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# Zollikon 1525<sup>1</sup>

## THE RISE OF THE EARLIEST ANABAPTIST FELLOWSHIP<sup>2</sup>

ON Sunday, January 22nd, 1525, Hans Oggenfuss, a tailor in Stadelhofen in Zurich, went out from the city. His journey was made for business reasons.<sup>3</sup> Wilhelm Rößbli, the minister in the village of Witikon, which overlooks Zurich, had given him an order to execute and this order Oggenfuss now wished to deliver to the customer. The matter was urgent, for the previous day (January 21st) Rößbli had been banished by the Zurich Council because he was a leading opponent of infant baptism. Rößbli must leave the boundaries of Zürich within a week<sup>4</sup> and naturally enough the tailor endeavoured to deliver the order before the week was out.

On his way, Oggenfuss witnessed a remarkable occurrence. By the fountain in Hirslanden he came across two men, both known to him and both coming from Zollikon.<sup>5</sup> One is the shoe-

<sup>1</sup> This translation is published by kind permission of the author Dr. Fritz Blanke and of Verlag Friedrich Reinhardt A. G., the publishers of the *Theologische Zeitschrift* in which this article originally appeared. The original may be found in the July-August, 1952 number of the *Theologische Zeitschrift*. This periodical is produced every two months by the Theological Faculty of the University of Basel. In addition to articles by members of the Faculty—e.g., Professors Barth, Cullman, Eichrodt, Staehelin, etc., the *Theologische Zeitschrift* contains useful reviews of latest theological books. The number from which this article is taken was given over entirely to subjects dealing with Anabaptism and the Mennonites—the reason for this was the fifth Mennonite World Conference held in Basel in August, 1952. In addition to Professor Blanke's article there is also an important article by Professor Harold S. Bender, the Mennonite Church Historian, which deals with the relation of the Zwickau Prophets, Thomas Muntzer and the Anabaptists. (*Translator's note*.)

<sup>2</sup> My work is based upon the Court records in the Zürich City archives, which records have now for the first time been published in their entirety with critical notes by Leonhard von Muralt and Walter Schmid, in the book *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer in der Schweiz Erster Band: Zürich* (Zürich 1952, 428 pp.). I have relied chiefly upon the documents which are numbered by von Muralt and Schmid 29, 30, 31, 32 and 33. In the following notes "Nr." refers in every case to this collection of source material.

<sup>3</sup> The scene with Oggenfuss will be found in Nr. 31 (pp. 41-42).

<sup>4</sup> Nr. 26 Bröthli, Hätzer and Castelberger were also banished.

<sup>5</sup> Zollikon is a village about two miles from Zürich situated on the eastern shore of the Lake of Zürich. Hirslanden was a village between Zürich and Witikon—now it has been incorporated into the city of Zürich. (*Translator*.)

maker there, and bears the name of his trade : Fridli Schumacher.<sup>6</sup> The other is Johannes Brötli,<sup>7</sup> a former Catholic priest who had become a supporter of Zwingli. Since the summer of 1523 Brötli had lived without benefice in Zollikon and since the summer of 1524 he had been in opposition to Zwingli on the question of the Church baptismal practice. Brötli lodged in Zollikon with his wife and children in Fridli Schumacher's house.

At the fountain in Hirslanden the two stand talking, Schumacher says to Brötli, " Now then, Hans, you have taught me the truth, for which I am grateful, and I ask you now for the sign." Schumacher himself has heard his lodger's teaching concerning baptism, and has been won over to Brötli's point of view. Now, however, he wants to take a further step, the step from theory to practice, and he therefore requests, in spite of the fact that he has already been baptized as a small child, the sign of baptism. Brötli does not hesitate but baptizes Schumacher by sprinkling him with water from the fountain.

So far as we know this was the first occasion on which a native of Zollikon had been rebaptized. It would seem to indicate that Brötli, who performed the baptism, had himself been previously rebaptized. Very probably this had taken place on the previous evening.<sup>8</sup> It is reasonable to surmise that the leading opponents of infant baptism—Grebel, Blaurock, Manz, Brötli—had taken the step of baptism on Saturday, January 21st, in the evening or during the night. I surmise that Brötli, after the first rebaptism—which probably took place in the city of Zürich itself—returned to Zollikon and told his landlord Schumacher of the great event. As a result of this, Schumacher's desire to be likewise newly baptized, may well have arisen.

When Brötli and Schumacher lived together, one may ask why the baptism did not take place in Schumacher's house rather than out by the fountain at Hirslanden? Perhaps caution was the reason. It may have appeared advisable to Brötli, the leader of the Zollikon group of opponents to infant baptism, that the first baptism which he administered to one of his Zollikon followers should take place outside Zollikon.

The fact that arrests us about this scene is its "apostolic" simplicity. One can scarcely imagine a greater contrast than that between the baptism at the fountain in Hirslanden, and the

<sup>6</sup> Alexander Nüesch and Heinrich Bruppacher: *Das alte Zollikon* (1899) p. 74.

<sup>7</sup> Nüesch-Bruppacher p. 505. In Nr. 29 and 31—Brötli is called "der alte Helfer" i.e., "the one-time assistant" (= Minister). Before Brötli moved to Zollikon he was minister in Quarten on the Lake of Wallenstadt in Switzerland.

<sup>8</sup> See F. Blanke "Ort und Zeit der ersten Wiedertaufe" ("Place and Time of the first Rebaptism.") *Theologische Zeitschrift* 1952, pp. 74-76.

baptisms which were at that time still practised in the churches of the city and countryside of Zürich. In these churches, in consequence of the fear of the council of liturgical innovations, the baptismal practice was not yet altered. Instead the children were still baptized by Zwingli and by the Zwinglian preachers, according to the Roman Catholic rite, i.e., with exorcism, the sign of the cross, and anointing with spittle and oil.<sup>9</sup> Now however, in Hirslanden, all these accessories are missing, just as they were also missing in baptism among the first Christians.

