the collection, stands in line with earlier meetings of Swiss Brethren leaders in Strasbourg.²⁶ It contains a letter of reply by these leaders to a Socinian (Polish Brethren) overture for union. The only reason we know of this conference is that the “Reply” was translated into Dutch and preserved in a later printed collection of documents. The Swiss Brethren assembled in 1592 make their position on the Trinity and the Incarnation clear, vis-à-vis the Socinian confession presented to them.²⁷ An increasing sophistication

24 Original in Abraham Hulshof, *Gescheidnis van de Doopsgezinden te Straatsburg van 1525-1527* (Amsterdam: J. Clausen, 1905), 226-31. Translated by the author with reference to an unpublished translation by C. J. Dyck, 2005, generously shared by John D. Roth, Goshen College.

25 H. S. Bender, ed., “The Discipline Adopted by the Strasburg Conference of 1568,” MQR 1 (January 1927), 57-66. The original document does not carry a title but is simply called an “agreement.” It was Bender who gave the name “Discipline” to this document. When the writers refer to it, they call it an *Ordnungsbrief*, or “Letter of Regulations.” Slightly edited and published here with permission.

26 “Coype ende Seecker Antwoordt van de Switser broeders ofte Hooghduytschen, alsoo genoemt; Over-gegeven aende Poolsche, betreffende het punct der Menschwordinghe ende der Godheydt Jesu Christi, in *Handelinghe der Vereenigde Vlaemse en Duytsche Doopsgesinde Gemeynten, gehouden tot Haerlem anno 1649 ... met de dry confessien aldaer geapprobeert* (Vlissinghe: Geleyn Jansz, 1666), 74-81. Translated by Cornelius Dyck, with editorial emendations by Willem de Bakker.

27 The Polish Brethren confession to which the Swiss Brethren responded is found in Theodor Wotschke, “Ein dogmatische Sendschreiben des Unitariers Ostorodt,” ARG 12 (1915), 137-54.

in the way the Swiss Brethren dealt with Incarnational issues is evident as the conferences progress.

One of the original marks of Anabaptist ecclesiology was the ban or “fraternal admonition.” The practice was based on Jesus’ words as recorded in Matthew 18. The manner of practicing the ban remained an issue within Anabaptist communities, but the ban itself continued to be a central pillar of Anabaptist church practice. The lack of such a practice was a consistently stated reason for Anabaptist separation from what they called an “undisciplined” state church. Chapter VIII translates a small book “Concerning the Christian Ban” that was written before 1575 and was circulating in handwritten copies, of which three have survived.²⁸ It appears that this booklet was never printed and is published here for the first time. Swiss Anabaptists clearly continued thinking about the ban and reprising its importance in the last quarter of the sixteenth century.

All Anabaptists composed hymns or, more accurately, they composed texts that they sang to the tunes of common folk songs. These hymns were transmitted orally and in manuscript copies, and eventually made their way into print collections. The Swiss Brethren tradition claims the *Ausbund* (1583), justly famous as the oldest hymnal in continuous use in Christendom; the Old Order Amish still sing selections from the *Ausbund* in their worship services.²⁹ Although the *Ausbund* and its printed predecessor, “Some Beautiful Christian Songs Composed and Sung in the Prison at Passau” (1564),³⁰ both say that their hymns were written by “the Swiss” (meaning the Swiss Brethren), that is in fact not strictly true. The core of 50 hymns that were incorporated from “Some Beautiful Christian Songs” into the *Ausbund* were composed around 1536 in the dungeon prison in Passau by communal Philippites fleeing Moravia, not by Swiss

28 All three versions of “Vonn dem Christen Ban unnd außschluß der unghorsammen und bösen menschen von den frummen und glöübigen in der gmein gottes, wie unnd warumb er sölle brucht werdenn” are found in STAZ, sig. EII, 444. They were transcribed and collated by the author; translation by Sydney Penner and Arnold Snyder.

29 The earliest known edition, dated 1583, carries the title *Außund / Etlicher schöner / Christlicher Geseng....* This first edition contained 131 songs.

30 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng* (1564), facsimile print, Mennonite Songbooks, German Series, Vol. 1, general editor Irvin B. Horst (Amsterdam: Frits Knuf, n.d.). In English translation, *The Earliest Hymns of the Ausbund* (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2003).

Brethren as such. The larger *Ausbund* collection of 1583 incorporated these hymns as well as others from diverse sources, including some non-Anabaptist ones and many from non-Swiss Brethren Anabaptist writers.

