

THE CANADIAN SOCIETY OF CHURCH HISTORY

PAPERS

1970



## INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

The papers printed here were originally read at the Society's annual meeting held in June 1970 on the campus of the University of Manitoba. Their reproduction in mimeographed form does not preclude their publication elsewhere and it is to be understood that copyright remains with the author.

The Society welcomes inquiries and memberships from all persons interested in religious and ecclesiastical history. The annual meeting for 1971 will be held in conjunction with the Canadian Learned Societies' at Memorial University, St. John's, on May 29th-31st. Further information may be obtained from the Secretary, Professor J. Kenyon, Scarborough College, University of Toronto.

G. P. Albaugh,  
President.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING CATHOLIC CHURCH  
IN CANADA IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: J. S. Moir..... 1

REFORM AND REVOLUTION AMONG  
SIXTEENTH CENTURY RADICALS: E.J. Furcha..... 20

THE NATURE OF THE ANABAPTIST  
PROTEST: W. Klaassen ..... 44

MAURICE BLONDEL'S HISTOIRE ET DOGME  
IN THE FRENCH MODERNIST CRISIS: J.J. D'Aoust..... 76

The English-speaking Catholic Church in Canada  
in the Nineteenth Century

John S. Moir

Scarborough College

University of Toronto

In a paper entitled "Catholicism in French Canada in the Nineteenth Century" - and subtitled, significantly, "Cultivated Fields and Fallow Ground", prepared for delivery at the International Congress of Historical Sciences at Moscow this coming August, Professor Pierre Savard of Laval University refers to the "incomplete state of our knowledge" of the French Canadian Catholic Church. In view of the extensive, even monumental amount of publications on that subject, Professor Savard's comment on the incomplete state of knowledge must be taken in the context of historical research and publication after 1945, since which time greater attention has been paid by church historians to aspects and issues raised by the social sciences, rather than by the older "institutional" school of church historians. The labours of an older generation, the generation of Abbé Gosselin, are being supplemented by the new wave of historians, such as Savard, Monet, Wallot, and others, who are throwing fresh light on a well established discipline. But what of the non-French Catholic Church in Canada which has had no Gosselin, no Caron or Langevin? Here is an area of Canadian development qualitatively if not quantitatively as important as the French church and one which is only now attracting the attention of a handful of dedicated scholars. Here are more fallow grounds begging for attention, and historians are now beginning to take up the challenge. But the general premise-- that we have not yet done justice to the themes of the English Catholic church in Canada-- will be admitted by most. This paper intends only to sketch what I conceive to be some of the major aspects or trends in the development of the English Catholic church in Canada. It will probably answer no questions, but with luck it may raise a

host of queries and encourage a greater interest in these particular fallow fields of Canada's history.

Viewed retrospectively the nineteenth century was for the Catholic church in Canada an age of tremendous expansion and achievement, as indeed it was for all Christian denominations in the country. The nineteenth century can conveniently be defined as identical in time with the Pax Britannica, extending from the end of the Napoleonic wars and the shorter war of 1812-14 with the United States, to the outbreak of the first World War. The first date marks almost precisely the separate organization of the English-speaking church; the second the beginning of the period of deep social and economic changes which shaped the present-day Canada in a new form.

In 1814 the Catholic church in British North America still consisted of the single diocese of Quebec, already 140 years old, containing two seminaries, some 300 priests and 450,000 members. At that date the church was primarily the French Canadian Church, for although the Maritime colonies of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Cape Breton and Prince Edward Island contained about 45,000 Catholics of Scottish and Irish origin and the frontier colony of Upper Canada had some 15,000 Catholics recently arrived from Scotland,<sup>1</sup> the vast majority (over 80%) of Catholics in British North America were French-speaking residents of Lower Canada who could boast of two centuries of linguistic and religious existence in the New World. One hundred years later the "French fact" was still dominant both in the church and the dominion of Canada, but the church now comprised 8 archbishoprics, 23 bishoprics and 6 vicariates apostolic, at least 17 seminaries, some 2500 priests, and 3 million members of whom about 40 percent (some 20 percent of the Canadian population) belonged to the English-speaking section of the church.<sup>2</sup>

Although the Roman Catholic church has always been the largest Christian denomination in Canada, generally twice the size of the largest Protestant church, the fact that Canadian Catholicism has been composed of a French majority and an English

minority (a minority actually comprising several distinct ethnic groups) has affected the role which the church has played in Canadian life. On occasions language has proved itself a more potent unifying force than religion. English-speaking Catholics shared the religious aspirations of French Canadian Catholics, but they often shared the political aspirations of English-speaking Protestants. The position of English Catholics may perhaps be described as a third solitude. They remained separated by language from their coreligionists and by religion from their colinguists. The solitude of language was epitomized, for example, by the chasm which appeared between English and French-Canadian bishops at the Eucharistic Congress of 1910 or in the controversy over Ontario's renowned Regulation 17. The solitude of the English Catholic in relation to his Protestant neighbor was vividly expressed by G.M. Grant: "Even in cities where there is the closest association of Protestant and Romanist in commercial, industrial and political life, the two currents of religious life flow side by side as distinct from each other as the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa after their conjunction. But the rivers do eventually blend into one. The two currents of religious life do not".<sup>3</sup>

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the position and problems of the Church varied in the different colonies of British North America, but the early development of the English-speaking Church can be most easily dealt with by treating it as two separate regions - the Maritimes, and the rest of Canada west of Montreal. Between these two unequal regions lies the French-speaking church of Quebec, inhibiting by its geographical intrusion the growth of a greater uniformity within the English-speaking church as a whole, but testifying to the necessity of treating Canadian history in part as the collective experience of disparate regions.

Differences within the English-speaking church were not, however, solely the result of geographical separation. Early settlement patterns in British North America had already by 1814 shaped the character of the Maritime colonies and throughout

the nineteenth century the same factor of settlement influenced the pattern of development in the western region as the Canadian frontier marched unsteadily westward from the Great Lakes across the Prairies to the Pacific Ocean. However, neither in the Maritimes nor in Upper Canada (and even later in the church's expansion into western Canada) did Catholics from England play any distinguishable role. Thus to speak of the English Catholic church in Canada in the nineteenth century is to speak of national groups - Scottish, Irish, German and Eastern European - all of whom were non-English by origin but all of whom were English-speaking.

Recognition of post-Conquest cultural and linguistic pluralism within the church came in 1819 with the appointment of two English-speaking suffragans and auxiliaries to the Bishop of Quebec - Angus MacEachern for the Maritime colonies and his friend Alexander Macdonell for Upper Canada.<sup>4</sup> In both these English-speaking regions the dominant national influence in the church was in the beginning Scottish. As new bishoprics were successively carved out of MacEachern's original diocese the appointment of bishops seems to have been dictated by the nationality of the majority of the Roman Catholics in those areas. Thus the diocese of New Brunswick had three Irish bishops in succession and four of the first five bishops of Halifax were also natives of Ireland, whereas Antigonish always maintained a strongly Scottish influence and MacEachern's four successors in Charlottetown were natives of Prince Edward Island, but all of Scottish ancestry.<sup>5</sup> In both the Maritimes and Upper Canada bishops tried to accommodate national interests of particular congregations when appointing priests. A notable exception to this practice seems to have been Bishop de Charbonnel who was accused of banishing Irish priests from his diocese and of preferring French-born priests who flew in the face of Irish voluntarist sentiment by attempting to enforce fixed fees for admission to the mass.<sup>6</sup>

The distinctive development of the English-speaking Catholics in the Maritimes is more difficult to trace than in central or

western Canada. A common old-world experience of landlordism and proselytizing may have been a bond between the Irish and Scots of the region but the Gaelic language and clan traditions tended to keep the Scots separated. There, as in Upper Canada, the Scots gloried in their loyalty to Britain; they were also notable for their piety and poverty and for clannishness. Like the Scots the Irish preserved elements of a closed culture, but the Irish were more aggressive.<sup>7</sup> Lacking a frontier the Maritimes enjoyed a more static society which received a smaller proportion of immigrants than did the British colonies to the west. Since the Maritimes did not share in the industrialism and rising standard of living enjoyed by those other colonies, it seems fair to say that in religious development as in so many other aspects of the history of the seaboard, time seemed to pass that region by, and the political tradition of "moderation and harmony" had its religious counterpart in the mutual respect and generally good relations of Catholics and other Christians.

In so many aspects of its growth in the Canadas, the English Roman Catholic church was the beneficiary of the peculiar religious freedoms accorded to the church in the old province of Quebec, whereas in the Maritimes full political rights for Roman Catholics were granted only in the mid-1820's. In Upper Canada, at least until the Irish famine migration, the Catholic population was predominantly rural and widely scattered,<sup>8</sup> the only block settlements being the Scots of Glengarry and the Irish in the neighbourhood of Peterborough and of the Rideau. Irish Catholics in the urban centres were well established in middle class professions and mercantile pursuits. Scottish Catholics held senior positions in the civil administration from the earliest period of settlement out of all proportion to their small numbers.<sup>9</sup> This Scottish influence in the two Canadas involved a clannishness that occasionally smacked of nepotism both in lay and church circles, but the influence was rapidly dissipated in the 1830's and 1840's by an influx of Irish immigrants and Irish priests.<sup>10</sup> Unlike Macdonell and his Scots, whose ardent loyalism and respect for social aristocracy was conjoined to a form of Erastianism,<sup>11</sup> the Irish clergy and



laity came from a background where the clan system had long since lost its effectiveness and where the historic repression of the Catholic church has welded pastor and flock together in a distrust of the civil establishment and in a voluntarist tradition.<sup>12</sup> The Irish tended to reverse the priorities of church and education held by Macdonell, viewing the church as an extension of the school,<sup>13</sup> and their propensity towards independence was a major bane of Macdonell's closing years.<sup>14</sup> After the massive wave of refugees from the Irish potato famine arrived in the late 1840's the various dioceses formed from Macdonell's original bishopric were preponderantly Irish in personnel and attitudes.<sup>15</sup>

Upper Canadian Catholics enjoyed satisfactory relations with their Protestant neighbours, relations that were polite if not always cordial. The exception to this condition was the period of the "Papal Aggression" controversy and the legacy of suspicion and covert hostility which it bequeathed to the next generation of Canadians. The Irish immigrants could readily identify with radical Protestantism in its liberal and anti-establishment objectives. This alliance was strained by the separate school agitation wherein Catholic educational traditions overrode Irish Canadian nationalism, and by the contemporaneous "Papal Aggression" controversy without which the political history of Canada might have recorded the birth of a strong secular reform tradition generations before Laurier made Liberalism respectable for Canadian Catholics.<sup>16</sup>

Unacceptable as George Brown's stand on papal aggression and separate schools was to the Church at large, Brown's reforming liberalism and his "top by pop" solution to the sectional difficulties of the United Province attracted enough support among the laity and lower clergy to bring them into conflict with church leaders who refused to see the political realism of Brown's proposals and condemned reformism out of hand because of its connection with the schools question.<sup>17</sup> One further Irish influence or at least the strong suspicion of such an influence, may be detected in the disruptive but far from in-

frequent appearance of a penchant for semi-autonomous congregationalism at the very time when the Catholic church was moving towards increased episcopal supervision. Such independence of spirit among the Irish in Upper Canada cannot be offered as proofs of the frontier thesis, since incidents such as the O'Grady affair invariably concerned urban congregations who challenged episcopally ordained priorities for the expenditure of limited financial resources.

