

***Sources of South German/Austrian
Anabaptism***

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.

Sources of South German/Austrian Anabaptism

Translated by
Walter Klaassen, Frank Friesen
and Werner O. Packull
Edited with an Introduction by
C. Arnold Snyder



PLOUGH PUBLISHING HOUSE

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: 978-0-874-86274-4

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data pending.

This is a preview. Get the entire book here.

***Dedicated
with affection to
past and present colleagues at
Conrad Grebel University College***

***but especially to
John E. Toews
for hope and direction,
enabling
a community at work***

Contents

1 Jörg Haugk von Jüchsen	A Christian Order of a True Christian: Giving an Account of the Origin of his Faith (1524)	1
2 Hans Hut	Comparing and Interpreting Divine Scripture: A Christian Instruction given in the power of the Holy Spirit together with the three parts of Christian Faith and how they are to be understood (1527)	21
3 Hans Hergot	Concerning the New Transformation of Christian Living (1527)	35
4 Ambrosius Spitelmaier	Questions and Answers of Ambrosius Spitelmaier (1527)	50
5 Leonhard Schiemer	Letter to the Church of God at Rattenberg (1527)	64
6 Hans Schlaffer	A Brief Instruction for the Beginning of a Truly Christian Life & Confession and Defence (1528)	81
7 Eitelhans Langenmantel	An Anonymous Anabaptist Sermon & An Exposition of the Lord's Prayer (ca. 1527)	110
8 Anonymous (Simon Schneeweiss?)	Theological Refutation of Anabaptist Teaching (1528)	121
9 Lamprecht Penntz	Recantation Procedures (1528)	129
10 Ursula Hellrigel	<i>Ausbund</i> , the 36 th Song	132
11 Hans Nadler	Declaration of the Needle Merchant Hans at Erlangen and the Refutation of the Articles of the Needle Merchant Hans (1529)	136
12 Wolfgang Brandhuber	A Letter from our Dear Brother and Servant of Jesus Christ, Wolfgang Brandhuber to the Church of God at Rattenberg on the Inn (1529)	155

13 Jörg Zaunring	A Short Interpretation of the Last Supper of Christ Presented as a Conversation between the World and a Christian to the Honour and Glory of God (ca. 1530)	163
14 Andreas Althamer & Johann Rurer	Instruction Concerning Anabaptists (1530)	171
15 Georg Gross Pfersfelder	Georg Gross, called Pfersfelder, to Hans von Seckendorf. Concerning Persecution of Anabaptists (1531)	185
16 Katharina Hutter	Testimony of Katharina Hutter, Given before December 3, 1535, at Klausen	191
17 Endres Keller	Confession of the prisoner, Anabaptist Endres Keller (Kentlein) in Rothenburg (1536)	196
18 Urbanus Rhegius	Justification for the Prosecution of Anabaptists (1536)	213
19 Sebastian Franck	Sebastian Franck on the Anabaptists (1536)	228
20 Anonymous	Anonymous Hutterite Leaders to Mathes Hasenhan (1538)	253
21 Trieste Brethren	Confession of the Brethren, Taken to Trieste as Prisoners (1539)	259
22 Hans Umlauf	A Letter to Stephan Rauchenecker (1539)	277
23 Helena von Freyberg	Helena von Freyberg, Confession on Account of her Sin (1539-45)	287
24 Paul Glock	Letter to his Wife Else (1563)	294
25 Paul Glock	First Defense (1563)	309
26 Paul Glock	Letter to Leonhard Lanzenstiel (1563)	325
27 Paul Glock	Letter to Peter Walpot (1566)	329
28 Paul Glock	Letter to Peter Walpot (1567)	335
29 Paul Glock	Letter to Peter Walpot (1569)	340
30 Paul Glock	Letter to Peter Walpot (1569)	344

viii / Sources of South German/Austrian Anabaptism

31 Paul Glock	Letter to Peter Walpot (1571)	348
32 Paul Glock	Letter to the Church in Moravia (1573)	354
33 Walpurga von Pappenheim	<i>Ausbund</i> , Song 75 (ca. 1571)	362
34 Hans Schmidt	Experiences of a Hutterite Missionary in Württemberg (1590)	366
Notes		381
Index of Names and Places		408
Scripture Index		412

Abbreviations

Bossert, *Quellen I*: Gustav Bossert, *Quellen zur Geschichte der Wiedertäufer, I. Band. Herzogtum Württemberg* (Leipzig, 1930).