The question of who might have put together the eclectic *Ausbund* collection has remained open, but the prefaces to various hymnals contain valuable clues. The printed “Some Beautiful Christian Songs” collection of 1564 has a preface that differs substantially from the preface to the *Ausbund* collection printed some 19 years later. And to complicate the picture, the earliest Anabaptist hymnal to use the word *Ausbund* in its title (ca. 1555) features a third distinct preface.³¹ In chapter IX all three prefaces are translated for the first time, so that readers may note differences and similarities in tone and content. It is striking how similar in tone the later *Ausbund* preface is, in its open and nonpartisan approach, to the tolerance-promoting literature circulating among the Swiss Brethren in the 1580s and 1590s. This may provide an important clue to the provenance of the *Ausbund* collection.

The year 1585 marked a turn to more severe action against the Anabaptists in Zurich, Bern, and Basel, with new mandates marking renewed magisterial resolve to stamp out the baptizing movement. Chapter X translates the reply of anonymous Anabaptists to the 1585 Bernese mandate.³² The letter is directed to the magistrates of that city and argues the case for toleration of Anabaptists as loyal subjects who simply understand Scripture differently. It is a moving apology, although in the end it did not succeed in swaying the magistrates to a milder position.

Chapters XI, XII, and XIII deal with *Codex 628*, a bound manuscript copied in 1590, covering 466 handwritten pages.³³ The Codex is found in the

31 “Ein außbundt, Schöner geistlicher Lieder auß dem Alten vnd Newen Testament zu samen getragen, Zu trost den Christgleubigen, mit nothwendigen Concordantzen, Für die einfeltigen einem yeglichen geseng nach zu suchen, Zeugnuß der schrift” (Cologne, ca. 1555). Thanks to Martin Rothkegel for generously forwarding the basic information and an image of the title page of this book. Also noted in R. Wolkan, *Die Lieder der Wiedertäufer* (Nieuwkoop: de Graaf, 1965), 118, n. 1.

32 Original document in STAZ, EII, 443, 105-110: “Abschrift der Teufferen brieff an ein Herschafft zu Bern gesendt den 18. Decemb. Anno 1585.” Transcription by Arnold Snyder; translation by Walter Klaassen and Arnold Snyder.

33 “Ein kurtze einfaltige erkanntnuß uff die dryzehen artickell so verlouffens 1572 (sic) Jars zu Franckenthal in der Pfaltz disputiert worden, allen der warheitt begierigen Gottsgeliepten / on fleysch partheyischen hertzen ze erwegen und

Burgerbibliothek at Bern; it was transcribed by the author and translated by a team consisting of Leonard Gross, Abraham Friesen, Walter Klaassen, and the author. Chapter XI is introductory, providing an overview of the Codex as a whole in some detail. Chapter XII contains a translation of the first of the two discrete writings that make up the Codex, a writing called “A Short, Simple Confession,” of which a much shorter, edited version was submitted to the Zurich authorities in 1588.³⁴ The “Simple Confession” is a detailed defense of Anabaptist beliefs structured around the 13 points argued at the Frankenthal Disputation of 1571 in the Palatinate.³⁵

Chapter XIII is a translation of the second discrete writing contained in *Codex* 628. It is called “Concerning Separation. Why we do not attend preaching at the papal, Lutheran and Zwinglian churches.”³⁶ The only previously known version of this writing is a copy published by Heinrich Bullinger in 1560, as part of his anti-Anabaptist polemic *Der Widertöufferen ursprung*. Bullinger reproduced a tract that appears to have been composed around 1546.³⁷ The 1590 copy translated in this present collection more than doubles the length of Bullinger’s print in an apparent expansion of the original. Our translation identifies the shared and unshared parts of these

urtheyllen heimgestellt...,” found in *Codex* 628 of the Berner Burgerbibliothek. Microfilm copy in the Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, microfilm #203.