From its institutional inception the English-speaking Catholic church had the advantage of growing within an institutional and legal framework already established by and for the French-speaking church. Undoubtedly this fact facilitated its growth, yet the difference in language from the French Catholic majority created strains. Unlike the Scots whose relations with the French were reasonably happy, the Irish Catholics seemed to harbor some kind of natural antipathy towards the French. Despite the generous reception of sick, destitute or orphaned Irish by the French, antipathy was none the less real for being subterranean.<sup>18</sup> At mid-century in Montreal, where Irish-French friction was endemic, the bishop prevented the creation of an Irish parish for a decade by refusing to acknowledge every request for such linguistic separation.<sup>19</sup>

Despite the strains created by language differences the English-speaking church depended heavily on the French for the theological education of its priests. The relative attractions for English ordinands and their bishops of the two seminaries of Quebec and Montreal seem to have been determined largely on the basis of propinquity. Bishop Macdonell always looked to the Sulpicians of Montreal for assistance, although he was often made painfully aware of the traditional, and in his day increasingly bitter, ecclesiastical rivalry of the two cities. His loyalty to the bishop of Quebec was hard pressed not only by force of circumstances but also by the pride of the Sulpicians who in his words tended to equate their own ambitions with the will of God.<sup>20</sup> The Upper Canadian connection to the Sulpician seminary grew over decades to be something more than mere

tradition or convenience.<sup>21</sup> At the turn of the century the archbishop of Toronto was convinced that in the education of his clergy the Sulpicians should always have the last word.<sup>22</sup> Although plans for a seminary to serve all parts of the English church in Canada had been put on foot by his predecessor it was not until 1910 that the archbishop opened St. Augustine's seminary in Toronto to perform that function.

While the history of the English church west of Montreal is marked by occasional and unsought involvement in the Montreal-Quebec rivalry there is no public evidence that the English church in the Maritimes found itself caught in that crossfire. For the Maritimes the Quebec seminary seemed the preferred source of theological education, to judge from incomplete statistics regarding the registration of ordinands. All students in the two seminaries learned French, but at least in Montreal the language issue of French versus English was perpetuated by the segregation of Ontario students, who for residential purposes lived on a separate floor nicknamed the "Irish corridor" and characterized by the high spirits of its inhabitants.<sup>23</sup> Differences between French and English were more than linguistic-- a difference in life-style and affluence was noted by Archbishop Lynch who contrasted his "Irish habit of poor living" with the French custom of taking wine thrice daily.<sup>24</sup>

The Catholic church in British North America shared with the rest of the world church in the "great renewal" of the nineteenth century. In Upper Canada the renewal began very modestly under Bishop Power during the 1840's. Early evidences in that decade are few, perhaps because of the relatively small and scattered Roman Catholic population and also because of the lack of any newspaper comparable to the Mélanges Religieux of Montreal.<sup>25</sup> This situation changed drastically at mid-century, coinciding closely with the arrival of the French count and bishop, de Charbonnel, and with the arrival of tens of thousands of Irish potato famine refugees. New religious communities were invited into the dioceses, a host of church-centered lay associations both charitable and devotional were founded, and Catholic newspapers appeared that emphasized the political liberalism and

the Irishness of the English-speaking church.<sup>26</sup>

The "great renewal" reached Upper Canada at the same time as the industrial revolution and its related revolutions in transportation, communications and agriculture so that the church shared in the general upsurge of piety and of affluence. New churches were built and old ones replaced or extended; church and charitable givings increased at an unprecedented rate. In the area of the later diocese of Hamilton only seven parishes and missions had been founded between 1820 and 1850, yet nineteen new ones were created in the 1850's alone - as many as were established there in the next half century.<sup>27</sup> These figures reflect the rapid economic expansion of the colony in the 1850's despite the major depression during the later years of that decade. But they concern only one limited area and cannot reveal two basic factors in the history of Canada in the nineteenth century, namely that the frontier continued to unfold as population moved westward, and that in the second half of the century Canada was beset by recurrent and prolonged depressions which certainly delayed the growth of all Christian denominations in the Dominion.

The onset of industrialism and consequently of urbanization in Upper Canada at mid-century and the general lack of capital and skills on the part of the Irish famine immigrants combined to make their church an urban institution to a degree unknown to the contemporary French-speaking Catholic church in Canada. Furthermore, the fact that the English church ministered to a large, low-income group concentrated in urban ghettos, produced two further consequences. Lack of education among the bulk of the laity undoubtedly sharply curtailed the recruiting of priests from among the first and probably the second generation of these immigrants and this must account for the large number of clergy who beginning about 1850 were received either directly from Ireland or from Ireland via the United States or France and who, in achieving positions of eminence in the church's administrative structure, stamped the English-speaking church with an Irish character.

Yet the Irish influence in the church did not so much replace as overlay older ethnic elements in the English church. In Ontario German Catholics had settled in Waterloo county during the early decades of the century and had retained through the medium of the church much of German culture,<sup>28</sup> or as a Protestant writer observed, "a freedom of tone" unlike the French and Irish Catholic expression.<sup>29</sup> At least ten separate schools in the county used German as the language of instruction. At the outbreak of the first World War records of 213 of the 317 priests who had worked or visited in the county showed that 84 were Ontario-born, 36 were Irish, and 34 from Germany and Austria.<sup>30</sup> Similarly among Highland Scottish settlers in Eastern Ontario Gaelic continued to be used in homes and in the pulpit, if not in the schools. Irish immigrants, however, seem to have spoken English only and this no doubt accelerated the process of their Canadianization. By the 1860's the Irish Catholics were among the most vocal exponents of a Canadian nationalism, thus following the example of the Irish clergy who identified easily and quickly with their new homeland.

This indigenization when combined with political liberalism produced at times a Canadianism that was anti-England and which dwelt on the past and present sufferings of Mother Ireland. But unlike the Irish of Boston and New York, the Canadian Irish preserved no articulated tradition about the potato famine. It remained an episode that was neither historicized nor mythologized in Canada.<sup>31</sup> One explanation of this omission may lie in the fact that their lay leaders, the few men of considerable substance, seem to have traced their emigration to a period before the Great Hunger, just as their Irish priests were a product of a later migration. Those immigrants who were immediate sufferers in the late forties, however, simply failed to preserve any strong group or individual recollection of their tragic experience. A second consequence of urbanization and poverty was the remarkable response to the challenge of charity and the church's inevitable need for funds. Poorer church members gave

generously in support of religion, and a traditional reliance on and promotion of the ideal of the "widow's mite" is still in evidence. But such self-sacrifice by poor laity and devoted clergy does not sufficiently explain the impressive rise of the church from a state of proud poverty in Macdonell's day to a condition of undeniably extensive wealth if not opulence by the end of the century.<sup>32</sup> Capital expansion came from the profits of the sale of city-centre properties bequeathed to the church in earlier years and from large donations by the few wealthy church members. Many bazaars and general subscription campaigns would be required to match such gifts as the half-million dollars given by one Toronto brewer to cover the cost of building and furnishing St. Augustine's seminary.<sup>33</sup>

The fact that at least a significant part of the Catholic church's activities was increasingly concerned with this poorer class of city dwellers in a country steadily becoming more urbanized and more industrialized underlies the sympathetic or at least neutral attitude of the English-speaking hierarchy towards trade unionism, at a time when their agricultural-minded French-speaking brother bishops in Quebec were publicly condemning the Knights of Labor as a threat to the Catholic faith.<sup>34</sup> That so much of the available energy and resources of the English-speaking church had to be channelled into essential parochial and social services before the first World War explains not only the monopoly role of the French church in western Canadian missions but also the belated participation of the English church in the great nineteenth century movement of foreign missions.

Since education in Canada is constitutionally within exclusively provincial jurisdiction the history of Catholic education must be examined within the separate context of each province. Hence it is difficult to state simply and succinctly the nature and traditions of Catholic education in Canada, but some common elements may be identified as having a nation-wide application at least for the English-speaking church. One such

tradition has been an emphasis on separate education of the sexes, although this is obviously in no way unique to the English church. Another, probably of American or even Irish origin, is the stress laid on team sports and the general encouragement of participation in athletics, a tradition occasionally criticized as derogating from academic achievement.

Except for the successful demand for separate Catholic schools in Upper Canada (first voiced about 1850, and blamed by supporters of nondenominational education on the influence of Bishop de Charbonnel and his Jesuit advisers), there seems to be no other evidence in the English church of the political ultramontanism which had been fostered in the French church by Bishop Bourget of Montreal since the 1840's. A public letter from the Irish and liberal Archbishop Lynch of Toronto to the federal Liberal party leader, Alexander Mackenzie, in 1876 declared that, "in Ontario the priests are forbidden to turn the altar into a tribune from which to deliver political harangues or to menace electors on account of the votes they may give at political elections".<sup>35</sup> This pronouncement brought down on his head the ire of the extreme ultramontanes of Quebec where the "Catholic Programme" identified the interests of the church with the Conservative party, and where sacramental terrorism was used to enforce the ultramontane will on Catholic electors. In Ontario the same objectives of the church were achieved by Lynch through quiet diplomacy and co-operation with Premier Oliver Mowat.<sup>36</sup>

Religious ultramontanism found a warm reception among English-speaking Catholics and especially among the Irish, but political ultramontanism of the nationaliste brand that distressed the French Canadian church was entirely foreign to the transplanted liberal and voluntarist traditions which thrived as well in Canada as in Ireland.<sup>37</sup> The Papal Zouaves are not an organization, not even a memory, in Canada's English speaking Catholic church. Irish pastors and their flocks were at heart nineteenth century liberals. Archbishop Lynch was described in his own lifetime as, "a devout Catholic, and a sincere advocate of Papal infallibility, he is willing to accord . . . full liberty of

conscience to those who differ from him,"<sup>38</sup> a description that must have seemed self-contradictory to some of his brother bishops in Quebec.