Chronicle I: The Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren vol. I (Rifton, N.Y.: Plough Publishing House, 1987).

Chronicle II: The Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren vol. II (Ste. Agathe, MB: Friesen Printers, 1998).

Franck, *Chronica*: Sebastian Franck, *Chronica, Zeitbuch unnd Geschichtbibell...* (Ulm, 1536; Photo reprint edition, Darmstadt, 1969).

Franz, *Quellen IV*: Günther Franz, *Urkundliche Quellen zur hessischen Reformationsgeschichte, IV. Band, Wiedertäuferakten* (Marburg, 1951).

ME: Mennonite Encyclopedia. 5 vols. (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1955-59, 1990).

ML: Mennonitisches Lexikon. Vols. 1-3 (Frankfurt a.M. and Weierhof, 1913-42, 1958); Vol. 4 (Karlsruhe: Heinrich Schneider, 1967).

MQR: Mennonite Quarterly Review.

Müller, *Glaubenszeugnisse*: Lydia Müller, *Glaubenszeugnisse oberdeutscher Taufgesinnter, I* (Leipzig, 1938).

Schornbaum, *Quellen II*: Karl Schornbaum, ed., *Quellen zur Geschichte der Wiedertäufer, II. Band. Markgraftum Brandenburg (Bayern, I. Abteilung)* (Leipzig, 1934).

Schornbaum, *Quellen V*: Karl Schornbaum, ed., *Quellen zur Geschichte der Wiedertäufer, V. Band. (Bayern, II. Abteilung)* (Gütersloh, 1951).

General Editor's Preface

In the last several decades the Institute of Mennonite Studies has been involved in the publication of primary source materials of Radical Reformation and free church documents through its *Classics of the Radical Reformation* (CRR) series. This tenth volume in the series continues an important tradition of providing translations in the English language, which are intended to be faithful to the original documents, yet readable and accessible to a wide audience.

Sources of South German/Austrian Anabaptism is a significant contribution to Reformation studies. In recent years scholars have emphasized the diverse nature of the origins and development of sixteenth-century radical reform in general and Anabaptism in particular. The present volume underscores this growing awareness. It unveils an important current of Anabaptist thought and piety, and sheds light on a stream of spiritualist writings that have been underrepresented in translation collections.

Gratitude for making these writings available to the English-speaking world goes to the editor, C. Arnold Snyder, and to the primary translators Walter Klaassen, Frank Friesen, and Werner Packull. Appreciation is also due to the sponsoring institution of the Institute of Mennonite Studies, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary of Elkhart, Indiana. Finally, special thanks must go to Pandora Press Canada for its commitment to publishing this volume, which we trust will make a contribution to both the church and the academy.

Karl Koop, Editor, CRR
Institute of Mennonite Studies

Editor's Acknowledgments

This collection of translated sources had its own peculiar genesis and development, as do all projects of this kind. A core of documents published here dates back to a publication done twenty years ago by the Institute of Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies, Conrad Grebel University College. The collection, entitled *Sixteenth Century Anabaptism: Defences, Confessions, Refutations* (1981), was translated by Frank Friesen and edited by Walter Klaassen. The book contained some rare and valuable material, but it was published as a bound typescript volume, intended for very limited circulation. The book was soon out of print. One of the first projects undertaken by Pandora Press in the mid-1990s was to make preparations to republish the Friesen/Klaassen collection. Thanks to Sam Steiner and the IAMS, permission was granted to proceed with the project, and IAMS has continued its support throughout.