- 34 The “Short, Simple Confession” covers the first 366 pages of *Codex* 628, transcribed by the author. The first half of this writing was translated by Leonard Gross; the second half was translated by Abraham Friesen. A printed edition of the redacted Zurich version of the “Simple Confession” is found in Leu and Scheidegger, *Zürcher Täufer*, 335-402.
- 35 The Protocol of the Frankenthal debate was published as *Protocoll. Das ist / Alle Handlung des Gesprechs zu Franckenthal inn der Churfürstlichen Pfaltz / mit denen so man Widertäufer nennet / Auff den 28. May angefangen / und den 19 Junij dises 1571 jars geendet* (Frankenthal, 1571).
- 36 *Codex* 628, 369-466; transcribed by Arnold Snyder; translated by Arnold Snyder and Walter Klaassen.
- 37 Heinrich Bullinger, *Der Widertöufferen ursprung/fürgang/Secten...etc.* (Zurich: Christoffel Froschower, 1561; photo-reprint, Leipzig, 1975), 214r-231r. Critical edition in Heinold Fast, ed., QGTS, II, Ostschweiz, 141-65. An English translation of Bullinger’s much shorter text was published as “Answer of Some who are called (Ana)Baptists, why they do not attend the Churches,” Shem Peachey and Paul Peachey, trans. and ed., MQR 45 (January 1971), 5-32. A new translation of the 1590 copy was prepared.

prints, making it possible to see what the later Anabaptist copyists saw fit to emphasize and highlight some fifty years after the composition of the original tract.

The penultimate writing in the collection is a “Supplication” written in 1589 by the long-time Anabaptist Andreas Gut, presented in chapter XIV.³⁸ He appealed for toleration yet one more time from the Zurich magistrates. Coming as it does on the heels of the 1588 submission of a shortened version of the “Simple Confession” to the Zurich authorities, and sounding many of the same themes, it appeared that Gut might have had something to do with the 1588 writing.³⁹ It has now been established, on the basis of an analysis of Gut’s handwriting, that he did not personally copy or edit the Zurich version of the “Simple Confession.”⁴⁰ Its origins have not yet been established. As a kind of footnote to Gut’s appeal to the Zurich magistrates, we have appended some notes for a reply from the hand of Johann Rudolf Stumpf, the head of the Zurich church. In those notes the influence of Heinrich Bullinger’s line of anti-Anabaptist reasoning can be seen quite clearly.

This collection of writings from Swiss Anabaptists will provide attentive readers new perspectives on the baptizing movement in Switzerland in the last half of the sixteenth century. Obviously there was much more going on among the baptizers in Switzerland than simply repeated defenses of the Schleithem Articles, although Schleithem’s emphatic separatism is stoutly defended repeatedly in writings throughout the century. At the same time, the documents reveal a separatism increasingly tempered by an evident desire to integrate further with the surrounding world. The appeals to authorities that they tolerate the baptizers as “dissenting loyal subjects” demonstrate a different mentality than do earlier stark calls for abandoning all that does not stand within “the perfection of Christ.” The writings published here add more depth and further nuance to the story of

38 Found in STAZ, EII, 443, 110v-114. Transcribed and translated by the author.

39 This was Bergmann’s mistaken conclusion and my own. Cf. Bergmann, *Täuferbewegung*, 61; Arnold Snyder, “The (Not-so) ‘Simple Confession’ of the Later Swiss Brethren,” MQR 73 (October 1999), 678; 683.

40 See Leu and Scheidegger, *Zürcher Täufer*, 336.

the Swiss baptizers of the later sixteenth century, even if they do not begin to answer all the questions one might have.⁴¹

41 It is my intention to publish a succinct history of Anabaptism in the Swiss territories in the near future, God willing. This work is already well underway, but not yet ready for publication. It will serve as a companion volume to this present collection of sources.

I

Martin Weninger, Regarding Church Attendance and Separation (Before 1535)¹

INTRODUCTION

Martin Weninger (also known as Ling, Lingky, or Lincki) first appears in the Anabaptist record in a document dated November 18, 1525. The entry reads: “Marthy Ling from Schaffhausen and Michael Sattler from Staufen in the Breisgau are to be released upon the swearing of an oath of loyalty and the payment of costs.”² This link between Sattler and Weninger remained over the next decade, as Weninger taught and promoted Sattler’s Schleithem ecclesiology in eastern Swiss territories until 1535.

The event that appears to have brought Martin Weninger and Michael Sattler to Zurich was the second public disputation on baptism, held in Zurich from November 6 to 8, 1525.³ That disputation was declared to have been won by the Zurich preachers. The Zurich authorities declared that those who were baptizing adults, and refusing to have children baptized, were to desist.⁴ Those who refused to conform and swear obedience to the authorities were sentenced to an indefinite term in the tower. Conrad Grebel, Felix Mantz, and George Blaurock, who had argued the Anabaptist case publically at the disputation, were sentenced to imprisonment on November 18; Margret Hottinger was also to be placed in prison if she

1 Original in QGTS, II, #141, 108-13; English translation by J. C. Wenger, “Martin Weninger’s vindication of Anabaptism, 1535,” MQR 22 (July 1948), 180-87; edited with permission.