In western Canada, for most of the nineteenth century, the church must be viewed as an extension of the French Canadian church. Missionary work among the native tribes was exclusively in the hands of French Oblates, and even in the three decades following Confederation in 1867, parish clergy and parish life in the region mirrored familiar French Canadian patterns. It was confidently assumed that the Canadian West would be Catholic and French, but instead it became, after 1867, first an extension of the English and Protestant ethos of Ontario and then, in the last generation before the first World War, a region of ethnic, linguistic and religious pluralism, thanks to thousands of Eastern Europeans who entered in Canada's second Great Migration. The pattern of development in the west was towards the integration of these New Canadians into the English Canadian way-of-life and, ironically, the Catholic church in the West became predominantly English, although the French had sowed the seeds of faith in earlier days.

As the "last, best West" grew at a phenomenal rate in the twenty years before the First World War, the Church grew proportionately. A federal minister of the Interior commented on the sudden change from "paltry sheds" to "real cathedrals, houses, convents, schools and hospitals" which marked "the very top of progress".<sup>39</sup> Local finances provided the physical structures but the priests and institutions of the faith were imported from the East. As the West was a mission monopoly of the Oblates until the coming of Franciscans in 1895, so too early female orders were offshoots of French-Canadian foundations. Tensions between the early French and later English settlers arose when later groups proposed to move churches closer to the transcontinental CPR, a suggestion resisted strongly by the more rural-minded French parishioners.



The decisive role of transportation routes in church growth was again exemplified in the West by the opening of thirteen parishes in central Alberta immediately after the arrival of the CPR and this pattern was repeated in the same area by the establishment of six more parishes when the Canadian Northern line was completed in 1906 and of four more when the Grand Trunk Pacific arrived soon after.<sup>40</sup> For both English and French-speaking churches in the West problems were increased during the last decade before the War by the arrival of thousands of Eastern Europeans. In those ten years seven Polish missions and two Greek Uniate Ruthenian parishes were created in the central area of Alberta alone. After sharing in the long incubation of the West, the church had suddenly begun to flourish in the hot-house climate of the second Great Migration to Canada, but its character altered from French to English pattern, an English pattern that included ethnic pluralism reflecting the modern Canadian immigration experience and paralleling more closely developments in Canada Protestant churches than in the French Catholic church.

Through the nineteenth century the English Catholic church had grown in Canada and with Canada. By 1914 the church mirrored territorially the expansion of the ambitious young dominion; physically it reflected the affluence of the increasingly industrialized nation; spiritually it shared in the "renewed" life of a militant Christendom and in the piety of the Victorian age of Western European civilization. Although dominated institutionally and perhaps psychologically by the "Irish fact" the English-speaking church was accommodating to the ethnic and cultural pluralism of the modern period more easily than its French-Canadian counterpart. At the close of the nineteenth century the English-Canadian church was characterized by urbanism, "English Canadian" nationalism, and an overt loyalty to Britain shared by most Protestant Canadians. Such generalizations are admittedly of a most tentative nature. So little scholarly research on the English-speaking Catholic church in Canada has

been undertaken or published that until a new generation of historians can probe those questions through the use of basic documentation, the interpretations offered in this paper must remain open to reservations not only about their specific accuracy but about their validity in principle.

#### Footnotes

1. Census of Canada, 1871, Vol. 4.
2. Based on Census of Canada, 1911 and F.J. Audet, Canadian Historical Dates and Events (Ottawa, 1917).
3. Anno Domini MDCCCCI, 2 vols., (Toronto, 1902), I, 81.
4. This territorial devolution was completed when Macdonell was made bishop of Regiopolis in 1826 and MacEachern of Charlottetown in 1829. Kingston was thus the first Roman Catholic diocese established in the British Empire since the Reformation, and its erection came a quarter-century before the "Papal Aggression" controversy was sparked by a similar development in Great Britain.
5. This analysis is based on Audet, op. cit., pp. 166-70. In Prince Edward Island 52 priests of Scottish origin were appointed, of whom 30 belonged to the Clan Macdonald. Of the 52, 28 were trained at the Quebec seminary and 10 at Montreal. Memorial Volume 1772-1922. The Arrival of the First Scottish Catholic Emigrants in Prince Edward Island and After. (Summerside, 1922), pp. 109-27.
6. "Legion." Association of Irish -Gentlemen. A brief View of the State of the Catholic Church in Upper Canada, Shewing the Evil Results of an Undue Predominance of the French Foreign Element in the Administration of Ecclesiastical Affairs, and of the Advisableness of Petitioning the Sovereign Pontiff for a more Just Proportion of Bishops and Priests from the Old Country. (Toronto, Dec. 4, 1858).
7. Memorial Volume 1772-1922, p. 72.
8. H.J. Somers, The Life and Times of the Hon. and Rt. Rev. Alexander Macdonell, D.D., First Bishop of Upper Canada, 1762-1840. (Washington, 1931), p. 42. Mrs. Joseph Greene, "St. Vincent de Paul's Church", Niagara Historical Society Publication No. 13, (1905), p. 26, comments on the numerical prominence of Irish among early Roman Catholic settlers.

9. See e.g., Bro. Alfred Dooner, Catholic Pioneers in Upper Canada, (Toronto, 1947), pp. 20-1, n. 40 et passim.
10. J.R. Teeffy, ed., The Archdiocese of Toronto and Archbishop Walsh: Jubilee Volume 1842-1892, (Toronto, 1892), p. 64, "The Irish Catholics . . . came in such numbers as soon to constitute the bone and sinew of the Church in this country."
11. W.J. Macdonnell, Reminiscences of the Late Hon. and Right Rev. Alexander Macdonnell, . . . . (Toronto, 1888), p. 6 et passim. Between 1824 and 1835 Macdonnell received at least 3,550 and 1600 acres from the government.
12. Ontario Archives, Macdonnell Papers, I, 79-80, Macdonnell to J.J. Lartigue, 7 April 1821, "There are some Irish families . . . not being accustomed to pay tythes to Catholic clergymen in their own country do not consider themselves obligated to do so here . . . ."
13. Unlike the French-Canadian bishops, the English-speaking bishops were chronically short of funds until the post-Confederation years, a fact which several congregations exploited by opposing church building projects. As James Bâby reported of St. Paul's parish, Toronto, in 1824, "None, hardly of the people . . . have paid their subscription money. . . ." (Edward Kelly, The Story of St. Paul's Parish, Toronto, Toronto, 1922, p. 44). As late as 1891 that particular congregation was paying \$3650 interest annually on the church debt, ibid., 137-9.
14. Macdonnell Papers, III, 268-9, Macdonnell to Cardinal Weld, 6 May 1827, complaining that Irish priests bring their "politics and party feelings" to Canada; ibid., II, 198, Macdonnell to Major Hillier, 23 March 1823, has dismissed 4 Irish priests and others are "roaming through the country to the no small injury of religion and of the people over whom they wish to acquire influence."; ibid., VIII, 1063-6, Macdonnell to the Rev. Angus Macdonald, 20 August 1832, "Some of my Irish clergy taking advantage of the reduced state of my mind have done and are still doing all they can to weaken and oppose my authority."

15. Of 48 priests ordained in London diocese between 1857 and 1884, at least 25 bore Irish surnames. See J.F. Coffey, The City and Diocese of London, Ontario, Canada. An Historical Sketch. (London, 1885), pp. 61-2.
16. The "Papal Aggression" controversy prevented the emergence of a Catholic-Protestant Reform alliance as surely as the growing Irish influence in the church destroyed the earlier conservative alliance between Macdonell and the Orange Order. In the latter connection it must have been common and unpleasant knowledge among Irish Catholics that their bishop owed much of his prestige with the Imperial and colonial governments to his role as chaplain of the Scottish Catholic troops who had helped to crush the Irish rebellion of 1798.
17. Arthur Monahan, "A Politico-Religious Incident in the Career of Thomas D'Arcy McGee". Canadian Catholic Historical Association, Report 1957, pp. 39-51.
18. J.A. Gallagher, "The Irish Emigration of 1847 and its Canadian Consequences", Canadian Catholic Historical Association, Report 1935-6, 43-57; G.R.C. Keep, "The Irish Adjustment in Montreal", Canadian Historical Review, XXXI (1), March 1950, 39-46; W.P. Bull, From Macdonell to McGuigan. (Toronto, 1939), p. 134.
19. J.J. Curran, ed. Golden Jubilee of St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum. (Montreal, 1902). P. 25 ff.
20. Macdonell Papers, III, 268-9, Macdonell to Cardinal Weld, 6 May 1827.
21. L.K. Shook, "St. Michael's College, The Formative Years, 1850-1853", Canadian Catholic Historical Association, Report 1950, p. 43. When de Charbonnel's ambitious plans for a Little Seminary failed to develop for lack of money, teachers and pupils, educational energies were channelled into the classical college which became St. Michael's.
22. F.A. O'Brien. Most Reverend Denis O'Connor, D.D., C.S.B., Archbishop of Toronto, Ontario. Life work of a Saintly Prelate. (Kalamazoo, 1914). No pagination. "In the education of his clergy he took the stand that the Sulpician Fathers of Montreal Seminary should have the last word."