The tasks of scanning and proofreading followed, with Linda Snyder doing the work of converting the material into a workable digital format. At this early point in the project, the intention was to reprint the original book in the *Anabaptist Texts in Translation* series, published by Pandora Press. As work on *Sixteenth Century Anabaptism* continued, however, the germ of a larger project began to take shape. Most of the documents in the Friesen/Klaassen collection related to the early South German/Austrian Anabaptist stream. Translated documentation from the earliest years of this movement was generally unavailable. Could material be added to make the collection more broadly representative of South German/Austrian Anabaptism?

The edition of Anabaptist documents edited by Lydia Müller, *Glaubenszeugnisse oberdeutscher Taufgesinnter* (Leipzig: Nachfolger, 1938; Johnson Reprint, 1971) offered important South German/

Austrian materials hitherto unavailable in English, and consultation with Walter Klaassen and Werner Packull resulted in a proposal for an enlarged and more comprehensive collection of documents. Walter Klaassen agreed to do a series of new translations for the larger collection; Werner Packull worked with his student, Mary Buck, in preparing a translation of Jörg Haugk von Jüchsen's pamphlet; and John Roth, editor of the Mennonite Quarterly Review, extended permission for the inclusion of two pamphlets translated by J. C. Wenger and published some years ago in that journal. Thanks is due to them all for their hard work and cooperation—but especially to Walter Klaassen, who did the lion's share of the new translation work and from his retirement has graciously donated his linguistic gifts and historical expertise to this and other translation projects.

The expanded collection, under its present title, was proposed to the *Classics of the Radical Reformation* editorial board, and accepted for publication in that series. Thanks to the Institute of Mennonite Studies, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, for its continued support of the task of making available radical reformation texts in English. Thanks go also to Karl Koop, editor of the series, for his logistical and editorial help throughout. This volume is being co-published with Herald Press, Scottdale, Pennsylvania. Their cooperation and support has enabled the continuation of the historic connection with the original publishers of the CRR series.

The provenance of individual translations in this volume is identified at the foot of each new chapter page. The designation "Friesen/Klaassen" indicates material taken from *Sixteenth Century Anabaptism: Defences, Confessions, Refutations*. The original translations were reviewed, revised and corrected, as needed, by the editor for publication in this volume; the essential work, however, remains that of Friesen and Klaassen. Four items contained in the original Friesen/Klaassen volume are not included in the present collection for editorial reasons, namely a brief letter by Melchior Rinck (#8 in Friesen/Klaassen), a letter by Hans Schmidt and Wolf Kürschner (#9 in Friesen/Klaassen), an apology by Georg Schnabel (#11), and a confession by Peter Tasch (#14). The latter two writings were excluded because they represent writings from the Melchiorite tradition, rather than the South German/Austrian tradition. It is hoped that they can be included in a collection of early Melchiorite writings, still in the planning stages at the present time. The two tracts by Langenmantel, translated by J. C. Wenger and previously published in the *MQR*, were substantially re-

worked and revised by the editor; they are, in effect, new translations. Further additions to the collection were five relevant items previously published elsewhere. Two items in our collection were translated originally by Linda Huebert Hecht (#9, 23), two by Pamela Klassen (#10, 33), and one by Elfriede Lichdi (#16). They were first published in C. Arnold Snyder and Linda H. Hecht, *Profiles of Anabaptist Women* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996). They are reprinted here with the kind permission of WLU Press.

A large thank you goes to Galen Peters, graduate student in history, Wilfrid Laurier University. Galen spent the summer of 2001 working at Pandora Press, researching and writing introductory material for this volume, laying out the manuscript, and preparing the scriptural and general indices. Galen's work was subsidized by a generous grant from the Jubilee Charitable Trust, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Our final thanks is reserved for Dr. Robert L. Kruse, trustee of the Jubilee Charitable Trust, for his enthusiastic support of Anabaptist publishing. The "private" support of a public project such as this is a model that, one hopes, will be emulated by others.

It is fitting that a volume dedicated to writings by and about the South German/Austrian Anabaptists—the most "communal" of the Anabaptist groups—should itself have been the result of such a clearly communal effort.