2 QGTS, I, #133, 136.

3 For the following, see C. Arnold Snyder, *The Life and Thought of Michael Sattler* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1984), 79-83.

4 Testimonies by those concerned in QGTS, I, #120-#124, 120-28.

refused to obey milords. She refused, and was also imprisoned in the tower.⁵

Following these notices of sentencing and imprisonment of the Zurich citizens, the same Zurich court record notes the expulsion and swearing out of the non-citizens Ulrich Teck, Martin Weninger, and Michael Sattler. Of the three, only Teck had a record of previous Anabaptist activity; Weninger and Sattler appear to have been interested and involved bystanders at this point in their lives—but clearly, in the eyes of the authorities, they were interested enough in the movement that it warranted arrest and an expulsion order requiring an oath. Although neither Sattler nor Weninger was prepared to defend the Anabaptist position in November 1525, both would become leaders in the early Swiss Anabaptist movement, with Sattler eventually demonstrating the ultimate commitment of martyrdom as witness to his beliefs—something Weninger would not be able to do.

Michael Sattler, the former Benedictine prior of St. Peter's of the Black Forest, was responsible for framing the Schleithem Articles in 1527, which gave a strong ethical, pacifist, non-swearing, and separatist direction to the fledgling baptizing movement.⁶ On the verge of emerging as an important leader among the Swiss Anabaptists, he was arrested soon after the Schleithem gathering (by March 18, 1527⁷), tried, savagely tortured, and executed by fire by the Austrian authorities on May 20, 1527; his wife Margaretha was drowned two days later.⁸

Martin Weninger was a weaver from the Swiss village of Thayngen in the Schaffhausen region of northern Switzerland. He became an Anabaptist and a leader sometime after his November recantation and departure from Zurich in 1525.⁹ He was active in the regions bounded by Basel,¹⁰ Strasbourg, Bern, and Solothurn.¹¹ Given his home territory in the Schaffhausen region,

5 QGTS, I, #136, 136.

6 Translation in John H. Yoder, *The Legacy of Michael Sattler* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1973), 34-43.

7 Snyder, *Life and Thought*, 100.

8 For these events, see Snyder, *Life and Thought*, 100-104.

9 Biographical information from Heinold Fast, QGTS, II, #33, n. 1, 41.

10 QGTS, II, 575, n. 16 places Weninger in Basel in 1529 and 1530.

11 At the time of Weninger's arrest in Schaffhausen, November 1535, the Solothurn authorities reported by letter that he had been in their territory "for a long time" (*ein gutte zytte in unser landtschafft hin und wider gewandlett...*), QGTS, II,

and his expulsion with Michael Sattler, he was a likely participant at the Schleithem gathering in 1527; his own Anabaptism certainly was shaped by Schleithem, as is evident in his later public statements and writings.

In 1532 Weninger emerged as the leading Anabaptist spokesperson at the Zofingen disputation,¹² along with Hans Hotz.¹³ As the transcript of the disputation makes clear, Weninger defended an Anabaptist position informed by the Schleithem Articles, in virtually all of its details, but particularly in his understanding of the separated nature of the “true church.”¹⁴ Sometime before 1535 he composed his “Vindication” (*Rechenschaft*) of Anabaptist separation, the document translated below.

In early November 1535, Weninger was arrested with other Anabaptists in Schaffhausen, and was brought to recantation. In his testimony he revealed that he had not been allowed to preach or teach by his community because he had sworn an oath in Baden some two years earlier, that is, around 1533.¹⁵ As part of his sentence he was to publically recant in both Schaffhausen churches, as well as in the church at Schleithem; the recantations of his fellow imprisoned Anabaptists followed quickly.¹⁶

Although Weninger did eventually recant, his “Vindication” of separation remains an excellent example of how Schleithem separatism was shaping Swiss Anabaptist ecclesiology in the mid-1530s. In fact, when the “Vindication” and the Preface to *Etliche schöne Geseng* (1564) are read together, it is evident that they are cut from identical cloth, even down to the sequence of the biblical positions and arguments presented. Weninger’s writing, then, provides us with a reference point for a Schleithem-

#152, 120; for his activity in Solothurn, including an arrest in December 1530, and banishment in January 1531, see QGTS, III, #871, #892, #895, #908.