### The Lord's Supper

Just as important to the originators of this baptismal movement as the renewal of baptism, was the new manner of celebrating the Lord's Supper. Already on Sunday, 22nd January, 1525 (or on Monday, 23rd January)<sup>10</sup> we find Conrad Grebel celebrating the Lord's Supper in the house of Jacob Hottinger in Zollikon. Further celebrations took place throughout the whole week in various houses, some in connection with baptisms, others without this connection being simply gatherings around the Lord's table. The proceedings were very simple. As introduction, one of the New Testament accounts of the institution of the Lord's Supper was read; following this there was a brief word concerning the meaning of the Lord's Supper, and then the partaking of the bread and the wine.<sup>11</sup>

Once again it should be noticed that the gulf between these celebrations of the Lord's Supper in Zollikon, and the celebrations by Zwingli and his ministers in that same January, 1525, is unbridgable. At this time there is still on the altar in the Grossmünster<sup>12</sup> and in the church at Zollikon<sup>13</sup> and in all other Zürich

<sup>9</sup> The Baptismal Liturgy of Leo Jud which was introduced into Zürich in 1523 contained all these Catholic practices. (*Krit. Zwingli-Ausgabe* Vol. iv 710-713). In Spring, 1525, a truly evangelical Baptismal Service was first introduced into Zürich—it originated from Zwingli (*Krit. Zwingli-Ausgabe* Vol. iv. 334-336).

<sup>10</sup> These dates are not absolutely certain. It is clear that Grebel first held this celebration of the Lord's Supper after he had been baptised, i.e., after January 21st, 1525. Oggenfuss stated during his cross-examination that this Lord's Supper had taken place a fortnight previously. He was speaking as a witness in court between January 30th and February 7th. If we count backwards fourteen days from February 7th we arrive at January 25th. Grebel must have held this Lord's Supper between January 22nd (Sunday) and January 25th, probably at the beginning of the week January 22nd. H. S. Bender in his book *Conrad Grebel* (1950) p. 138, also believes that the Lord's Supper to which Oggenfuss bears witness refers to the first which was held by the new Anabaptist fellowship.

<sup>11</sup> Nr. 29, 31, 32.

<sup>12</sup> The Grossmünster is the chief church of Zürich and the one in which Zwingli preached. (*Translator's note.*)

<sup>13</sup> Nr. 29 (p. 37-38).

churches the monstrance with the host. Before it stands the minister, in vestments, celebrating in Latin<sup>14</sup> (with the omission of the sacrifice) the Roman mass, and distributing to the congregation the wafers, but not the cup.<sup>15</sup> But here, in the simple room of a farmhouse in Zollikon, laymen break ordinary bread and distribute it together with the wine, to all partakers—a revolution indeed in the history of the Lord's Supper, but, as I believe, a necessary and salutary one.

We are well informed from the records of the court hearings, of the interpretation which those in Zollikon placed upon this new form of the Lord's Supper. Oggenfuss testifies that the Lord's Supper in Jacob Hottinger's house had been partaken with the thought in mind, "that they now intend to walk the Christian way and remain steadfast in it."<sup>16</sup> Those who share in the Lord's Supper therefore accept the obligation to live a Christian life. Jörg Schad owned that they had broken the bread and eaten with the intention that, "they have God always in their hearts and will think on Him."<sup>17</sup> Thus the Lord's Supper is an obligation to love God. In this first week we meet still more frequently a third interpretation of the Lord's Supper. It is described as, "a meal of love and Christian charity,"<sup>18</sup> as, "a sign of brotherly love and of peace,"<sup>19</sup> as an occasion, "for everyone to show brotherly love."<sup>20</sup> The eating together of the bread and the drinking of the wine demonstrated the reality of the present brotherly unity; the Lord's Supper is a fellowship meal, a love meal, clearly depending on 1 *Cor. x.* 17, "because there is one bread, we, who are many, are one body."

We feel that the real heart of the young fellowship beats in these gatherings together for the Lord's Supper with their simple ceremony. There they feel themselves as, "communio sanctorum," bound together by the same bond and united in love towards God and towards the brethren.

We may ask why Zwingli had not already, at that time, introduced a similar purified celebration of the Lord's Supper. It was only the Zürich Council to whom Zwingli submitted, which hindered him.<sup>21</sup> So the Anabaptists anticipated him when, as first

<sup>14</sup> In *De Canone Missae epichiresis* (August, 1523) Zwingli expressly approved the wearing of the vestments and the use of Latin in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. (*Krit. Zw. Ausg.* ii 600 ff.)

<sup>15</sup> *Krit. Zwingli Ausgabe* iv 4.

<sup>16</sup> Nr. 31 (p. 42 top).

<sup>17</sup> Nr. 31 (p. 41).

<sup>18</sup> Statement of Hans Bruggbach Nr. 31.

<sup>19</sup> Statement of Conrad Hottinger Nr. 31.

<sup>20</sup> Statement of Jörg Schad Nr. 31.

<sup>21</sup> A new and truly evangelical order for the celebration of the Lord's Supper was first put into practice in Zürich at Easter, 1525 (*Krit. Zw. Ausg.* iv 1-24).

forerunners of the Free Church conception, they boldly ignored the State Church, and organised the building up of their fellowship without magisterial patronage.