C. Arnold Snyder, editor
August 26, 2001

Introduction

Dating from studies in the 1960s and 1970s, the sixteenth-century beginnings of three primary baptizing groups—Swiss Anabaptists, South German/Austrian Anabaptists, and North German/Dutch Anabaptists—have been identified and described in some detail.¹ Of the three original Anabaptist groups, the Swiss and the South German/Austrian Anabaptists stand closest in time, geography, and mutual influence, even though there are distinct emphases in the original teachings of each. The baptism of adults began in January 1525 in Zürich; its initial appearance in South German territories is not as well documented, but there is evidence of baptizing activity about one year later. North German/Dutch Anabaptism began only in 1530, with the baptism and missionary activity of Melchior Hoffmann. North German/Dutch Anabaptism developed in northern Europe with little visible influence from the Swiss and South German/Austrian movements. In the second half of the sixteenth century—well after these groups had matured and developed beyond their original peculiarities and particular emphases—more contacts developed between the baptizers in the south and the north, with Mennonite influence from the north predominating in these later exchanges.

Historians have noted significant diversity among the earliest Anabaptists in geography, levels of social involvement, faith emphases, and church practices. At the same time, there is also the recognition that along with diverse points of origin and emphasis, the various baptizers also exhibited fundamental commonalities that allow us to speak of a sixteenth century “baptizing movement” as such.² To contemporaries of the Anabaptists, their most obvious common teaching

was their uniform opposition to infant baptism and their insistence that baptism was to be reserved for adults, following a sincere confession of faith. Among other common emphases visible to the historian are the celebration of a memorial Lord's Supper (as opposed to maintaining a "real presence of Christ" in the elements), belief in the freedom of the human will as a result of God's grace, the conviction that saving faith is the result of the Holy Spirit's activity in the heart, and must include the "fruits" of discipleship and obedience (as a result of God's grace, not by human effort alone), a practice of fraternal admonition (discipline) among members, and a concern for economic sharing and solidarity with the believing community as visible evidence of one's faith in Christ. As the movement matured over the course of the sixteenth century, more points of consensus emerged among the baptizers, for example, that no oaths were to be sworn (only "yes" and "no" were to be used) and that believers were to live without recourse to weapons (*Wehrlosigkeit*).

The documents collected in this volume are writings that emerged from, or that relate directly to the South German/Austrian Anabaptist grouping, that is, the second geographical and ideological wave of the sixteenth century baptizing movement.³ The geographical boundaries of the South German/Austrian baptizing movement are imprecise, and shift over time. In spite of important points of genesis in Thuringia and the Tyrol, a significant early presence in South German imperial cities like Nuremberg and Augsburg, and refugee membership extending from Silesia to the Rhineland, the geographical core of the movement came to be located in Moravia. Moravia was the place of refuge for many thousands of Anabaptists in the sixteenth century, and was the particular location for the growth and development of the South German/Austrian branch of the baptizing movement.

There is no one document in this collection that, taken by itself, summarizes the birth and development of this branch of Anabaptism. Taken collectively, however, the documents translated here provide important avenues for understanding this unique group of "baptizing brothers and sisters in the Lord" that was active in the south-central regions of Europe.

Looked at in terms of genre, the collection of sources published here contains an eclectic variety of material, well representing the kind of documentation available to historians of this branch of Anabaptism.

—*Edifying treatises and letters.* Some of the writings collected here were composed primarily for the edification of others (#1, 2, 3, 7, 13,

20, 22). Of these, two (#1, 3) date from the pre-Anabaptist period, and illustrate the continuity that existed between the baptizing movement and some of the currents of reform that preceded it.

—*Prison Documents.* By far the most numerous in our collection are Anabaptist writings originating in various prisons, reflecting the reality of religious persecution. The “prison documents” include judicial records of prisoners’ replies to questioning (#4, 11, 16, 17) and epistles and treatises written in prison, intended for the edification of the communities (#5, 6, 12, 24-32). The collection also contains a complete confession of faith written in prison by a group of prisoners (#21).