12 For the transcript of the Zofingen disputation, see QGTS, IV, 69-256; short summary in Yoder, *Anabaptism and Reformation*, 102-106; a more detailed description in Snyder, “The Birth and Evolution of Swiss Anabaptism,” 501-645, on Zofingen and Weninger in particular, 610-14.

13 For a biographical sketch of Hans Hotz, noting sources, see Snyder, “Birth and Evolution,” 611, n. 446.

14 Details reviewed in Snyder, “Birth and Evolution,” 612-14.

15 QGTS II, 116.

16 On Weninger’s arrest, testimony, and trial, see QGTS, II, 114-20; 123-25, *passim*. His recantation on December 5, 1535 is reported in *ibid.*, #159 and #160, 124-25. See subsequent numbers for recantation reports.

influenced, separatist Swiss Anabaptism, against which we can measure changes and modifications in the coming decades. What is outlined by Weninger sometime around 1534 is clearly a “Swiss Brethren” position, as a comparison with later confessions makes clear.

Regarding Church Attendance and Separation¹⁷ (Before November 1535)¹⁸

I, Martin Weninger, called Lingky, wish the knowledge of and obedience to the will of God, the righteousness which comes from faith in Christ and results in works (Philippians 1[:29ff?], 3[:5-14], Titus 3[:1ff], Hebrews 11[:1ff], James 2[:22]) to all who seek to worship God in the spirit, with their hearts in the truth, and to serve Him with words and works, to His praise in Christ. Amen. (Colossians 3[:16ff], 1 Corinthians 10[:31?]).

Brother Galle Hafner has admonished me to provide an account concerning the church attendance of the children of this world, who walk in the uncleanness of impure lusts just like other heathen (1 Thessalonians 4[:5], 1 Peter 1[:14] and 4[:2ff]). I am inclined to do this in order to show everyone the foundation of the hope that is within me [1 Peter 3:15].

Christ calls us to guard ourselves from the mixed teaching of the Pharisees and the perverted Scripture teachers¹⁹ who wish to be masters of Scripture but don't know what they are setting forth or saying (Matthew 16[:6], 1 Timothy 1[:7]), and teach things that are useless—just as the pastors teach useless things for shameful earnings (Titus 1[:11ff]): lazy bellies, not able to work, all with deceitful minds, just like our [state church] pastors.²⁰ David says: They teach only sin and glory in their pride and speak vain contradictions (Psalm 59[:13]), just as our [state church] pastors do now, teaching sins and strengthening [people] in sins with their frivolous teaching, as it says in Ezekiel 13[:3], Jeremiah 23[:1ff]. They minimize the harm of the wantonness of the people's life of sin (Jeremiah 8[:11], 6[:14], 2 Peter 2[:1ff]), saying peace where there is no peace and promising freedom to those who blaspheme God with their actions and walk according to the

17 Original translation by J.C. Wenger in MQR 22 (July 1948), 180-87; used with permission, and modified for publication here.

18 See QGTS II, 108, n. 1.

19 *Schriefftverkeerten*, recalling the common saying “Die Gelehrten—die Verkehrten” (The learned ones—the perverted [or “screwed up”] ones).

20 We translate *pfaffen* as “[state church] pastors.” Wenger chose to translate the term “priests,” but the persons Weninger was referring to were Reformed pastors in Swiss Protestant territories, not Catholic priests. “Clerics” or “parsons” would also be possible translations of the term.

lust and desire of their evil hearts (Jeremiah 23[:1ff], 2 Peter 2[:18ff]), and they themselves are servants of corruption and sin (Romans 6[:16ff], John 8[:34]). Those who walk in darkness and have no fellowship with the light of Christ (1 John 1[:6]) are called Christians—even pious Christians and brothers. The apostle of God calls them “children of the Devil” when he says: Whoever does what is right, is of God and has the new birth of the Spirit, but whoever does not do what is right, but commits sin, is of the Devil and not of God, because sin is not of God. Such a one has never known God and also will not see God (1 John 3[:3ff], 3[:6ff], 5[:18ff?]) and 3 John 1[:10]). Those who transgress the teaching of Christ have no God (2 John 1[:9]), and all their piety will be worth nothing (Ezekiel 18; 33[:12ff], James 2[:14ff]).