### The Meetings

We have heard that Röubli had been banished and this sentence had also been passed on Hätzer, Castelberger, and Brötli, other opponents of infant baptism. They had had to swear to leave the boundary of the city of Zürich within eight days, as from January 21st. Ruedi Thomann, an elderly farmer from a well-known Zollikon family, did not wish this period to elapse without seeing again two of those under sentence of banishment with whom he was evidently connected, and so he invited Röubli and Brötli to a "Letzi," that is, to a farewell meal.<sup>22</sup> This meal took place in the evening of Wednesday, 25th January, 1525, in Ruedi Thomann's house in the part of the village of Zollikon known as "Gstad" (today Gstadstrasse 23-25). Besides the two theologians and the host, there is also present Marx Bosshart, Thomann's son-in-law, who lives with him. While the four are still at their meal, Manz and Blaurock come into the room. Ruedi Thomann did not, until then, know these two personally; why then did they visit him on this particular evening? Not because of him personally, but because in his house, on that evening a religious meeting—albeit an illegal one—is to be held. We do not know whether this meeting had been suggested by Thomann himself or by Brötli and Röubli. At any rate Ruedi Thomann has put his living room at their disposal for the meeting.

After the evening meal three further visitors appear, Heinrich Thomann (Ruedi's brother), Jacob Hottinger, an older man from one of the most well-known Zollikon families, and Hans Bruggbach from Zumikon, one of the nearby villages. Nine men: five farmers, three theologians and one well educated in secular subjects (Manz) sit at one table and hold a Bible reading. They read in the New Testament and talk over what they have read. What did they read and what did they discuss? Evidently they dealt with the fact of the human soul being lost in sin and with the fact that according to Holy Scripture only those men are saved who repent and are baptized. Then, suddenly, Hans Bruggbach stands up. He bewails his sins, he "weeps and cries how great a sinner he is." He implores his companions that they should beseech God for him, and desires that someone bestow on him the sign of baptism. This passionate outburst by Bruggbach as he acknowledges his sin can be explained only by the surmise that

<sup>22</sup> The following description of the meeting at Ruedi Thomann's is taken from the statements of those who were present in Nr. 29, 31 and 32.

during this evening there had been talk of guilt and a turning from sin. Bruggbach's request for baptism is fulfilled. The method of baptism is simple, but not formless. On the contrary, the baptism is embedded in a short liturgy which is spoken by Blaurock and Manz in turn. Blaurock first directs to Hans Bruggbach the question whether he desires baptism (Blaurock uses the word "grace"). Bruggbach replies in the affirmative. Then Manz says the relevant sentence contained in the *Acts of the Apostles*, x. 47, "Who will forbid me that I baptize him not?" Blaurock answers, "No one." Manz takes a metal ladle, of the sort used in the kitchen at that time, and pours water from it over the head of the baptismal candidate, saying, "I baptize thee in the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost."

The first baptism results in the same meeting in yet a second. Jacob Hottinger, who in the last weeks had shown himself to be an ardent follower of Manz and Grebel, stands up and is himself likewise baptized by Manz. These baptisms were certainly the most important object of the meeting. It was not a time of Bible study in the ordinary sense, rather was it a revival meeting with the aim of leading those present to repentance and baptism.

The evening closes with the Lord's Supper. Blaurock directs attention to the bread and the wine which stand on the table and breaks the bread in pieces. The distribution of the Lord's Supper is preceded by an address of which a fragment is preserved for us. According to Ruedi Thomann's statement, Blaurock said, "Whoever believes that God has saved him by His death and outpoured blood, let him come and eat with me of this bread and drink with me of this wine." The Lord's Supper is, according to these words, the feast of those who believed themselves redeemed.

The meeting in Ruedi Thomann's house consisted of Bible study, evangelism and celebration of the sacraments, but it was also, not least, a means to win new members for the already formed Anabaptist fellowship. For this last purpose the evening was not particularly successful. Two of those present were baptized and admitted into the fellowship. But what of the others? Manz, Blaurock, Roubli and Brötli had, a few days before on January 21st, 1525, received rebaptism. There remained however three others who in the meeting could not decide for baptism, Ruedi Thomann, Heinrich Thomann and Marx Bosshart. Of Heinrich Thomann we know that the evening which the organisers had hoped would prove attractive to him had, in fact, repelled him. The sight of the baptismal process and of the Lord's Supper caused him, as he said, to sweat; had he had to take part he would have run out of the room. No doubt it was his anxiety which caused him to sweat, and it is not surprising! What he saw must have seemed to him as a man of clearly con-

servative judgment a disgrace to religion. For one man breaks ordinary bread in a farmer's living room and distributes it together with the wine, and a layman performs the holy baptism in a new and unfamiliar way on adults in spite of the fact that they had already been baptized as infants.

Heinrich Thomann is however the only one of those present who feels ill at ease in this meeting of January 25th. Probably he stood a long way from the group, perhaps he was only at the meeting out of curiosity. His brother, Ruedi, is however in close touch with the Anabaptist movement, otherwise he would not have invited Brötli and Roubli. Marx Bosshart also is in sympathy with the new movement. It is true that Bosshart has not, on that same evening, taken the decision to be baptized, but what he has experienced sinks into him. After the visitors have gone—only Blaurock and Manz remain overnight with Thomann—Marx goes to his room. But he cannot sleep. For during the night, "it challenges him," as he himself expresses it, meaning to say he can find no peace of mind. He knows no other alternative but to pray to God for guidance as to what he should do. When morning comes the understanding for which he prayed breaks upon him with positive and convincing power. He now realises: you must be baptized. He gets up early on Thursday, January 26th, and wakes his father-in-law and also Manz and Blaurock. There follows between the young farmer and Blaurock, a "soul searching" conversation, the gist of which is preserved by the witness of Ruedi Thomann. Blaurock observed to Marx, "You have been until now a carefree young man," and admonishes him (referring to *Ephesians iv. 22-24*) to put off the old man and to put on the new and repent. Bosshart is ready to comply. So, after the candidate's confession of repentance, the most important prerequisite of the baptismal act, is completed, Blaurock is able to baptize Marx Bosshart. Bosshart is heard of again in the same year as an Anabaptist itinerent preacher in the Zürich Oberland.