—*Hymns.* Hymns were an important means of communication for the Anabaptists. They generally borrowed well-known melodies (secular as well as sacred) and composed verses to be sung to these tunes. The hymns functioned as memorials and reminders of historical events—above all, of the martyrdoms of brothers and sisters in the faith. The stories (and the teaching hymns) all served didactic purposes, all the more practical as a medium because of the aid to memorization provided by rhyming couplets set to music. Two hymns are included in our collection (#10, 33). This is a disproportionately small number, relative to the number of hymns actually composed and preserved in the sixteenth century, but will provide readers with a sense of this important genre of Anabaptist documentation.

—*Refutations and defences written by non-Anabaptists.* The collection also contains writings composed by opponents of the South German/Austrian Anabaptists, intended to refute Anabaptist teachings and practices (#8, 11-B, 14, 18). Also included are two writings composed by non-Anabaptists that portray them in a less polemical light, and plead for toleration (#15, 19).

—Finally, rounding out the collection are sources that defy easy classification, but that shed valuable light on the movement. Included here is a translation of the recantation procedures applied in Hapsburg territories (#9), a letter of inquiry from Hutterite leaders to an Anabaptist outside Moravia (#20), a confession by an Anabaptist woman directed to her fellow church members (#23), and the reminiscences of a Hutterite missionary (#34).

Emphases common to all Anabaptists will be plain to see in these writings, but also visible will be the particular emphases that marked the South German/Austrian movement both in its historical origins and in its subsequent development. Of particular interest is the role played by late medieval mysticism in shaping the spiritualism visible

in early South German/Austrian Anabaptism—a connection to an earlier spirituality that is less clearly evident in other branches of Anabaptism. A second particular mark of early South German/Austrian Anabaptism is its emphasis on the nearness of the End Times. Anabaptism in south-central Europe began in the midst of a heightened apocalyptic consciousness, in the shadow of the great Peasants' War. Its baptizing practices were shaped initially by apocalypticism. A third feature that will be evident in our collection of documents is the subsequent movement away from apocalyptically-inspired itinerant ministries, toward settled communities. As the movement matured, and apocalyptic predictions proved false, it became more and more important to establish faithful communities that could survive in the longer run. The growing importance, over time, of a congregational mentality and polity, and the apparent influence of the Swiss Brethren in this regard, will also be visible in the documents collected here. Finally, the importance of communal thinking (concrete expressions of mutual aid) will be visible in the documents gathered here. A few documents in our collection will point to the emergence and continuation of Hutterian communal Anabaptism in south-central Europe, but no attempt has been made to adequately document the early years of the Hutterites, since those documents are available elsewhere.

I. Anabaptist Sources in English Translation

English-speaking readers with an interest in the beginnings and development of Anabaptism have not had equal access to the historical sources documenting the sixteenth-century movement. However, there are some source anthologies that survey the field rather well. One of the best collections available in English remains the third volume in the *Classics of Radical Reformation* (CRR) series, Walter Klaassen's *Anabaptism in Outline* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1981). Also useful, even though more limited in focus, is C. J. Dyck's, *Spiritual Life in Anabaptism* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1995). Two collections that include Anabaptist writings within the broader Radical Reformation rubric are George H. Williams, *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1957) and, more recently, Michael G. Baylor's *The Radical Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). The anthologized Anabaptist writings translated and collected in these books give English-speaking readers a good sense of the broad panorama of views present in the sixteenth century baptizing movement.

For readers interested in more detailed sources written by specific Anabaptist writers, or for those who wish to study the Anabaptism of a particular geographical area more intensively, the sources available in English are quickly diminished, and only selectively available. The writings of the very early Swiss Anabaptists (1525 to ca. 1530), for example, are well represented in English translation, with three volumes of writings available in the *Classics of Radical Reformation* series for this narrow slice of historical time and place.⁴ Writings of the later Swiss Brethren (1530-1600) are extant, but are not well-known in any language, since they circulated primarily in manuscript form and must be individually sought out and read in European archives.⁵ However, a Swiss Brethren biblical concordance from this later period is now available in translation,⁶ and a *Classics of Radical Reformation* volume translating some central writings of the Swiss Brethren in the last quarter of the sixteenth century is in preparation and, it is hoped, will be available in a year or two from the time of publication of this present book.