Through such evident witness it is now clear that the teaching of the [state church] pastors is not of God, and does not correspond to the teaching of Christ and the apostles. It is also no wonder that such false apostles and deceptive workers pose as the apostles of Christ. For the Devil, the god and prince of the world himself (2 Corinthians 4[:3ff], John 12[:31], 14[:30], Ephesians 2[:2ff]), poses as an angel of light. It is no wonder that his servants, who draw the wanton people to themselves (2 Peter 2[:14], Jeremiah 23[:1ff]) and strengthen them in their sins so that they are less and less disposed to repent and live (Ezekiel 13[:3ff]), also pose as preachers of righteousness. Their end will be according to their works (2 Corinthians 11[:15]).

Now when such hirelings and shepherds paid a set wage see the wolf coming, they flee and do not lay down their lives for their sheep (John 10[:12]). The little sheep of Christ will not listen to such shepherds [John 10:3]. The foolishness of such shepherds, who come as if from Christ—whether or not He sent them—will be manifested to many in the Free Territories [of Aargau], moved as these shepherds are by the seditious, blood-thirsty spirit which brought destruction in the rebellion of Korah, etc. Also many Zwinglian pastors have returned to the pope in Thurgau,²¹ ignoring how it went with those to whom they had promised their lives,

21 The common territory of Thurgau, which had undergone Zwinglian reform, began a process of re-Catholicization after the Second Kappel War (1531) between the Protestant and Catholic cantons. Zwingli lost his life in battle during this conflict. QGTS II, 109, n. 11.

and so were found to be liars (Revelation 2[:2]). Those who had not wished to recognize this must now see that it is true.

[The state preachers] teach contrary to Paul (Romans 6[:1ff]) that one cannot be free of sin and live in righteousness. [They say] that one must sin until the grave, and no one is able to keep God's commandments (1 John 3[:3ff], 5[:18]), which is not true. The apostle of God testifies that Christ bore our sins on His back so that we might be without sin and live in righteousness. How can and dare the [state church] pastors say that no one can do what is right and live without sin (John 1[:12ff], 1 Peter 2[:24], 3[:18])? Christ took away our sin and undid the work of the Devil. The work of the Devil that Christ undid is sin, the sin unto death, the death of damnation, as Paul also testifies in Hebrews 2[:14ff] that Christ took the power of eternal death away from the Devil, so that He might deliver us from sin—we who all our lives had been in fear of death and in bondage to sin. As it stands written in Titus 2[:14], He has delivered us from all kinds of unrighteousness. How would He have delivered us from the power and imprisonment of the Devil if we continued to live in sin of the Devil and had not received power, grace for grace, to oppose the Devil with a firm faith in Christ? If we who seek to be righteous through Him were still found to be living in sin, what then would we have received from Christ (Galatians 2[:17])? For He broke the bond and made captivity captive and gave gifts to all humanity, and we have been set free (Psalm 124[:7], 2 Timothy 2[:26], Ephesians 4[:8]). Sinners will not stand in the judgment of God nor remain in the congregation of the righteous (Psalm 1[:5], 5[:5-7]). Sinners will be destroyed together and be wiped out (Psalm 37[:2, 9, 20, 28], 1 Corinthians 6[:9ff], 2 Peter 2[:3ff], Matthew 7[:19], 13[:40-43, 49ff], Luke 13[:5], etc.).

Therefore, woe to the fickle and the sinners, who walk on two streets (Ecclesiastes 2, Luke 16[:13]), and woe to the one bound by and entangled in sin, for in the end such a one will be taken and burned in the fire (4 Esdras 16[:78], John 15[:6]). Now observe how the poor [state church] pastors weaken the passion of Christ and employ it for lasciviousness and a cloak of wickedness (1 Peter 2[:16], Jude 1[:2?]). Peter says: As those who are free, and yet not like those who use freedom to do evil [1 Peter 2:16]. As Paul also admonishes (Galatians 5[:1]): Stand fast in your freedom and do not cast it from you, for its reward is great (Hebrews 10[:35]), for as Jesus Christ has set you free, do not allow yourselves to be joined to the servile

yoke. For where the Spirit of Christ is, there is freedom, and the body is dead for the sake of sin (Romans 8[:10], 2 Corinthians 3[:17]). Whoever does not have the Spirit is not of Christ (Romans 8[:9]). For those who are Christ's have crucified their flesh and destroyed their evil desires by desisting from the lusts of error (Galatians 5[:24], Ephesians 4[:22]). Therefore, since the kingdom of Christ is internal (Luke 7[:21]), firmly within us, we have the grace to do God's will and serve Him, to please Him with discipline and fear (Hebrews 12[:28], Ezekiel 36[: 26ff], 1 John 5).