Now comes the turn of Ruedi Thomann. So far he had hesitated but now Blaurock urges him on, "You are an old man and near death, you must also repent and request baptism!" Ruedi is willing and so Blaurock can also bring him into the new fellowship. So the circle is complete. All of those who were present at the meeting of January 25th, with the exception of the outsider, Heinrich Thomann, have now received the sign of baptism. Blaurock however is not yet satisfied. Is it not reported of the Philippian gaoler, *Acts of the Apostles, xvi. 33*, that he was baptized together with all his household? And must not a fellowship such as this of the Anabaptists, which wishes to be a replica of the first Christian fellowship, also copy it in this respect? That



is Blaurock's idea<sup>23</sup> and so he would now persuade Ruedi Thomann that he ought also to allow his relations and his servants to receive baptism. Thomann is of the same mind so on this January morning the farmhouse in Gstad witnesses a ceremony of household baptism after the example in the Acts of the Apostles.

Two days later, on Friday, January 27th, 1525, another meeting in a house is held,<sup>24</sup> also in Gstad, but on this occasion at the home of Hans Murer (today Bahnhofstrasse 3). Brötli, who is on the point of departure, leads it. Of those present, we know the names of Heinrich Thomann, Leinhard Bleuler, Conrad Hottinger and Hans Bruggbach's son from Zumikon. Brötli is made happy by the request of the last three for baptism, which he immediately performs by sprinkling them with water, Heinrich Thomann remains once again unconverted. He later reported that when he saw the baptism of the three men by Brötli, "his hair stood on end."<sup>25</sup>

We know also of a meeting in Felix Kienast's house (today Rütistrasse 43) where Felix Manz baptized farmer Jörg Schad and others, but it cannot be said for certain on which day of the week, 22nd-29th January, this meeting took place.<sup>26</sup> It is clear, however, that there were daily meetings, usually in the evenings.<sup>27</sup> Most of the baptisms were performed by Brötli, but others, as we have heard, by Blaurock and Manz. Rudolf Hottinger admits to having baptized one young married woman who pleaded with him in tears to do so.<sup>28</sup> So far as we can see, no one in Zollikon was baptized by Conrad Grebel, who had already left for Schaffhausen at the beginning of the week.

### Blaurock the Zealot

We have now dealt with the Friday of this eventful week. Two days later on the Sunday morning, January 29th, the churchgoers in Zollikon witnessed a disturbing scene.<sup>29</sup> They have gathered in the church for worship. Just as their minister, Nik-

<sup>23</sup> This household baptism would seem at first sight to be a contradiction of the principles upon which this group based their baptism. Nothing more than the fact of it taking place is reported—it is however probable that Blaurock first obtained from those he baptised a statement of repentance. The reason for this household baptism is however quite clear—it is performed because it is recorded in Scripture. This action reflects the very strong "biblicism" of this group. (*Translator's note.*)

<sup>24</sup> Statements from Heinrich Thomann in Nr. 29 and from Conrad Hottinger in Nr. 31.

<sup>25</sup> Nr. 29.

<sup>26</sup> Jörg Schad's statement in Nr. 31.

<sup>27</sup> Hans Thomann reports e.g., that he has seen people with lanterns going in and out of the meetings. (Nr. 29.)

<sup>28</sup> Nr. 33.

<sup>29</sup> Nr. 29.

laus Billeter, is about to enter the pulpit a man comes out from the congregation and bars his progress. He is recognisable by his black hair, bald patch and blue clothing<sup>30</sup> as Jörg Cajakob, known as Blaurock.

Between the two there begins a heated conversation. Blaurock asks the minister the question as to what he wishes to do. Billeter, as a good Zwinglian answers, "I wish to preach God's word." Blaurock counters, "Not you, but I am sent to preach,"<sup>31</sup> whereupon Billeter makes it quite clear that he is sent to preach, namely by his superiors, the authorities of the Grossmünster who always appointed the minister in Zollikon.

This answer does not satisfy Blaurock and he goes on with the argument. In the meantime Billeter has gone up into the pulpit and begun to preach. Blaurock, however, continues the disturbance and so Billeter breaks off his preaching, comes down from the pulpit and makes his way to the door. His purpose is certainly not to leave his pulpit free for the mischief-maker, but rather to cut short the disturbance. But Billeter has not reckoned with the congregation. Several of those present are not in agreement with his retreat and call out to him that he should stay put. So Billeter enters the pulpit a second time and continues with his preaching. He cautions his people against disturbance and requests if anyone wishes to point out an error to him he should do it privately in the Manse, but not in the church. Certainly a request with which one must agree? Blaurock feels thwarted and interrupts the preacher again. He quotes to him the words from the story of the cleansing of the Temple, "It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves." Blaurock has with him a rod and he emphasises what he has to say by striking a board three or four times during his outburst.

The matter has gone far enough. The under bailiff, Wüest, who was present in the church, stands up and threatens the disturber of the peace with prison if he does not immediately desist. This quiets Blaurock, and the episode comes to an end.

What exactly did Blaurock want? He wanted to achieve in Zollikon what he succeeded in achieving in Hinwil, in the Zürich Oberland, nine months later. There on the 8th of October, 1525, the people made their way to the regular Sunday morning service in the church and were waiting for the minister. But before he (Hans Brennwald) appeared to begin the service, Jörg Blaurock entered the pulpit and began to preach, introducing himself with

<sup>30</sup> Nr. 109.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. *Jeremiah* xxviii, 15. "Then said the prophet Jeremiah unto Hananiah the prophet, Hear now, Hananiah. The Lord hath not sent thee . . ."

the statement, "Whose is this place? It is God's place where one should preach the word of God, so I am here as one sent from the Father, to preach the Word of God."<sup>32</sup> In this way, Blaurock usurps the pulpit. Brennwald comes too late and, unable to drive out the intruder, has to call in the authorities to help.