The writings of the North German/Dutch Anabaptists are even more selectively available in English, and in fact present a seriously truncated view of the birth and development of the Anabaptist movement in the lowlands. Of the numerous and influential booklets published by Melchior Hoffman in his lifetime, the only writings translated into English are his "Ordinance" (in Williams' *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*) and some important selections in Klaassen's *Anabaptism in Outline*.⁷ The general unavailability of Melchior Hoffman's writings represents a serious lacuna for serious students of Anabaptism, since understanding Hoffman's thought is central for understanding all that comes later in North German/Dutch Anabaptism, including of course, Menno Simons himself. The considerable body of writing by Bernhard Rothmann, Anabaptist theologian and apologist for the Münsterite group, is available in a German critical edition,⁸ but is unavailable in English, with the exception of an occasional excerpt here and there.

In contrast to the unavailability of so many crucial early Melchiorite writings, the selection of writings dating after the fall of Münster (post-1535) is far richer, although also far from complete. As might be expected, writings valued by Mennonites are well represented, whereas the writings of Anabaptist dissidents have fared less well. The writings of Nicholas van Blesdijk and Adam Pastor, for example, are generally unavailable in translation. By contrast, the collected writings of Menno Simons as well as those of Dirk Philips have been available in

English for many decades now, as has the *Martyrs Mirror* and various confessions of faith.⁹ Thanks to the *Classics of Radical Reformation* series, there is now even a good selection of writings by the eccentric spiritualist Anabaptist, David Joris, available in English.¹⁰

In spite of the relative wealth of material for this later historical period of Anabaptist/Mennonite history, it should be clear that readers who rely exclusively on sources translated into English will receive a truncated and selective view of Anabaptist origins and development in the north, with the preponderance of available writings dating from the post-Münsterite period and representing a particular Mennonite perspective.

Against this backdrop, the writings of South German/Austrian Anabaptists are relatively well represented in English, but there are some notable omissions, particularly from the earliest period of baptizing activity. The Anabaptist writings from south-central Europe that have predominated in the English literature have been those of the Hutterites.¹¹ Historically speaking, however, the Hutterites represent a later Anabaptist development in South German/Austrian Anabaptism (much like the Mennonites in the North in this regard). A Huttero-centric picture of the movement in south-central Europe consequently leaves important gaps in documentation. Renewed interest in North America in Pilgram Marpeck has helped to round out the picture. Almost all of Marpeck's writings have been translated, with some work still to be done in this regard.¹² The translation of Marpeck's writings and those of his circle have considerably widened the sources of South German/Austrian Anabaptism, but they likewise left untouched the sources documenting the beginnings and early evolutionary steps of the movement in this region. The primary aim of this volume of translated sources is thus to fill this gap and to make available a representative selection of the rich and interesting material documenting the earliest years of the South German/Austrian movement. Consequently, readers will find a concentration of documents dating from the 1520s and 1530s. As the collection moves forward in time, documentation becomes more selective than representative.

A review of the birth and development of South German/Austrian Anabaptism will allow us to locate the writings in this present collection within the framework of the South German/Austrian movement as a whole.

II. South German/Austrian Anabaptist Sources in Translation

For the sake of this introduction, we will identify three phases of development of South German/Austrian Anabaptism and note some of the source literature available in English that documents these phases of the movement.

1. Beginnings in radical reform and social upheaval (1517-1526)

The immediate context out of which South German/Austrian Anabaptism grew was Martin Luther's call for church reform on the basis of Scripture alone and an understanding of salvation by faith. What sheds particular light on South German/Austrian Anabaptism, however, are late medieval mystical writings that were considered "reforming" literature in their own right in the first decades of the sixteenth century.