23. F.J. O'Sullivan. The Chronicles of Crofton. (Toronto, 1926). P. 174.
24. C.B. Sissons, ed. My Dearest Sophie. (Toronto, 1955). P. 55.
25. P.F. Cronin, "Early Catholic Journalism in Canada", Canadian Catholic Historical Association, Report 1935-6, 31-42; Agnes Coffey, "The True Witness and Catholic Chronicle: Sixty Years of Catholic Journalistic Action", Canadian Catholic Historical Association, Report 1937-8, 33-46. On the role of the Mélanges Religieux, see Jacques Monet, "French-Canadian Nationalism and the Challenge of Ultramontanism", Canadian Historical Association, Historical Papers 1966, 41-55.
26. See Sister Maura, The Sisters of Charity, Halifax (Toronto, 1956), pp. 2, 6-7; anon., Life and Letters of Rev. Mother Teresa Dease, Foundress and Superior General of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Toronto, 1916), p. 11; Sister Mary Agnes, The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph (Toronto, 1921); Mary Hoskin; History of St. Basil's Parish, (Toronto, 1912), p. 52 et passim; Marion Bell, "The History of the Catholic Welfare Bureau", unpublished M.S.W. thesis, University of Toronto, 1949, p. 14 et passim.
27. Theobald Spetz. The Catholic Church in Waterloo County (Kingston, 1916), Pp. 226-38.
28. J.A. Lenhard, "German Catholics in Ontario", Canadian Catholic Historical Association, Report 1936-7, 41-5.
29. Anno Domini MDCCCI, 2 vols., (Toronto, 1902), I, 81.
30. Spetz, op. cit., pp. 239-61.
31. In "Catholicism and Secular Culture: Australia and Canada Compared", (Culture, juin, XXX No. 2, 1969, 93-113), Timothy Suttor points to several historical factors which have blunted the "racial memory" of English Canadian Catholicism.
32. See e.g., Shook, op. cit., p. 45.
33. Fifty Golden Years 1913-1963, St. Augustine's Seminary. (Toronto, 1963). P. 1; Bro. Alfred Dooner, op. cit., 212, 215-6.

34. George Boyle. Pioneer in Purple, The Life and Work of Archbishop Neil McNeil (Montreal, 1951). Pp. 33, 70.
35. Toronto Globe, 29 January, 1876.
36. H.C. McKeown. The Life and Labors of Most Rev. John Joseph Lynch, D.D., Cong. Miss., First Archbishop of Toronto (Montreal, 1886). Pp. 308-9.
37. D.A. O'Sullivan. Essays on the Church in Canada (Toronto, 1890). P. 17, "Every Catholic is . . . an ultramontane Catholic, and . . . whoever is not ultramontane is no Catholic."
38. J.C. Dent. Canadian Portrait Gallery, 4 vols. (Toronto, 1880). I, 145.
39. E.J. Legal. Short Sketches of the History of the Catholic Churches in Central Alberta (N.p., 1915). P. 27.
40. Ibid., pp. 104-13.

Edward J. Furcha  
Union College  
University of British Columbia

To say that Reformation studies today must needs focus on the revolutionary character of developments in the sixteenth century is almost redundant. No serious student of the period has ever denied the revolutionary impact of, say, Luther's Durchbruch, Schwenckfeld's Stillstand or Muentzer's Deutsches Kirchenamt of 1523/24. Further, it is almost a foregone conclusion among students within the Protestant tradition, in any case, that events in the sixteenth century are to be seen in their importance to subsequent events in the history of the Christian Church.

What is new, however, in the approach of the present generation is our ability to appreciate the meaning of such events, even within the dissenting segment of sixteenth century society. Because of the revolutionary nature of our own age, we are capable of empathy with and renewed understanding of the age that ushered in the 'Weltanschauung' of Western man, sweeping enough to transform the Medieval world view into something that could be called 'modern'.

My task in this paper then is to explore some of the paths taken by so-called Radicals of the sixteenth century and to analyze their respective stance.<sup>1</sup> If such pursuit will allow for any conclusions, I shall draw them toward the end of my paper in hopes that these might stimulate further investigation and lead toward constant re assessment of our own position amidst the reforms and revolutions of our own day.

Allow me then to define briefly the key terms as I intend to use them. Neither "reform" nor "revolution" per se imply violence, even though we will have to concede that the use of force or coercion may be present in these processes of change. I do not wish to suggest either that reform and revolution can be readily separated and viewed as distinct or that, on the other hand they must be mutually exclusive. However, for the purpose of this paper an idea or activity is held to be "refor-

matory" in nature when it builds upon widely held ideas and rests on well established practices or institutions, accepts inherited authority in principle, yet seeks to reshape or re-define existing life patterns on the basis of some degree of re-alignment of authority.

"Revolutionary", on the other hand, is taken to mean "overturning what is by offering in its place something that is not yet". The authority principle invoked in the latter case is usually novel or at least altered to such a degree that it does not correspond to any previously acknowledged authority, be it the church, councils, socio-religious or political structures.

Thus, most so-called magisterial reformers of the 16th century might be classified as reformatory in their ideas and methods because of their essential acceptance of inherited authority in one sphere or another. Even among Radicals of the same period men may be found whose position is more akin to reformatory patterns than it is to revolutionary ideas since they are willing to abide by some widely accepted source of authority. In many instances, on the other hand, a clear distinction between reformatory and revolutionary stances is well-nigh impossible. A given man often challenges a source of authority in one sphere of life while accepting unchallenged a traditional authority pattern in another.

To mention but one, I might refer to Caspar von Schwenckfeld, a lay theologian of his day. His acceptance of Scripture as a binding authority is largely within the context of the existing socio-religious framework and not unlike Luther's e.g. In his anti-sacralism, however, he proves revolutionary enough to qualify among his contemporaries as a "spiritualist" who comes dangerously close to heresy.

Thus selecting representative Radicals of the 16th century whose reformatory or revolutionary activities could be readily examined proved much more difficult than might be supposed at first glance. For one, generalizations normally accepted as useful in providing a handle with which to classify an otherwise heterogeneous lot of men proved to be unsatisfactory. This left



the alternatives of either proposing new terms as for example "Regenerative Reformers", if regeneration appeared to be a primary concern of a given number of men, or of dealing with specific reformers and focusing on definite pamphlets of theirs which could be described as reformatory or revolutionary in nature.

The latter alternative is chosen as the most productive. Of the many Radicals then who bear careful scrutiny and renewed evaluation, I have chosen Thomas Muentzer, Caspar von Schwenckfeld and Sebastian Franck, for reasons which will be apparent in the course of this paper.

The first is almost a "natural". Revolutionary spirits in East and West have found in him a kindred soul and have widely hailed him a "father of revolution".<sup>2</sup> Our own reasons for selecting him may however prove to be largely unrelated to conventional evaluations made on the basis of contemporary judgment or on a superficial reading of his letters and sermons which are alleged to have incited peasants and/or noblemen to revolt. It is our contention that the most revolutionary contribution Muentzer made to his age and to subsequent developments in the church can be found in his Liturgical Reforms, clearly set out in the Deutsches Kirchenant (Easter, 1523) and in the Deutsch-Evangelische Messe (1524).

Here we to focus on a single revolutionary concept in Schwenckfeld, on the other hand, his Stillstand appears to be a valid starting point. This dramatic decision to abstain publicly, as it were, from celebration of the Lord's Supper implies in my estimation a rejection of Luther's insistence that any valid encounter with God can and must take place in the visible company of the "communio sanctorum".<sup>3</sup>

The revolutionary element in Franck's writings is undoubtedly his "spiritualism" which enabled him to become the progenitor par excellence of the concept of religious tolerance.<sup>4</sup> To a large measure Franck also suggested some of the avenues by which later generations were to find bridges to religions other than the Christian faith in answer to the question how the God of all men reveals himself on a scale wider than could be encompassed by

the Judaeo-Christian tradition. We shall face this issue later in our discussion. At this point, however, we must turn our attention to a brief historical sketch of the growth of the concepts of reform and revolution in the writings of the three Radicals mentioned above. It may not be out of order beyond that point to look for a possible theology of revolution which ultimately underlies the variously stated "manifestoes" of revolution or reform.

Let us begin somewhat arbitrarily, with the years 1522-23. At this point, some five years after Luther's Thesenanschlag, the novelty of priests leaving Mother Church by defiantly breaking vows of celibacy and obedience, of printers challenging the "institutions" of Medieval Europe through underground publications of annotated Bibles and bold theological pamphlets had slightly worn off. A more serious second stage of reform had begun -- less dramatic perhaps, but more significant in the long run than the former phase, in that it was given to delineation of "fronts" within the obviously diverse evangelical camp. Positions had to be consolidated on grounds that might be acceptable within the terms of Christian tradition or could at least be subject to the authority of the working of the Holy Spirit.

In Germany, Luther had broken virgin ground with his major pamphlets of 1520, notably, The Babylonian Captivity, An Open Letter to the Christian Nobility and A Treatise on Christian Liberty.<sup>5</sup> Through these he had alerted the questing minds of his age to the far-reaching prospects of reform. But apart from the immediate challenge to a narrowly conceived view of Papal authority in matters religious and political, Luther does not appear to have intended 'revolution' in our use of the term.

How far, in fact, he wished to remain dissociated from such overthrow of existing authority is apparent in his rejection of Carlstadt and the "Bilderstuermer" on the one hand, and of the peasants on the other, when they sought his support in their demands for justice and for a fairer share of the land which they tilled.

In Switzerland, another major area of ferment, issues were clarified in the Zuerich Disputations in which Zwingli pleaded for the support of the City Council in his endeavour to reform the entire nation. His 67 Theses or Conclusions and the subsequent "Exposition and Substantiation of the Conclusions" are brilliant testimony of the far-reaching peaceful nature of the Swiss reform movement. Anabaptist and Catholic opposition notwithstanding, Zwingli was able to lead his people onto new plains by largely treading former paths which he simply sought to clear of all the outgrowth of the Middle Ages.

The fascinating discovery a twentieth century observer makes when viewing these events in the sixteenth century lies in the fact that political, social and economic problems and consequent unrest, brought about by unresolved issues, are clarified, attacked and often overcome by no more or less potent a weapon than recourse to spiritual renewal in terms largely of Biblicist reform. As we shall see in the case of Thomas Muentzer, a most profound influence is exerted by his liturgical reforms which somehow become the password of revolution since these are coupled with prophetic vision and zeal and an absolute demand on the commitment of all those who accept them as a viable alternative to the historical (hence "dead") faith of Christendom at large.

Thus it may be said in reviewing the history of the period under discussion that the process of alignment and consolidation, apparent not only in the areas mentioned, but indeed elsewhere, fully affected all strands of a largely Feudalist-oriented Europe. Whether nobleman or burgher, priest or peasant, everyone seemed to sense at least the magnitude of the movement toward change. By 1524-25 some of the parks that had been nursed for about a century of sporadic unrest broke into full flame in the Peasants' Revolt.<sup>6</sup> Actual incidents of the revolt are recorded for May 1524 in the region of the Black Forest. Within a year of this date the revolt reached its climax, notably around Muehlhausen, a town with which Thomas Muentzer was intimately connected. By August 1525 the uprising is stayed, not without considerable bloodshed, destruction of invaluable treasures and a

definite re-alignment of positions along lines that could hardly have been anticipated by any one.