In Zollikon also Blaurock had doubtless wished to take over the pulpit, but he was unsuccessful because the minister was already there. The reason for Blaurock's attempt on the pulpit seems clear to me. For anyone as impetuous as Blaurock the development of the Anabaptist movement in Zollikon was going too slowly. He wished to attempt, through preaching in the church, to win over the population, at one fell swoop. The power to attempt this he found in his overwhelming sense of mission. He felt himself as a prophet, directly commissioned to spread God's Word and to cleanse God's Temple.

His attempt at Zollikon, however, went wrong. Blaurock could not deliver his message to the people. On the contrary, by his impetuosity, he had nipped the Anabaptist fellowship in Zollikon in the bud. For as a result of the incident in the church, the Zürich authorities found themselves forced to intervene. On Monday, 30th January, 1525, the authorities came to Zollikon and took into custody<sup>33</sup> Blaurock, Manz and all the farmers who had been baptized in the last eight days. So ends the "springtime" of the Anabaptist church in Zollikon, by that I mean the eight days of undisturbed expansion. So begins the time of oppression by the authorities, of fines and imprisonments. There follows in the summer of 1525 the period of the breaking down of the Zollikon Anabaptist fellowship.

Now that we have followed the course of events which occurred in Zollikon in the period from 22nd-29th January, 1525, it will be worth our while to examine more closely, certain events of this memorable week, so that we may appreciate them from the point of view of piety, theology and sociology.

### Repentance and Baptism

If we seek a phrase to describe the events of these eight days, the description "revivalist movement" seems the most appropriate. By this one understands the sudden appearance of a religious awakening, in which not only a few individuals but a large number of men are convinced by a direct power of the need for personal Christian repentance, and in so doing break through to the joy of salvation.

That is what happened in Zollikon. The various stages in the act of repentance can be clearly seen from the evidence pre-

<sup>32</sup> Nr. 109.

<sup>33</sup> Nr. 29.

served in the records of the court proceedings.<sup>34</sup> The first stage is when the conscience starts to trouble the individual so that he becomes concerned because of his sinfulness. The next step is that he beseeches God for a full realisation of sin. Then this realisation breaks through and discloses to him his own guilt and sin.

It is remarkable how deep this consciousness of sin strikes. Conrad Hottinger comes to see that he is a great sinner and that no one remaining in sin can be saved. Hans Bruggbach echoes the same thought. Jörg Schad comes to the realisation that he has wandered all his days in vices and in sins. In these expressions the thought is certainly not of the individual sinful actions. But rather these men, who have lived all their lives as law abiding citizens and church members, have become conscious that their past lives cannot stand before God's absolute judgment, and that they, because of their original sin, are damned. It is the understanding of sin which was taught in the Reformation that we meet here and not as abstract theory but as personal experience. The impact of this experience is underlined by the fact that it is accompanied by strong emotional feeling. These farmers, though no doubt accustomed to hide their feelings, break out in loud lamentations with shedding of tears.

In Zollikon the path of conversion has however yet two further stages. From the depth of the misery of sin arises the cry for rescue, for the "washing away and forgiveness of sin," for, "the grace of God." It is however realised by those calling for help that they may only expect the forgiveness of God if they are willing, in future, to refrain from sin. Jörg Schad is conscious that through the grace of God he has come to know his sin and that God has promised him that, "if he ceases from sin he will forgive him."

Forgiveness is experienced in baptism. Baptism brings to an end the struggle for repentance and brings also deliverance from the heavy burden of sin. Thus it is thought of as the visible sign that God has, by His grace, pardoned the sinner. Blaurock questions the men in Ruedi Thomann's house as to whether they desire the grace of God. When they answer, "Yes," he baptizes them. Baptism is the sign of grace.

It has, however, yet another meaning. Rudolf Breittiner, being moved to tears by the guilt of his sin declares to Brötli, "He will henceforth abstain from all his sin, and therefore desires the sign, and so he (Brötli) should baptize him." Breittiner is willing from now onwards to say "No" to sin, but in order to carry out his purpose there is need of baptism. Baptism here is clearly thought of as the divine affirmation and confirmation of the human

<sup>34</sup> Viz. from Nrs. 29, 31, 32.

resolution. Jörg Schäd speaks in a similar way, "he has desired the sign of brotherly love because he wishes to do good to his neighbour just as to himself and has thus been sprinkled with water." Schäd wishes to begin a new life and in the future to act according to the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (*Matthew viii. 12*). For this, however, it needs the sign of baptism as the sign of brotherly love, i.e. as the sign that makes this love possible.

So baptism has in Zollikon a double meaning. It testifies that God bestows grace upon the repentant man, and that he sends to the pardoned sinner, the power for a new life.

It is thus a complete, closed process of inward change which we can observe in these Zollikon farmers. Moreover, these occurrences have, as we always see in revival movements, the characteristic of being irresistible with spontaneous outbursts. To the magistrate's question as to why he had undergone baptism, Hans Bruggbach replied, "It had so affected him that he had absolutely no choice in the manner." In the case of Rudolf Breittiner, the feeling of sinfulness came to its climax, not in a meeting, but in the open air, when he was out for a walk with Brötli and Felix Kienast. He stood still and began to weep and bemoan his sins. Brötli had, in the meantime, gone further ahead. Breittiner called him back and asked to be baptized.