Martin Luther's calls for church reform initially galvanized a wide spectrum of support, but as Luther began to define his program in more politically conservative directions, especially following his return to Wittenberg from the Wartburg in 1522, the reforming movement began to fragment. Andreas Karlstadt's estrangement from Luther and Karlstadt's grass roots reforming efforts in the small town of Orlamünde were an early sign of a more radical reforming direction. Thomas Müntzer's dissatisfaction with Luther and his own reform in the town of Allstedt mirrored Karlstadt's experience. In contrast to the increasing clericalization of Luther's reform, and its conscious integration into the reigning political order, both Karlstadt and Müntzer expected common people to be spiritually informed participants in church life and reform; both retained a greater role for the direct action of the Holy Spirit; both expected "true faith" to result in changed lives and a visible, moral reformation; and both were more interested in changing the social-political order (according to what they understood to be biblical models) than they were integrating into the existing order. Luther increasingly insisted that salvation was a complete gift of divine grace, known to God alone, and so saving faith could never be judged by visible works; furthermore, his reformation was to have everything to do with divine salvation, and nothing directly to do with social change as such.

This rupture within the early Reformation movement is well known, and historians have often pointed (rightly) to the social/political "impatience" of the radicals, who pushed for wholesale changes with lit-

the consideration of the practical political results. However, there were also significantly different ideological points of departure informing the “mainline” and “radical” reformations. These become visible in the way mystical literature was interpreted by either side.

The early Luther and his early supporters, Karlstadt and Müntzer, shared a common grounding in late medieval mystical theology. In fact, Luther’s earliest publications directly promoted mystical theology. In 1516 and again in 1518, Martin Luther published an anonymous writing he called the “German Theology” or *Theologia Deutsch*.¹³ It was a Taulerian mystical text that described the process of yielding self-will so that Christ might be born within, all of which would result in a new life. This message appealed to many in the reforming camp. Karlstadt was an enthusiastic supporter of the book and its ideas, and he acknowledged his debt to it.¹⁴ Müntzer was even more deeply immersed in Tauler’s writings than were either Karlstadt or Luther.¹⁵ Hans Denck, the important early South German Anabaptist leader, wrote what some have called an abbreviated commentary on the *Theologia Deutsch* which was often subsequently republished with later editions of the *TD*.¹⁶ The Spiritualist Sebastian Franck, who did not share the adult baptism of Denck and the Anabaptists, nevertheless had in common with the South German/Austrian Anabaptists a similar understanding of the mystical process of regeneration and an appreciation of the *Theologia Deutsch*.¹⁷

South German/Austrian Anabaptism grew out of the late medieval thought-world represented by the *Theologia Deutsch* and in many ways, continued to champion a “protestantized” late medieval mystical spirituality. Martin Luther never openly disavowed the book he had brought to light and published, but he resolutely moved away from some of its central presuppositions. For their part, orthodox Lutheran theologians in the second half of the sixteenth century came to consider the *Theologia Deutsch* a pernicious and dangerous book, and disavowed it openly.¹⁸ The case of the *Theologia Deutsch* thus provides a good point of departure for understanding the theological grounding of South German/Austrian Anabaptist reforming movement and its differences with Luther’s later reform.

A central point on which Luther and the later radicals came to disagree, was in their respective understanding of “faith” and the work of Christ. Luther’s radical followers continued to insist, much in the manner of the *Theologia Deutsch*, on the necessity of a spiritual rebirth and the subsequent sanctifying work of “Christ in us.” True faith, in the

radical (and medieval mystical) understanding, could be attained only by going through a painful process of self-negation, leading up to the birth of Christ within—it was necessary to yield to the work of Christ in the heart. The understanding that this ascetic, spiritual process would give birth to “true faith” was a radical protestant interpretation of the mystical process of achieving *Gelassenheit*. Reading the writings of both Andreas Karlstadt and Thomas Müntzer is instructive in this regard.¹⁹