We have given this cursory sketch of events in order to see the work of Muentzer, Franck and Schwenckfeld in the proper environmental context, but must now press on to a more detailed overview of the work of each of these three men.

Our starting point for Thomas Muentzer (1488-1525) is his writings recently published in a critical edition by G. Franz.<sup>7</sup> These are in some way supplemented by contemporary sources pertaining to the Peasants' Revolt.<sup>8</sup> The most apparent discrepancy in these is the relatively unrevolutionary style of much that Muentzer wrote, contrasted, however, in the contemporary sources by the wide spread reputation he enjoyed as an allegedly revolutionary spirit. The discrepancy is not too readily explained. One may venture a guess, namely that Muentzer is drawn into the maelstrom of unrest and revolt because of his sympathetic voice on behalf of the oppressed. When he addressed his "beloved brothers at Stolberg" in an effort to dissuade them from "mischievous rebellion" (July 18th, 1523) no one apparently heeded the title but everyone obviously noticed such statement as this, that "the rightful reign of Christ must come about after the glory of this world is laid bare. Then the Lord shall come to rule and to push the tyrants to the ground." And again, how melodious in the ears of the frustrated and oppressed peasants must have sounded the words further on in the same document, "What the world despises, God lifts up, and what appears to be foolishness, is wisdom with him," etc. (paraphrasing I Cor. 1, 15-18).

Apart from the occasional encouragement to be bold and to make good use of the entrusted talents, Muentzer's writings contain little that is inciting violence or rebellion. On the other hand, his sermons and pamphlets are pregnant with prophetic fervour and rich with allusions to the prophetic writings of Holy Scripture. He sees himself as the one who is entrusted with the "sword of Gideon" (May 9, 1525). And some adherents, writing him that same month address him as "Christian protector of God's word."

Some of the writings of the years 1524-25 show a persistent effort to distinguish between the good seed and the evil that has sprung up like weeds (Schriften, p. 225). Yet, even in the context of the Protestation oder Erbietung, in which the admonition appears, Muentzer's concern is more with the inward change than it is with outward forms. At the same time allusions to impending disaster appear in some of his correspondence of July 1524. In a letter of 22nd July addressed to Schoenes Zeiss reference is made to prepare for action.

To clarify what he means he writes, "...he who wishes to be a stone in the new church must risk his neck." It may be noted that by August 3, 1524, he had secretly left Allstedt. By August 15th he wrote from Muehlhausen. Is he there in order to "risk his neck" for the kingdom of God, or has he come, as traditional scholarship has maintained, to lead the revolt? I am inclined toward giving him credit for trying to bring the gospel of peace without false compromise. According to his letters certainly, he does not want to be a troublemaker in the sense of being a violent revolutionary. His sword is the pen (Schriften, 449-50). He certainly wields it with authority.

The two segments of society which he attacks most forcefully are the priests and the princes. In terms of his own age such attacks are revolutionary in themselves, for he appears to be undermining the very pillars upon which Medieval society built its structures. Thus his Exposition of the Book of Daniel - perhaps the most unified of his works - is also the most political of all his writings. The pamphlet is actually a sermon preached before Duke John of Saxony, his son and the chancellor G. Brueck. With great skill Muentzer appeals to the secular arm of society since (so he alludes) the ecclesiastical arm has failed the people. The blame for all troubles in the land is laid at the doorsteps of a corrupt Church (Schriften, 242 ff). Unyieldingly Muentzer drives the wedge between prince and priest, church and state. Does he speak from knowledge of things to come? Will he resort to violent deeds if and when his prophetic utterances remain unheard?

Apart from the fact that Muentzer is found among the peasants in Muehlhausen at the height of the unrest we shall likely never know conclusively from his own pen what his ultimate stance was on the matter of violent revolution.

As we suggested above, however, his liturgical writings appear to provide a clue to our understanding of Muentzer's theology of revolution. In an introductory note to his Kirchenant of 1523 (Schriften, p. 25), he contends that the office is appointed to "lift the lid under which the light of the world was kept hidden" and to serve unto the "destruction of all the glorious ceremonies of the godless."

His stance is clear. The attack against a corrupt priesthood is all the more poignant in that Muentzer provides the people with intelligible expressions of praise and with divine psalms whose meaning they can understand. By such means he aims to expose the falsehood of the other. How revolutionary for his age such revision of the existing liturgy (believed to have been unchanged from the beginning) really was, becomes apparent when we compare Muentzer's German Mass of 1524 with the Roman Mass and Luther's Ordnung of 1523. With the exception of a few responses, the Latin is replaced throughout by German readings and prayers. The most striking innovation, however, is to be found, no doubt, in the act of preparation for worship. Here Muentzer orders the priest's confession to be made in silence, and instead of the celebrant's "mea culpa", Muentzer designates the worshipping people to pray for forgiveness on the celebrant's behalf.

As Luther had done, so Muentzer introduced communion of bread and wine for all the people. But unlike Luther he places the entire act in the context of the people's celebration in their own tongue. To dismiss the experiment too lightly would be doing a grave injustice to Muentzer. It was not developed merely for the sake of experiment but, as he himself stated it, to "help a poor degenerate Christendom recover" by providing people everywhere with the pure milk of the gospel instead of the dragon's milk they had been fed by the priests (Schriften, 163-64).

It may be noteworthy in passing to observe that he never intended even this improved order to be absolutely binding and that he worked on the principle that Scripture, when used in liturgy, must be translated more according to its meaning and intent rather than according to the letter.

Caspar von Schwenckfeld (1489-1561), approaches the upheaval of his day differently. His noble birth and lay status in terms of theological training may partly account for the differences. Contemporary sources, who are favourably inclined toward him depict him as a gentle person. He is personally acquainted with the leading Reformers of his day and can boast of intimate associations with Anabaptists and Radicals alike. Yet, to my knowledge, he stays clear of any major confrontation, makes no known reference to the Peasants' Revolt, but instead devotes himself to practicing what might be termed spiritual nurture. Why then include him in a discussion on revolution and reform? At least three reasons come to mind.

The first is his avowed reliance on Scripture as source from which the early church drew its inspiration. In this regard he comes close to Luther's principle of "sola scriptura". Unlike Muentzer, however, Schwenckfeld does not draw on the prophetic aspects of the Bible as much as he relies on the Johannine and Pauline writings, the Wisdom literature and especially the Psalms which he musters for the purposes of promoting the growth of the Christian man.

A second reason is found in a concept at the very heart of the nobleman's life work, viz. the claim that regeneration or rebirth is essential to the new man (the man in Christ). Repeatedly Schwenckfeld writes of this insight.

In short, in order to enter the kingdom of heaven one must undergo a change, a conversion, a mortifying of the sinful, evil desires of the flesh. St. Paul calls it 'a dying unto sin' (Col 3. 11), the Lord Christ, 'a denial of self' (Jn. 3. 3). I say that the flesh must be reshaped, reformed, renewed within. Yes, a new sap must be poured into the old tree if it is to bear good fruit. In heart and mind we must be changed, humbled, transformed. (The Life and Mind of A Christian, 1560).<sup>9</sup>

The new man in Christ is normative in Schwenckfeld's theology, "He is certain of his faith, sealed with the Holy Spirit, secure from eternal death." (The Steps in Regeneration).<sup>10</sup> "His origin is to be found in Christ, the seed, of which the children of God are born". (Of the Regeneration and Origin of a Christian).<sup>11</sup>

The third reason is somewhat more difficult to appreciate in a brief account like ours. Nonetheless, it becomes apparent in the above-mentioned "Stillstand" (abstention from outward participation in the sacramental rites of the church of his day), which in turn reflects a tendency in Schwenckfeld to "spiritualize" the experience of the presence of the living Christ in the hearts of regenerate (true) men.<sup>12</sup>

Taken together, above reasons go a long way in accounting for the nobleman's reformatory activities. In each of the theological tenets which he discusses, he draws on Scripture and Tradition but reserves the right to judge the value of what he has received with the aid of the Holy Spirit of God within him. The revolutionary implications of such an authority principle are far-reaching. While he himself may be judged to have stayed within the boundaries of the Church Catholic, many of his adherents found it difficult to acknowledge any visible authority. Once dissociated from the awareness of the presence in man's life of the living and overarching reality of God, a stance such as Schwenckfeld's is a gate to relativism in matters spiritual. In terms of a medieval world view the nobleman accordingly appears to be highly revolutionary.

Sebastian Franck (1499-1542), on a wider basis perhaps than the other two radicals under discussion, has contributed significantly to the climate of opinion that eventually was to permeate Western Christendom and seems to have reached full bloom in our own generation. In many ways, Franck 'has come of age' long before his time.

The presuppositions underlying his thought are intricately interwoven. As did Schwenckfeld and to some extent Muentzer, Franck drew on the negative theology of Medieval mystics, notably among them, Meister Eckhart and Tauler. From the latter he un-



doubtedly borrowed the distinction "outward - inward" man. The influence of the Theologia Deutsch can only be conjectured but hardly denied.<sup>13</sup>

In his philosophy of history, Franck seems to be guided by Joachim of Fiore. There he found the seed of the prophetic expectation of an imminent beginning of the age of the Spirit. The effects of such a view of history are apparent in a number of ways, but most prominent, in Franck's negative attitude to institutional Christianity and in his insistence that God is to be worshipped in spirit only.

Whatever other sources such as the writings of the Humanists of his day and the ideas of Anabaptists, et. al. may have helped form Franck's thinking, the actual revolutionary impact of his work seems to have centered in his understanding of and attitude to the world, in his concept of Scripture and Spirit and in his eccesiology. While other theological tenets such as his concept of God are significant to the total picture, they may be disregarded for the purpose of this paper.

Franck's Chronica of 1536<sup>14</sup> is clearly his most important contribution to the revolutionary climate of his day. Its very philosophy challenges the value scale of much of the historical writing of the era by demanding that all events be measured in terms of their "spiritual" content. Franck denies for example the validity of comparing orthodoxy and heresy. He further contends that all events can be assessed only after a careful reading of the sources (in other words, that there be a measure of objectivity). In the last analysis, however, he questions the possibility of evaluation at all on the grounds that the operations of the Holy Spirit can be discerned only by the Spirit.