We know the criticism which Goethe has levelled at the writing of Church History. He says in the *Zahmen Xenien*: "What have I to do with Church History? I see nothing but parsons. What the Christians, the ordinary people feel, of that it seems to me nothing at all appears." It is true that the sources of Church History do tell us what the theologians felt and thought, and the deepest experiences of great personalities, but of the spiritual struggles of the ordinary, nameless Christian we hear almost nothing at all. The court records which are at our disposal for the events in Zollikon, prove an exception. Here we can see into the heart of the common man and share in his spiritual fears and joys. Not only are these Zollikon texts themselves out of the ordinary but also the matter which they contain. I know of no precedent for a revivalist movement in the Reformation similar to that which is told for us of Zollikon. I have nowhere come across a whole group of men seized by the almost tempestuous breaking out of the spirit of repentance. Such a unique repentance movement must be explained.

### Theological and Personal Factors

Since we have traced its course during the first eight days, we must now ask what was the basic impulse of the movement?

I would differentiate between a theological and a personal impulse.

It can be established that Conrad Grebel and his group, i.e. the Zürich opponents to infant baptism had already, in 1524, come to the conviction, through the New Testament, that repentance must precede baptism.<sup>35</sup> Baptism should not be administered to unrepentant men. Thus it was taken for granted that the person to be baptized must have reached an age where he was capable of repentance. This means that only adults, and indeed only those who were contrite, should be baptized.

This was at first only theoretical teaching. It was put into practice on the 20th January, 1525, when adult baptism was instituted. That is to say the people who wished to be baptized were told that they must previously have repented, i.e. been converted. The personal conversion or repentance now became of decisive importance as the necessary preliminary to baptism. That means, without repentance, no baptism, i.e. no salvation.

Thus, behind the revival in Zollikon there stands a new teaching concerning repentance. It is the theological motive of the movement. It was, however, the call to repentance in the preaching which provided the actual impulse out of which this teaching concerning repentance developed. Thus it was that in Zollikon the religious agitation which we have examined was first set in motion by the emergence of personalities who powerfully sounded the call to repent. We know the names of these preachers, Grebel, Manz, Blaurock, Brötli. Among these, the outstanding figure is Blaurock. Jörg Cajakob<sup>36</sup> was the son of a Romanisch farmer in Bonaduz in Graubünden. He became first a Roman Catholic priest in Trins in Graubünden. About the year 1523 he broke with the old faith and became a Zwinglian and in the same year he married. We see him in Zürich for the first time taking part in the public disputation over baptism,<sup>37</sup> of 17th January, 1525, in which he opposed infant baptism. He was then thirty-three years old.

Blaurock was an enthusiast, his friends called him a "second

<sup>35</sup> I refer here only to the letter which Grebel sent to Thomas Müntzer in the name of the opponents in Zürich to infant baptism in September, 1524. (von Muralt-Schmid p. 14 ff. especially pp. 17-18.) For the earlier history of the Zürich Anabaptist Movement see Dr. F. Blanke "La Pré-histoire de L'Anabaptisme à Zürich, 1523-1525," published in *Mélanges Historiques offerts à Monsieur Jean Meyhoffer Docteur en Théologie*, published in Lausanne, 1952 by "Faculté de Théologie de L'Eglise Evangelique Libre du Canton de Vaud pp. 17-29.

<sup>36</sup> Concerning Blaurock see, Oskar Vasella "Von den Anfängen der hündnerischen Täuferbewegung" (*Zeitschrift für Schweizerische Geschichte*, 1939 p. 165 ff.).

<sup>37</sup> "Geschicht-Buch der Hutterischen Brüder" edited by R. Wolkan p. 34. The "Gespräch von Glaubenhändeln" mentioned there seems to be the disputation over Baptism held in Zürich on January 17th, 1525.

Paul." By this they meant that he was possessed by that inner strength of conviction which characterised the apostle. Today we should probably call him an evangelist. We have heard how fervently he stirred the consciences of the young man, Marx Bosshart, and the old man, Ruedi Thomann, and how he urged the latter to be baptized, both himself and his family. Blaurock's was a dynamic personality and in a large measure the Zollikon "repentance movement" is to be attributed to his evangelistic zeal.

The disturbance in the Zollikon church on January 29th bears witness to the fact that Blaurock was not free from over-enthusiasm. The point at issue here was, of course, a clash with the antagonistic though authorised minister. Whether Blaurock's preaching of repentance in the meetings or in the individual contacts had in it any of this over-enthusiastic character we do not know. It is, however, possible. Many were perhaps carried away by his temperament and the fascinating power of his go-ahead personality.

Ludwig Keller, in his books which were widely read during his day, especially in his *Die Reformation und die älteren Reformparteien*, (Leipzig, 1885), has asserted the strict historical connection between the Anabaptists at the time of the Reformation and the Waldensians and the other non-Romish sects of the Middle Ages. According to Ludwig Keller, the Anabaptists were nothing else than the continuation of the movements of the Middle Ages which were outside the recognised Church. One still occasionally comes across this theory today.

There is a good method by which we may clarify this problem, and that is by considering the question as to where the fundamental theological principles of the Zollikon Anabaptists originated. The group in Zollikon in 1525 was the earliest Anabaptist group that there was. If anywhere, then surely by examination of the theological ideas of this group, it can be shown whether the Anabaptists are children of the Middle Ages or of the Reformation.

Let us briefly examine the individual points of this Anabaptist "theologia in statu nascendi," as it is revealed in Zollikon in the week from 22nd-29th January. Jörg Schad and Marx Bosshart report that they have besought God for a knowledge of their sin.<sup>38</sup> They are thus aware that in the first place not the forgiveness of sins but rather the knowledge of sin is a divine gift to be sought. This the Zollikon Anabaptist group—and especially their leaders—have learnt from the teaching of Zwingli. They have first gained their consciousness of the absolute corruption of unregenerate man and also their knowledge that salvation

<sup>38</sup> Nr. 31.

is founded in grace alone, from Zwingli. That the way of salvation for man, from the very beginning, depends upon "sola gratia" is the decisive discovery of the Reformation, which the Zollikon Anabaptists also accepted, whereas the Middle Ages, including the Waldensians, knew nothing of this.