Martin Luther, by contrast, came to place the atoning work of “Christ for us” at the centre of his theology. In Luther’s understanding, faith was a pure gift of God that could not be “attained.” The divine gift of faith changed the sinner’s standing before God, not because Christ was working within, to transform sinners into actual saints in this world (something Luther considered an impossibility), but rather sinners were forgiven only because of the atonement that Christ had already wrought for all sinners, on the cross. Sinners are forgiven and saved (“justified”), said Luther, by the grace of God and for Christ’s sake. Period. It appears that what most impressed Luther in the mystical literature was the initial “self-emptying” phase leading up to a total dependence on God’s grace, and not the “regenerationist” steps that followed.

It might be said that these contrasting emphases on the “work of Christ” were differences in degree, not differences in kind. The radicals also continued to stress Christ’s atoning work on the cross (without which no one would be saved), and Luther continued to preach that true faith would bear good fruit in the world. Nevertheless, the differing respective emphases on the nature of faith and the work of Christ did lead to fundamentally different understandings of salvation, how the Christian life was to be lived, and how church reform should be carried out.

South German / Austrian Anabaptism built directly upon the radical protestant appropriation of mystical theology, rather than on Luther’s stress on Christ’s atonement for sin. Readers who move from the *Theologia Deutsch* and the writings of Andreas Karlstadt and Thomas Müntzer, on to the Anabaptist writings of Hans Denck and Hans Hut will see the connections immediately. Hans Denck’s Anabaptist writings reflect his continued grounding in the mystical tradition. None of Denck’s writings are included in this collection, since they are all readily available in a new and fine translation,²⁰ but they are nonetheless central background to the writings contained here. Likewise, although our collection includes an important writing by Hans Hut on the interpretation of Scripture, the intimate connection between his

thought and that of Thomas Müntzer is most clearly visible in Hut's tract *On the Mystery of Baptism*, recently translated and published elsewhere.²¹ Readers wishing to understand the thought-world of South German/Austrian Anabaptism should be aware of the writings of Andreas Karlstadt and Thomas Müntzer, and not omit a careful reading of Denck's works and Hut's tract on baptism, as well as translated excerpts from Hut's prison testimony translated in Klaassen's *Anabaptism in Outline*.

The earliest documents in our collection demonstrate the close link that existed between "protestant mysticism" and early South German/Austrian Anabaptism. Jörg Haugk von Jüchsen's *A Christian Order of a True Christian* (#1) was written before adult baptism had begun anywhere. It therefore belongs to the pre-Anabaptist category of radical reform writings, along with Müntzer's writings and the early writings of Andreas Karlstadt. Nevertheless, Haugk's booklet also belongs in our collection of South German/Austrian Anabaptist writings, not only because Anabaptists like Denck and Hut echoed Haugk's views (with the added feature of adult baptism), but also because South German/Austrian Anabaptists emphatically made Haugk's *Christian Order* their own: they continued to reprint and copy this work into the seventeenth century. Hans Denck and, to all appearances, Pilgram Marpeck, both were responsible for later printings, and the Hutterites made numerous copies of Haugk's tract in their manuscripts. In fact, a review of themes brought to light by Haugk's writing provides a good introduction to the particular emphases visible in the early South German/Austrian baptizing movement that adopted Haugk's writing as its own.

Suffering, Spiritual Regeneration, and Faith

In a manner reminiscent of Thomas Müntzer, Haugk's *Christian Order* emphasizes the process of spiritual regeneration of believers. It is this painful process that leads to "true faith," says Haugk, as opposed to an "invented faith" that wishes to achieve salvation on the cheap. Haugk uses mystical language, concepts, and imagery, but transforms it all by interpreting the mystical legacy through the Reformation lens of salvation by faith. His language and imagery closely echoes Thomas Müntzer's criticism of Luther's "justification by faith alone." This mystical/radical Protestant emphasis on attaining true faith through a painful process of having Christ come to birth in one's heart—in opposition to a "false faith" attained by mere hearing the Word of God

Shucks.

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