Such argumentation inevitably led Franck to a basic scepticism, for in a real sense he denied to men the ability to discern or judge the divine reality in the events of history. This scepticism, in turn, illuminates Franck's attitude to the world. He sees the world basically as the demonic power, set over against God and intent on claiming the allegiance of man. In his Paradoxa (published in 1542) he writes,

"Die Kirche Christi kann mit der Welt weder eins sein noch in Frieden leben..." And further on in the same context, "The world is like a perverse spider and like lime, since she sets afire what she is supposed to extinguish and since even honey is poison to her and the word of peace appears to be stirring trouble (aufruhrerisch)." (Paradoxa, Wollgast edition p. 370 & 372ff)

At this very point the difference between the priest Muentzer and the "bergher" Franck is most glaringly apparent.<sup>15</sup> In the pamphlet, Von de Werelt, des Duyvels Rijcke, (published 1618) Franck expresses disapproval of the vulgar masses whom he describes as "common, newly-wise, rough, like a stubborn bull," etc. (Fol. 41). One is not altogether unmindful of the present scene when one reads a description of their behaviour as "childish and plebejan" (kindish pofel) (Weltbuch, xxxviii). The only effective means against being swept away by this torrent, that he is able to suggest, is to maintain the nobility of the soul i.e. to set oneself apart through a life "grounded in God".

Muentzer, on the other hand chose to mingle with the masses. Some of the Anabaptists of the day, by contrast, opted for withdrawal from the world. Franck insists over against either of these extremes to choose the world as the testing ground in which ultimately the outward figure (or 'image') of the inward reality has to be overcome by true reflection, proper perspective and a striving after the caelestial essence. "Risk it all and cling to the kingdom of God", is his challenge to the men of his age.<sup>16</sup>

A second factor operative in Franck's understanding of God's activity among men is his concept of Scripture. Unlike Luther, but similar in intent to Muentzer, Denck and others (and more precisely than these), Franck develops the argument that Scripture is a book which is protected by seven seals against false interpretation.<sup>17</sup> In itself there Scripture cannot be conducive to salvation. The children of light alone, because they are under the aegis of God are capable of benefiting from its allegories. Apart from the Spirit who acts as the hermeneutical agent, as it were, Scripture to Franck is no more than the paper pope

which Luther had made it. He insists that the spirit of Scripture is hidden in the letter in order that "no swine may stumble over it and that no uncircumcised may come upon this secret."<sup>18</sup>

What Franck seems to say is obviously that Scripture partakes of the duality of all things: it is hidden, yet revealed, material, yet spiritual, human, yet divine. The key to its right understanding is the Spirit. Again we have come to one of the revolutionary insights of the sixteenth century. Its impact, as we are all aware, did lead, on the one hand, to developments that were destructive of human community, but, on the other hand, to creative self realization on a deeply spiritual level.

Not unrelated to these two concepts is Franck's Ecclesiology. In a popular song he ridicules an apparent anomaly, viz. the existence of at least four churches each of which demands recognition for one specific reason or another. Over against their foolish claims, Franck sets those individuals who seek the kingdom of God instead. Their narrow path is the true 'imitatio Christi' - the acceptance of Christ's humility and patience and a readiness to bear rejection by the world.<sup>19</sup>

In a more profound theological vein, the Ecclesiology reflected in the Song of the Four Churches is rooted in the currents of thought which carry with them a deep-seated anti-institutionalism and a clearly expressed aversion to visible human constructs of any kind.<sup>20</sup> Even Luther, as we well know, speaks of the hidden church as distinguishable from the church in its earthly manifestations. But Luther is fully aware, all the while, of the historicity of that church. Franck, on the other hand, polarizes the two aspects of the Church by positing them as opposites: the church of the Spirit vs. the visible church. To the latter he ascribes a distinct place in the scheme of things by allowing that she served a useful purpose at the time of the Apostles, but has long since lost her value in the divine plan of salvation. The argument is forcefully presented in the Letter to Campanus:

"Therefore, I firmly believe that the outward church of Christ, including all its gifts and sacraments, because of the breaking in and laying waste by Antichrist, went up to heaven right after the death of the apostles and lies concealed in spirit and in truth. I am thus quite certain that for fourteen hundred years now there has existed no gathered church nor any sacrament.<sup>21</sup>

In denying any validity to the visible church of his day, Franck has taken the full consequence of his stance against the visible church, its ministry and purpose. He has in some sense become fully secularized.<sup>22</sup> It is undoubtedly this radical turning away from the structure of the church which led Troeltsch to the observation that Franck comes closest to the ancient teaching of Mysticism which advocated the third kingdom or the 'evangelium aeternum'.<sup>23</sup>

To sum up our main observations on Franck to this point, we venture to say that he is forced to deny the possibility of reform. At best he could have argued for the restitution of the Church, that had disappeared from earth by AD 131. In actual fact, however, he opts for revolutionary change in his concepts of God as the one who has no name (Paradoxa, 3)<sup>24</sup> in his attitude toward institutions and the manner in which he argues for a Christianity which is liberated from the Law (Paradoxa, 18).<sup>25</sup>

Fascinated by the duality of everything, Franck seeks to walk the 'via paradoxa' of a sort of evangelical existentialism, illuminated by the inner light rather than being dependent on the knowledge of Christ. Whether or not such a life style allows for a viable theology of revolution, shall be one of our concerns in the second part of this paper.

## II

It may be too rash a judgement on scant evidence such as we have mustered for this paper, to speak of a common theology of revolution other than in embryo. Nonetheless, the events we have traced thus far and the responses we have elicited from three Radicals, (allegedly out of the main stream of sixteenth century transformations, yet colourful and distinct)--seem to suggest a common theological orientation. Thus it may be said that the

Radicals under review participate in a world view which does not deny the existence of God nor does it necessarily diminish the significance of man. Even Franck who in some sense is the most pessimistic of the three on that score, speaks of encounter and interaction between God and spiritual men. We may conclude then that a prominent primary characteristic of these Radical theologians (others of their day could easily be included here), is no doubt the acknowledgement and acceptance of authority; an authority - be it noted - that rests neither with the Pope, nor in the Councils, nor even in Scripture as a collection of writings, but solely in the being and nature of God as he manifests himself in the new man.

Such an authority principle invites disaster. Yet, it is at the same time the affirmation of the possibility of the presence of God's kingdom here and now in a manner that transcends any one structure. Out of this conviction Muentzer for one could exhort his listeners "you must not doubt; God shall destroy all your opponents who dare persecute you."<sup>26</sup> For this reason also he could equate the word of God "living in all the elect" to a mother "giving milk to her child".<sup>27</sup>

I venture to suggest that recourse to such understanding of authority helped Radicals reach an understanding of corporate worship which was largely unfettered by inherited patterns, yet capable of incorporating these in a living liturgy as long as they expressed the worshiper's response to God. The object of such worship was "to declare Christ within us by the activity of the Spirit -- as he has been proclaimed by the prophets, was born, died and rose -- as he reigns together with the Father and the same Spirit, forever making students of us".<sup>28</sup>

Free from the compulsion of tradition or law yet able to paraphrase a basic Christian credal formula, Muentzer here propagates a valid criterion of a theology of revolution as he engages in creative interpretation of the past in order that the experience of his life be an authentic and active living-out-of and living in the presence of Christ.

There is yet a third element, shared by the Radicals, which may be taken as an important ingredient of a theology of revolution. It is the conviction, frequently stated, that the Church of Christ can respond to the aspirations and needs of a people in transition. To enable such response the Radicals promoted action which would risk the uniformity of socio-political structures and forsake the literalism of Scripture and Ecclesiastical tradition in search of the unity of the Spirit. This unity, of course, found various expressions, hence led to a diversity which was often taken to mean disunity. Nothing could be farther from the expressed intention of these men. When Franck enumerated the paradoxes of life he assumed an all-transcending unity which held together conflicting ideas or warring nations in the history of Christendom. Similarly, Schwenckfeld's brotherhood of the regenerate was never intended to form the nucleus of another church, but simply to make concrete the spiritual nature of the body of Christ. Both men were misjudged by their age and greatly maligned throughout subsequent centuries. We may easily appreciate therefore why Muentzer has been branded to the present day as inciter of revolt, enthusiast and arch spiritualist. All such testimony to the contrary, his writings would lead one to believe that he fell victim to his prophetic zeal and the circumstances of his presence among the rebelling peasants of Muehlhausen at the height of the Peasants' Revolt. He was there likely to help initiate the rule of justice among the oppressed and illiterate - a rule for which he worked, preached and suffered, even though he had no illusion as to its presence among the men of his day.<sup>29</sup>

How then are we to assess the contribution by sixteenth century Radicals from the vantage point of the twentieth century? Without equivocation it may be said that they were not primarily interested in re-formation.<sup>30</sup> They thought and acted rather from an inherent pessimism regarding existing institutions and patterns of authority. In a real sense they were caught in the dilemma of acknowledging the reign of God yet having to admit that this rule could not be contained in or delineated by the structures of their day.

Needless to say, their theological starting point was lost to the majority of their generation, for the magisterial Reformers, on the one hand, were still largely medieval men who ultimately took refuge in existing structures and attempted reform through compromise. Militant elements, such as the peasants, on the other hand, were prone to take the kingdom of God 'by force'. Under stress, they opted for anarchy - seeking to control power - rather than allowing the recreative forces to bring about the much needed revolutions that would make all things new. In neither camp was there any room for an adequate theology of revolution, a theology that implied commitment to an ultimate concern (to use a Tillichian phrase), allowing at the same time that any awareness of and response to such concern must needs be ambiguous. The Radicals who undoubtedly came closest to a theology of revolution experienced the consequences of the ambiguity of all human existence. They were made fools for Christ; yet, who is to say that their foolishness came to naught?

Conclusion: Harvey Cox argues in his Secular City (p. 107) that we live today in a period of revolution without a theology of revolution. If this were the case, we would have reached again a state of 'utter despair' (to use Luther's term) or 'complete meaninglessness' to say it in a Tillichian phrase. Perchance, the theological starting point of the Radicals of the Sixteenth Century offers a possible way out of the dilemma of our day. In other words, the admission - impossible as it may appear to be - that no revolutionary change can be effected which does not begin with a change of heart must be at the centre of any renewing process that acknowledges the activity of God in the affairs of men. The most enduring legacy which the Radicals have left to subsequent generations closely follows this insight, for they recognized that ultimately all human systems and creeds have to be seen as addenda - the mirages of men in the wilderness - and that God alone holds the key to abundant life. To grasp this truth, it would appear, is to be a true revolutionary, for such a stance demands a radical assessment of the human situation as we find it at any given moment in history and an admission of utter dependence in matters of ultimate concern.