On the question of the sacraments the Anabaptists are pupils of Zwingli in so far as they understood baptism and the Lord's Supper, in contrast to Catholicism and to Luther—symbolically and not sacramentally. The Lord's Supper for them is the symbol of the brotherhood of Christians, but not the giving of the body of Christ. Baptism did not mediate the forgiveness of sins, but it is a sign which bore witness to the fact that for the believer sins are forgiven by God.

The influence of Zwingli is most evident however in the way the members of this group state their relation to God and Christ. When the rebaptized farmer, Lienhard Bleuler, was asked by the magistrate whether he would in the future give up the Anabaptist movement he replied that, "he was God's servant and was himself no longer his own master, he had enlisted under the Captain Jesus Christ and would go with him even to the death, whatever he commanded and required of him, he would obey and perform."<sup>39</sup> These are typical Zwinglian expressions, Christ the Captain under whose banner we have enlisted, for whom we shed our blood and who gives us his Spirit is a metaphor frequently used by Zwingli.<sup>40</sup> This was exactly Bleuler's conception. He says to the magistrates: "I can no longer decide for myself for I have become a soldier of Jesus Christ from whom I receive my orders. If it must be, I am willing to die for my Captain." Rudolf Hottinger testifies likewise; he is aware that as a servant and slave of God he must "listen" and await what the Spirit of God shows, teaches and commands him.<sup>41</sup> This feeling of exclusive dependence upon God's command is Christian self-examination<sup>42</sup> as Zwingli had taught. Rudolf Hottinger and his friends had doubtless been true followers of the Zürich Reformer, for they have understood well Zwingli's view of the Christian status. Now, however, they assert against Zwingli and his belief in the authority of the Church, the belief in the direct authority which God has over the individual, which belief they learnt originally from Zwingli himself.

As a result of their conviction which led them to see them-

<sup>39</sup> Nr. 33.

<sup>40</sup> See G. W. Locher "Christus unser Hauptmann" (*Zwingliana*, 1950 Part I.)

<sup>41</sup> Nr. 33.

<sup>42</sup> German is "Selbstbeurteilung"—self judgement or self examination. By this is meant that the individual lays himself open to the leading of God—and thus he "examines himself"—to discover what is the will of God for him. (*Translator's note.*)



selves as servants of God and soldiers of Christ, the consciousness arose in the men of Zollikon not only of their independence from the Zürich church, but also from the State. Rudolf Rutschmann confessed in his own name and in that of the fourteen Zollikon farmers, his fellow prisoners,<sup>43</sup> "He had been baptized. Thus he was a servant and an obedient follower of God, he would also do what the Spirit of God showed, taught and commanded him. And therefore he would take notice of no one, and allow himself to be subject to no worldly power. For the rest he was willing in all things not contrary to the word of God, to be obedient to and at the service of the gracious authorities of Zürich."

Who can fail to perceive in this courageous statement of these fifteen farmers from Zollikon, the spirit of the Reformation? So had Luther spoken at Worms. Zwingli, especially in his early years, had also, on principle, rejected the interference of the authorities in questions of religion and conscience and demanded freedom of faith, above all, if the state in question was Catholic. Now he lives to experience this same challenge thrown out from Zollikon to the Zürich evangelical<sup>44</sup> authorities.

This may be taken as certain; the soil out of which this new thinking of Grebel, Manz, Brötli, Blaurock and their followers grew, was not the ideas of the Middle Ages, neither the Roman nor the Waldensian; rather was it Zwingli's Reformation teaching. These first Anabaptists all went through Zwingli's school, and in it they received the essence of evangelical faith which they never forgot.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless these pupils, in certain important aspects, differed from their master. They have put repentance before baptism. They have bestowed baptism upon adults. They have stressed that baptism also signifies the power for a new life. They have celebrated the Lord's Supper as a fellowship meal. They have rejected the State Church.

These are the points of departure of the Anabaptists from Zwingli in the year 1525. But which is the direction of these differences? Do the Anabaptists want to fall back to the Middle Ages and renew the ideas of that period? On the contrary, they wish in those several points of deviation from Zwingli's teaching to advance the Reformation. They wish to build further upon the foundations which Zwingli laid. The deviations from Zwingli

<sup>43</sup> Nr. 30.

<sup>44</sup> German, "evangelisch"—i.e., as against Catholic. The term "Protestant" did not of course come into use until 1529. (*Translator's note.*)

<sup>45</sup> The eschatological anticipation is not emphasised by the Zollikon Anabaptists. Yet it must be said that there is one mysterious, isolated outbreak of eschatological fervour which should be noted. Cf. Dr. F. Blanke, "Die Propheten von Zollikon." (*Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter* Jahrgang 9, 1952, pp. 2-10.)

go in the direction of a yet more literal, and stricter adherence to the Holy Scripture. The authority of the Bible is for Zwingli and for the Anabaptists, who parted from him, the rule of conduct, but in the application of this rule of conduct the Anabaptists think in details, more literally and more biblically. So the disagreement arose between Zwingli the teacher and his ultra-Zwinglian pupils. Thus one can say that the Anabaptist movement in this disagreement, i.e. in its appeal to the Holy Scripture alone, remained a daughter of the Reformation, though admittedly a self-willed one.

### No Economic Factors

There is still one question which remains to be answered. Was the revival in Zollikon genuinely religious or was it also involved with political and social influences? How far economic factors had a share in the origin and expansion of Anabaptism is not yet sufficiently clear. Our intention now is to discuss this question only in relation to Zollikon.