Since, therefore, we are under grace, sin cannot rule in our mortal bodies (Romans 6[:12]). For this reason did Christ die for all, that all who live should not live unto themselves, nor for their desires, but rather live for Him who died for us and rose from the dead (1 Corinthians 6[:14, 17?], 2 Corinthians 5[:15], 1 Thessalonians 5[:9ff]). We do not shun the light. For whoever is of God, hears God's Word (John 8[:47], 18[:37], 1 John 4[:6]). The [state church] pastors walk and are not in the light, for their works are evil (John 3[:19ff], 7[:7], 8[:12?]). For there is no darkness in light (2 Corinthians 6[:14]). It has no fellowship with darkness. Those who teach others and do not act on it themselves will soon experience the wrath of God (Romans 2[:13, 21ff], Matthew 7[:21], Luke 6[:46ff], Psalm 50[:16-21]). "Lord, we have preached..." But He will say to them: "I know you not. You have done evil (Matthew 7[:22ff]). Depart from me." Christ calls those His brethren who hear God's word and do the will of His Father [Matthew 12:50].

Dear one,²² how many today are brothers and sisters of Christ, and do God's will? Therefore your fellowship (*gemeinschaft*) is not a brother-and-sisterhood (*bruderschaft*) of Christ, for you accept as brothers and sisters adulterers, drunkards, blasphemers, misers, usurers, dancers, carnival masqueraders (*fassnechter*), alley ruffians—all without a ban to distinguish between those who do good or evil. Dear one, why is it so? For this reason: Because the [state church] pastors, who should be disciplining the people, are exactly like the people [they are to discipline] (Hosea 4[:9ff]). Therefore Paul teaches and admonishes us that we should purify ourselves from such people (2 Timothy 2[:21]), for we are not to be in fellowship with the Devil (1 Corinthians 10[:20]). The Devil has fellowship with those who obey him in sin. But he flees from those who

22 Reference to the recipient of the writing, probably the state church clergyman Galle Hafner. So John C. Wenger, MQR 22 (July 1948), 184, n. 29.

resist him (James 4[:7], 1 Peter 5[:8ff]). David says: I do not dwell with wanton people, nor have fellowship with hypocrites; I hate the assembly of the wicked (Psalm 26[:4ff]).

Now since they do not preach the teaching of Christ, and do not agree with the saving words of the doctrine of godliness, Paul teaches us that we are to shun them (1 Timothy 6[:3-5], Romans 16[:17]). For it is possible for them to turn many away from the faith, such as Philetus and Hymeneus, of whom Paul teaches us to keep clear (2 Timothy 2[:17]). Do not receive anyone into your house, nor greet anyone, who does not bring the teaching of Christ (2 John 1[:10ff]). Whoever greets such a person has fellowship with that person's evil works. How should I follow him into a temple or to other places when, if he were to follow me, I should have nothing to do with him so as not to have part in his evil works? A teacher should be an example to his flock in love, faith, purity and good works, and care for the sheep (John 10[:4], 1 Timothy 4[:12], 3[:2ff], 2 Timothy 1[:13], Titus 2[:7], 1 Peter 5[:3], Matthew 5[:20?]). This is completely lacking among them, as the Scriptures testify. Who should regard such people as God's apostles, when they lack the witness of an apostle? Now it is evident that the [state church] pastors have neither the doctrine nor the manner of life of apostles, and yet they say they are apostles and that the Lord is with them.

They say that the Gospel is a burden that no one is able to bear, contrary to the words of Jeremiah 23[:38]: You shall not call my Word a burden. For Christ says (Matthew 11[:30]): My yoke is sweet; my burden is light. John testifies: His commandments are not heavy (1 John 5[:3]). And we keep His commandments, and do what is pleasing before Him (1 John 3[:33]). He is the one who has made us acceptable, and who works in us both the willing and the doing (2 Corinthians 5[:5, 18], 3[:5], Philippians 2[:13], Ezekiel 36). He has created and prepared us for good works, so that we may walk in them (Ephesians 2[:10]). Therefore the power and all the glory belong to God alone (2 Corinthians 4[:7]), Daniel 9. Christ teaches us to beware of the deceivers of this world, for if it were possible they would mislead even the elect (Matthew 24[:4], 2 Peter 3[:17]). Paul [was] an apostle of Jesus Christ, sent of God alone, not from men or through men (Galatians 1[:1]). The rulers of the world have elected the [state church] pastors and sent them out for a specific wage. Therefore they are of the world, and the world listens to them (1 John 4[:5]). In