## III

## Manifesto of A Revolution?

How can they understand  
 Who know neither the Christ  
 Nor the one God who sent him?

We speak to them of Love --  
 They merely gather for love-ins.

We offer them Christ's peace --  
 They walk the streets of Everytown to demonstrate.

We preach the liberty of Christian men --  
 They take it to be licence for immoral deeds.

But when our hands are stained  
 From tending to their wounds;  
 When Christian scientists help solve the problems  
 Of disease and hunger,  
 The multitudes take note.

This world desires vision:  
 Eyes to behold the wonders of the created universe;  
 Minds to perceive.  
 Men live by faith and vision.  
 And when they see a revolution --  
 All things new --  
 They give God praise.

## IV

The formal part of my paper ends here, except for the inevitable connection that all this endeavour concerning the sixteenth century should have for us in the twentieth. With countless numbers of contemporaries we are led to ask whether there is in fact a theology of Revolution. Curiously, my answer is "no".



There is no absolute one but rather a number of theologies which in some way provide a new basis for the human-divine encounter that modern man can be capable of.

My personal conviction would lead to value one higher than another; my rational mind tells me that all must somehow be brought into tension and dialogue; my historical training urges me not to predict which of these or whether another one altogether shall be the Christian answer to the world of tomorrow. As historians we all know that circumstances and environment bring into focus different emphases which can change the picture significantly.

However, I dare say that inherent in the Christian truths is a valid ingredient of revolution in the demand that old forms must needs change when these have become a hindrance to growth. He who promised to make all things new, opens the possibility for something that is not yet, but provides the freedom and the community that transcend any one individual experience. It is this understanding of revolution that permeates the work of sixteenth century Radicals: it allows for freedom, is creative in the change it affects and admits to basic values.

The absence of some or all of these elements in much of our present day "revolutions" makes me wonder about their genuine nature. At the same time, however, I am prepared to hear in them a cry for liberation. As a church that claims to be an agent of God we must hear and in some way respond to this cry.

#### Footnotes

1. A precise delineation of the "Radicals" invites controversy. Without taking sides in the ongoing debate, I would refer the reader to G.H. Williams, The Radical Reformation, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962; Meinold Fast, Der linke Fluegel der Reformation, Bremen: Schuenemann Verlag, 1960; Ernst Troeltsch, Die Soziallehren der Christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen, Gesammelte Werke, I, Tuebingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1912. Troeltsch above all, and after him a host of North American scholars, has provided useful categories of distinction.

2. Recent authors who have dealt with Thomas Muentzer in one way or another are the following: E. Block, Thomas Muentzer, Als Theologe der Revolution, Stuttgart 1960; H.J. Goertz, Innere und Aeussere Ordnung in der Theologie Thomas Muentzer's, Leiden: Brill, 1967; Eric W. Gritsch, Reformer Without a Church: The Life and Thought of Thomas Muentzer, 1488 to 1525, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967; Also, by the same author an article entitled "Thomas Muentzer's Theology and Revolution", M.Q.R. 43 (April 1969); E.W. Gritscher, The Authority of the Inner Word, Yehe dissertation (1959); Thomas Nipperdey "Theologie und Revolution der Thomas Muentzer." A.R.G. Vol. 54 (1963).
3. The problem has been with the church ever since, found adherents and equally fervent opponents (Ritschl-Schleiermacher) and certainly is a live issue in today's struggle between the Pentecostalist movement and those who seek renewal within the church as we know it.
4. Meinulf Barbers, Toleranz bei Sebastian Franck, Bonn: Roehrscheid, 1964, is the latest critical study on the subject known to me.
5. Characteristically, the Letter to the Nobility was written in German, the other two treatises, however, appeared in Latin since the former was intended for the people, the latter two, on the other hand, were designed for the use of theologians.
6. For a history of the Peasants' Revolt cf. G. Franz, Der Deutsche Bauernkrieg, Munich-Berlin: 1935 (reprint, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt: 1968). Cf. Also, G. Franz, Quellen zur Geschichte des Bauernkrieges, W. Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt: 1963. The author cites documents which go back to 1423 and show signs of conflict between nobility and peasants.
7. Thomas Muentzer, Schriften Und Briefe, (hence, Schriften), ed. G. Franz, in Quellen Und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte, XXXIII, Guetersloh: 1968.
8. Cf. G. Franz, Bauernkrieg and Quellen zur Geschichte des Bauernkrieges.

9. Cf. E. J. Furcha and F. L. Battles, The Piety of Caspar Schwenckfeld, Pittsburgh: 1969, p. 34.
10. Ibid, p. 15.
11. Ibid, p. 28
12. Since about 1526, Schwenckfeld did not participate in any celebration of the Lord's Supper. In at least two documents (of 1528 & 1559 respectively), he states his reasons. Cf. Furcha - Battles, op. cit. p. 104 ff.
13. Cf. G. Baring, "L. Haetzers Bearbeitung der Theologia Deutsch, Worms 1528" in Z.F.K., 70, 1959. The author argues that the influence of the anonymous writer of this work is widespread and cannot be rated too highly.
14. A fuller title is, Chronica, Zeytbuch und Geschichtbibell von Anbegin bis in dies gegenwertig 1536th year. etc. recently reprinted by the Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt, 1969.
15. I am insisting on this distinction even though both men were ordained. Muentzer never really abandoned the office of a minister of word and sacrament, whereas Franck's major contribution to the 16th century is primarily in the "secular" sphere.
16. Cf. Paradoxa, 187 - 189, Wollgast edition, p. 319 ff. A frequently recurring term is Gelassenheit - tranquility, equilibrium which he suggests as the best attitude to adopt in the effort to overcome the world.
17. Das Verbuetschiert mit 7 Siegeln verschlossene Buch (1539). The opposing forces that have to be countered are fear of men, human understanding, human counsel and human strength, human skill and godlessness or love of world. The inner struggle may be accomplished within man through rebirth, baptism and circumcision in the spirit.
18. Sechshundert Dreyzehn Gebot und verbot, Ulm, 1537, (last page) Similarly in his Paradoxa, The outward word is merely a "figure of and introduction to the inward word". Cf. particularly Sections 115-125 (Wollgast edition pp. 192 - 208), and frequently elsewhere.

19. "Of Four Opposing Churches, Each of Which Hates and Condemns the Others" (1531), quoted in H. Fast, Der Linke Fluegel, p. 246. Similar songs were apparently popular. Cf. one by Berner, a Schwenckfelder of sorts, quoted by Wackernagel, Das Deutsche Kirchenlied, V, No. 790.
20. Cf. G. Müller, Die Römische Kurie und die Reformation, p. 19 ff. The author observes a wide-spread, anti-curialist feeling in Germany at the outset of 1524. He cites the laughter and derision with which the Papal nuntio Rorario e.g. was received in Nurnberg and refers to Strasbourg whose Council had passed anti-Roman legislation.
21. Letter to Campanus, in Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers, ed. William & Mergal, p. 149. I have slightly modified their translation to correspond better to the German text.
22. M. Barbers, Toleranz, p. 62 states the case succinctly as follows: "Fuer Franck der jeder sichtbaren Kirche jede Berechtigung abspricht, von seinen Voraussetzungen her absprechen muss, sind die Sakramente schlechthin Aeuseerlichkeiten ohne jedweden Hintergrund, magische Zeichen, die eine unsichtbare Gnade andeuten wollen ... So musste Franck sich von der Kirche ... abwenden, jeder sichtbaren Kirche absagen, um zur einen, unsichtbaren Kirche Christi zu gelangen."
23. Soziallehren, p. 888 By way of an aside it may be noted that in 1528 Franck married a sister of one of the so-called godless painters of Nurnberg.
24. Wollgast edition, p. 22
25. "The just (believers) have no law," Wollgast edition, p. 303 ff. Similarly also, Paradoxa 232 & 233 and 216/217.
26. Muentzer, Exposition of the Book of Daniel, Schriften, p. 258 (my translation).
27. Muentzer, Prague Manifesto, in Schriften, p. 497 (my translation).
28. Muentzer, German-Evangelical Mass, Preface, in Schriften, p. 167 (my translation).

29. Muentzer, "A Letter to the Council of Nordhausen" (after Aug. 15, 1524). *Schriften*, p. 575 (my translation). Muentzer concludes, "The peace of God be with you ... that you may receive truth and righteousness which the world has not received .... by his grace he teaches us to seek after the highest good."
30. This must be said even though earlier in the paper we suggested that Schwenckfeld in some of his concepts stood closer to the Reformers than he was to Radical theology.

Working Bibliography

- M. Barbers, Toleranz bei Sebastian Franck, Bonn: Roehrscheid, 1964.
- G. Baring, "L. Haetzers Bearbeitung der Theologia Deutsch, Worms, 1528", in Z.F.K., 70, 1959.
- E. Block, Thomas Muentzer als Theologe der Revolution, Stuttgart: 1960.
- H. Fast, Der linke Fluegel der Reformation, Bremen: Schiinemann Verlag, 1962.
- Sebastian Franck, Chronica, Zeytbuch und Geschyctbibel, (reprint Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt: 1969).
- Sebastian Franck, Paradoxa, Woolgast edition, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1966.
- Sebastian Franck, Sechshundert Dreyzehen Gebot und Verbot der Juden, Ulm: 1537.
- Sebastian Franck, Das verbuetschiert mit 7 Siegeln verschlossene Buch, 1539.
- Sebastian Franck, Van der Werelt, des Duyvels Rijcke, Gouda, 1618.
- G. Franz, Der Deutsche Bauernkrieg, Munich-Berlin: 1935 (reprint, Wiss. Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt: 1968).
- G. Franz, Quellen zur Geschichte des Bauernkrieges, Darmstadt: 1963.
- E.J. Furcha & F. L. Battles, The Piety of Caspar Schwenckfeld, Pittsburgh: The Pittsburgh Theological Seminary: 1969.
- Gedenkschriftzum 400 jaehrigen Bestchen der Mennoniten (1525-1925), Karlsruhe: Schneider Verlag, 1925.