In his work, *Elenchus in catabaptistarum strophas*, written in 1527, Zwingli upbraided the Zollikon Anabaptists for having communistic intentions:<sup>46</sup> "Perditi homines mediocrium bona communia volunt esse, sua vero, si quae habent, nullatenus." (These infamous men desire that the possessions of the poorer people should be had in common, their own possessions, however, such as they have, by no means!) As evidence for this statement he cites a weaver named Heini Frig—or Gigli—from Hirslanden, near Zürich, who told him that the Zollikon Anabaptists had used up his winter stocks.<sup>47</sup> We meet this Frig again in the court records. He had been baptized in the week from 22nd-29th January and was arrested on January 30th along with his like-minded companions. In contrast to the other Anabaptist prisoners, he quickly renounced his standpoint, and then accused his one-time friends of leaning towards communism. He declared<sup>48</sup> that he had been forced by the Zollikon Anabaptists to sell his smallholding and give up his profession. The plan had been that all things should be had in common and put in one fund. All should live out of this one central fund. Frig here goes still further in his accusations now he has gone over to Zwingli's side. Which of his two statements is nearer to the truth? Can he be accepted as a reliable witness? It can be seen from the fact that his statement stands entirely on its own, that it is necessary to be cautious in this matter. It is substantiated by no other record at all. The Zürich authorities themselves, at any rate, clearly did not consider his statement as of great importance. In spite of this serious accusa-

<sup>46</sup> *Krit Zw. Ausg.* vi p. 85.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* p. 83. In the notes see my discussion concerning this man Frig.

<sup>48</sup> Nr. 39.

tion made by Heini Frig at the beginning of 1525 there is no sign of the question concerning having goods in common among the questions which were put in cross-examination to the imprisoned Zollikon Anabaptists from the side of the authorities. In view of these facts we are justified, I believe, in setting a large question mark against the possibility of Zollikon communism.

The number of people whom we know were baptized in Zollikon in the period between 22nd-29th January amounts to 35.<sup>49</sup> Of this number only one was a woman. Thus the Anabaptist movement in this first week was very much a men's movement. Among the 34 men baptized, there were four labourers, the other 30 were independent farmers. They belonged to the well-established Zollikon families of Breittiner, Bleuler, Hottinger, Kienast, Murer, Rutschmann, Thomann and others. Most numerous of these were the members of the Hottinger family.

Heinrich Bruppacher, in his book, *Das Alte Zollikon* (1899) brought together useful information concerning the economic situation of these families who shared in the Anabaptist movement. Paul Guyer, in his recent book, *Die Bevölkerung Zollikons im Mittelalter und in der Neuzeit* (1946), confirms Bruppacher's work. Zollikon had about 50 farmers with large farms and about 40 with smaller farms.<sup>50</sup> The Anabaptists belonged in an overwhelming degree to the latter group. Many of the names of the richer families, such as Brunner, Ernst, Falk, Häusler, Obrist, do not appear at all among the Anabaptists. As against this, of the 40 owners of small farms the greater part, about 30, are included in the Anabaptist group.

Are we justified, with these facts before us, in saying that economic factors in Zollikon played a part in the Anabaptist movement? Scarcely! It grew up among the class of the small farm owners. If they had been poor it is certainly possible that they would have expected from Anabaptism an improvement of their situation. However, they cannot be classified as poor. According to Bruppacher, "They did not belong to the poor; on the contrary they earned their good honest living in that, in addition to their smallholdings, they occupied themselves with casual labouring or handwork."<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, it is, of course, striking, that the well-to-do group remained aloof whilst those living in more moderate circumstances took part in the movement. But is it any different today with the participation of the different

<sup>49</sup> My calculation is based upon the names mentioned in Nrs. 29, 30 and 31.

<sup>50</sup> Nüesch-Bruppacher p. 83.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83. By "handwork" is meant weaving, etc. The use of the "house industry" was much practised in Switzerland at this time. (Translator's note.)

classes of society in church life? This distribution has nothing to do with economic aspirations.

If we think back once again to the hard, inward struggle which preceded the conversion of the individual, to the "terrores conscientiae" which these men experienced, it is altogether improbable that social or economic hopes played a part in the Zollikon Anabaptist movement. These farmers were not concerned with money and worldly goods, but rather with their guilt before God and the liberation from this guilt. Thus in the origin of the Anabaptist church in Zollikon we are dealing with the birth of a fellowship, entirely religious in character.

The young growth was soon forcibly suppressed, but that does not detract from its importance. In Zollikon a new form of church constitution began to show itself—that of the Free Church. Zollikon is the cradle of this idea, from whence it set out on its triumphal march through four centuries and through the whole world.

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*The Mission of the Local Church*, by Paul Rowntree Clifford.  
(S.C.M. Press, 7s. 6d.)

To the considerable number of books which in recent years have been published on the Church the Superintendent of West Ham Central Mission has here added one which, of its kind, is as good as any we have read. He deals with the Church as the divine society, with worship, the sacraments, fellowship and the relation of the local church to the community, the family and the Church Universal. The whole rests on his conviction that the Church is not to be thought of as an institution but as the people of God, a community created and sustained by divine grace. That the author is a Baptist is made quite plain, and in a work of this type, particularly as it is assured of a wide circulation, it is refreshing to find the Baptist viewpoint expounded. As the title indicates, Mr. Clifford's intention is to approach the question of the mission of the Church in its local setting. Some readers may, therefore, feel disappointed to find that certain practical issues which confront them in their own churches are not here dealt with and that there are times when the author might well have descended from the heights of theological principle to the plains of practical detail. Nevertheless, here is a book of real quality, the fruit of thinking which is both clear and deep, and which we warmly commend to laymen and ministers alike as a useful and eminently readable contribution to the subject.

GRAHAM W. HUGHES.