this way what Paul prophesied is fulfilled (2 Timothy 4[:3ff]): They will choose teachers for themselves who will tickle their ears, and they will not hear the truth, the saving teaching of Christ, as also now the sect of the Nazarenes is spoken against everywhere (Acts 24[:14], 28[:22]). John says [1 John 1:6]: Those who say that they have fellowship with Christ and still walk in darkness, that is, in sin (Ephesians 5[:8ff]), lie and do not speak the truth. Therefore the [state church] pastors tickle their ears with lies in that they attribute to them the name and fellowship of Christ while they nevertheless still walk in darkness. And Paul testifies that He is the cause of salvation for those who obey His will in His death or suffering (Hebrews 5, 1 Thessalonians 5).

Those who hold fast to the beginning of the nature of Christ (as He has imparted His nature in the things of those who are God's, from their youth until the end of their lives)—they are the ones who become a part of Christ (Hebrews 3[:14]). Therefore Christ says: Those who endure to the end (Matthew 10[:22]) will be saved. But not with wrongdoing, rather with doing good, as it says in Ezekiel 18. But those who persist in wrongdoing until the end Christ calls false Christians and false apostles who mislead many (Matthew 24[:4ff]). Paul also testifies: Evil people and seducers will go from bad to worse, misleading others and allowing themselves to be misled (2 Timothy 3[:13]). It is true that they say they know God, and yet they are disobedient and an abomination before God, unfit for all good works (Titus 1[:16], 1 John 1[:6ff], 2[:4]). They are the ones who love the sensual pleasures of the temporal life more than God, have no love of the good, and give the appearance of a godly manner of life, but deny its power (2 Timothy 3[:4ff]). Paul admonishes us to turn away from such a painted-on faith.

Concerning separation read: 2 Corinthians 6[:14ff], Revelation 18[:4], Acts 19[:9], Ephesians 5[:11], 2 Timothy 2[:19ff], 1 Peter 4[:4], John 15[:18ff]. One is to separate oneself from their evil works, and not from the world, insofar as one may keep oneself from being soiled by them (1 Corinthians 5[:10], James 2[:21, 27], 2 Peter 1; 4, Ephesians 4[:17ff]). The preaching of the [state church] pastors, when they testify from the pulpit, is also an unfruitful work. No preaching helps; the more time passes, the worse things get; no one improves. The testimony, that the wrong is getting the upper hand, is also true of the [state church]

pastors (Matthew 24[:12]). Just as the Lord said of the time of Lot and Noah, so it is in this land [Luke 17:26-30]; may He come when He will.

Now you have the testimony that the [state church] pastors and Christ and His apostles do not share one teaching. For the pastors speak vain contradictions, as has been noted and adequately proven on the basis of the truth. Paul teaches us to judge spiritual things spiritually, and not according to their appearance (1 Corinthians 2[:12]) and not as the Jews did (John 7[:1]). Those who live and are minded in a carnal way cannot apprehend God's ways or the things of the Spirit. Such things are foolishness and riddles to carnal people; they cannot know them, for they are things that must be judged spiritually. Therefore let all persons see to it that they not judge what is not given to them to judge, and blaspheme (1 Peter 2[:1]) what they do not understand, to their own condemnation and the reward that unrighteousness brings with it.

If something is from God, all humankind cannot bring it down; but if it is not from God, it will disappear of its own accord (Acts 5[:38ff], Matthew 15[:13]). Those of Zurich²³ did not wish to be lords, and it cost them their land. They had to be torn up by the roots; also those from Basel. But look, it is turning green again in their land first. If the Lord had not been with us they would have swallowed us alive, Psalm 124[:2ff], and our bones would be no more. Our shield and protector is God [Psalm 129, 144]. We overcome our enemies through the faith and patience of Christ, following the example of Christ. All glory and honor be to God alone in His congregation (*gemeinde*) in Christ Jesus. Amen.

God's seal: 2 Timothy 2[:19].

To do the right thing out of fear of God is pleasing to God (Acts 10[:35] etc.).

23 Both Wenger and Fast agree that this reference and the sentences following refer to the nonresistant Swiss Anabaptists, and the persecution they had endured in Swiss territories. Cf. MQR 22 (July 1948), 187, n. 53 and QGTS II, 113, n. 20.

Shucks.

You have reached the end
of this preview. But don't worry,
you can get the complete book at
www.plough.com