- H.J. Goertz, Innere und Auessere Ordnung in der Theologie Thomas Muentzers, Leiden: Brill, 1967.
- E. W. Gritsch, Reformer Without a Church: The Life and Thought of Thomas Muentzer, 1488 - 1525, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967.
- E. W. Gritscher, The Authority of the Inner Word, Yale Dissertation, 1959.
- M. Luther, Works of Martin Luther, Philadelphia Edition, Vol. II, 1943.
- G. Mueller, Die Roemische Kurie und die Reformation, 1523 - 1534, Guetersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1969.
- Juergen Moltmann, "God in the Revolution" (a paper presented at Turku, 1968)
- Thomas Muentzer, Schriften und Briefe (Schriften) ed. G. Franz, Quellen & Forschungen, 1968.
- T. Nipperdey, "Theologie und Revolution des Thomas Muentzer", A.R.G. Vol. 54 (1963).
- John K. S. Reid, The Authority of Scripture, London: Methuen & Co., 1957.
- Corpus Schwenckfeldianorum, ed. C.D. Hartranft, Schwenckfelders of America, 1907.
- H. Scheible, ed. Das Widerstandsrecht der Deutschen Protestanten, 1523 - 1546 Guetersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1969.
- P. Tillich, The Courage to Be, New Haven: Yale Press, 1952.
- E. Troeltsch, Die Soziallehren der Christlichen Kirchen Und Gruppen, Ges. Werke, I, Tuebingen: 1912.
- G. H. Williams, The Radical Reformation, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962.
- G. H. Williams, & A. M. Mergal, Spiritual & Anabaptist Writers, L.C.C. XXV, 1957.
- H. Zwingli, Zwingli Hauptschriften, Fritz Blanke, et al. (eds.) Zurich: Zwingli Verlag, 1947.

## The Nature of the Anabaptist Protest

Walter Klaassen

Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo

### Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to delineate the main features of the Anabaptist protest. We shall see this protest in the religious, social, and political context of the time, take note of the way in which this protest was viewed by Catholics and Protestants, and get some feeling of the Anabaptist consciousness of the radicalness of their protest.

Anabaptism was part of that vast religious upheaval known as the Reformation. Its basic impulse was religious as it was for Luther and Zwingli, a yearning for a church, more faithful to the vision of its founder.<sup>1</sup>

But if in its origins Anabaptism was a religious movement, and if generally speaking it remained such, its peculiar characteristics made it the bearer of revolutionary social and political potential. This is, of course, no secret. Traditional Catholic and Protestant historiography made this the basis of the rejection of Anabaptists from the ranks of humanity. Their judgments were usually slanderous and self-justifying.<sup>2</sup> Even today so notable an historian as G.R. Elton rather uncritically reflects this tradition. He writes:

During the heyday of Anabaptism it appeared to contemporaries that there were now three religions to choose from: the popish, the reformed, and the sectarian. It has sometimes been argued that the effective elimination of that third choice wrecked the prospects of early toleration and liberty for the private conscience. This is to mistake the true nature of Anabaptism. Since it always embodied a conviction

of sole salvation for the particular group of believers, and often also the chiliastic dreams of salvation realized in the destruction of the wicked with the establishment of Christ's kingdom on earth, it was in its essence markedly more intolerant than the institutional church. Its victory, where it occurred led to terror, and that was in the nature of things. No one will deny that the movement also gave prominence to men of true piety, simple belief and gentle manner; but this does not take away from the fact that its enormous appeal rested on the claim to bring power and glory to the poor, the weak and the resentful. The Anabaptism of the early Reformation - no matter what pious and respectable sects may today look back upon it as an ancestor - was a violent phenomenon born out of irrational and psychologically unbalanced dreams, resting on a denial of reason and the elevation of that belief in direct inspiration which enables men to do as they please. Not even the terrible sufferings of its unhappy followers should make one suppose that the salvation of mankind from its own passions could have been found by the path which runs along the clouds.<sup>3</sup>

This statement is suffused with hostility as indeed in his whole treatment of Anabaptists. Because of it he appears unable to bring discrimination to the problem leaving his conclusions so inaccurate as to be virtually worthless. It will simply not do to say "that was in the nature of things". Is religious separatism really determinative of violence? He presents no evidence for his conclusion either from primary sources or secondary literature; his judgment appears to be made on the basis of an abstract law of history. Besides that he applies this law to the Anabaptists only. It should perhaps be applied at least to Zwingli, since he too was a separatist, but there is no trace of it.

On the other side are the confessional apologists who, with some exceptions, have shied away from facing the revolutionary potential of Anabaptism. The movement has been interpreted in theological and apologetic terms. Were one not aware of the social and political setting of Anabaptism this interpretation would



never lead one to suppose that it had been a truly radical movement. The movement is adequately described but the obvious conclusions are not drawn.<sup>4</sup>

It is to the credit of some of the recent followers of Marx and Lenin that they have pointed out and documented the social revolutionary nature of Anabaptism.<sup>5</sup> They too, as we know, write from within a confessional stance. Mennonite and other sympathetic historians<sup>6</sup> have clearly shown the basically religious origins of Anabaptism; the Marxist historians have shown that such religious convictions can have radical economic and political consequences.

This paper is intended to be seen as an addition to the summaries of the Anabaptist vision made by H.S. Bender,<sup>7</sup> Robert Friedmann,<sup>8</sup> and John H. Yoder.<sup>9</sup> Taking it beyond confessional concerns may help to provide a fuller picture of the movement and its fate.

### I. The Religious Protest

Anabaptists, one and all, would have agreed with Luther's protest against Rome as described in his main writings of 1520, The Babylonian Captivity of the Church and The Liberty of the Christian Man. They accepted his doctrines that a man is saved by grace through faith and that every believer becomes a priest. They also constantly emphasized the Scriptures as the ultimate authority for the believer.

The first Anabaptists were the disciples of Huldreich Zwingli and followed him enthusiastically on his path to reform the church. The late Fritz Blanke stated in his conciliatory Brüder in Christo

that Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, and the Zürich Brethren were Zwinglians to core, the only difference being that they were more biblicistic than Zwingli.<sup>10</sup> John H. Yoder wrote that the Anabaptists "wanted only to correct the inadequacies of the other Reformation attempts which they saw around them."<sup>11</sup>

It is time to raise the question again as to whether it is sufficient to say that all they wanted was a little more of what Luther and Zwingli had to offer. It is the thesis of this paper that the matter went deeper than that. It was not simply a question of playing oneupmanship with the Reformers. The Anabaptists started farther back religiously, economically, and politically. They not only agreed with the necessity for correcting abuses, but they raised questions about the basic assumptions of European religion and culture.

1. Against the traditional view of the sacred.

The first question is that of religion, the basic question of which is about the sacred, the holy. They do not ask whether God is or not; that is assumed and never argued. But how does God manifest himself among men? What is the nature of the holy, the sacred? They arrive at an answer quite different from that of the old church and most protestants.<sup>12</sup>

Basic for their position is the letter which Conrad Grebel and his friends wrote to Thomas Müntzer in September 1524.<sup>13</sup> In it they describe their vision of the Christian life and the church. The document reveals nothing so much as a repeated and careful reading of the words of Jesus in the Gospels, Paul's words about the law, and the oracles of the Old Testament prophets about religious observances and ceremonies and the divine demands for

justice and love and mercy. It is the old question already asked centuries before Christ as to what constitutes the holiness which God is and demands of men.

It is the uniform testimony of Anabaptism that holiness does not belong to special words, objects, places, or persons.

Grebel's letter is the first and representative example of this conviction, with which they rejected a centuries-long christian and an even longer pre- and para-christian understanding, of the sacred, a tradition that is still strong in Christianity.

The point at which the question focused most acutely was the Eucharist. There were the sacred words which were part of the miracle of transubstantiation;<sup>14</sup> the sacred objects, the bread and the wine; the sacred place, the sanctuary, and the sacred person, the priest, without whom the miracle could not take place.<sup>15</sup> Grebel and his friends reject the validity of the assumption that holiness is of that sort, for God neither instituted it nor demands it.<sup>16</sup> That is to say, it is not Biblical.

More broadly the Anabaptists challenged the claim of the Roman Church to holiness. Because of its claim to supernatural origin and the presence of the Holy Spirit the church was regarded as holy in and of itself in its essence and being and visible manifestation. But Anabaptists applied a test other than that of sacramental holiness. Menno Simons, leader of Anabaptists in the Netherlands and North Germany, insisted that no matter how vaulting the claims of holiness, they are an abomination unless they are expressed in true love of God and man. He and his brothers could see in it only exploitation, deception, and on the part of its

chief representatives, the clergy, only evil living.<sup>17</sup> Holiness divorced from truth and love is a deception and a lie. The institutions of the Catholic and Protestant churches were rejected as carriers of God's revelation since they lacked the true holiness which is moral and ethical in nature and not sacramental.

Holiness is not ontological but relational in nature. Thus baptism and the Supper had significance not in terms of the rites themselves but in terms of their function in the community. In baptism one joined the disciplined group of the followers of Jesus; the Supper was a sign "that we are and wish to be true brethren with one another."<sup>18</sup> Anabaptists therefore do not view themselves as another cultic institution, but as the community of love and truth resolved to realize in the present God's will for the whole of mankind.<sup>19</sup> Holiness therefore has to do with relationships and life style and behaviour.

## 2. Against intellectualizing Christian faith.

Paul Tillich describes the Catholic religious system of the later Middle Ages as follows:  
 The Catholic system is a system of objective, quantitative, and relative relations between God and man for the sake of providing eternal happiness for man. This is the basic structure: objective, not personal; quantitative, not qualitative; relative and conditioned, not absolute.....  
 It is a system of divine-human management, represented and actualized by ecclesiastical management.<sup>20</sup>

Along with Luther and Zwingli Anabaptists rejected this heritage. But they charged the Reformers with not having put anything concrete in its place. So far as they could see Protestantism was another form of religious abstraction which left Europe no better or worse off than before. The doctrine of

sola fide, as they heard Luther preach it, was to them merely an intellectual concept because it did not call for a change in the style of life.<sup>22</sup> They believed they had first-rate evidence of the basically anti-christian nature of an ontological approach to christian faith and life in that the clergy, who preached it showed no evidence of a Christ-like life.<sup>23</sup> Said one Anabaptist: "Certainly Christ died for us and redeemed us, but no one is saved by such redemption unless he follow Christ in his daily life to do and to suffer as he did and suffered."<sup>24</sup> Knowledge of Christ does not come from an intellectual concept. Menno Simons touches on this point in his work The New Birth:

Some may answer: Our belief is that Christ is the Son of God, that His word is truth, and that he purchased us with his blood and truth. We were regenerated in baptism and we received the Holy Ghost; therefore, we are the true church and congregation of Christ.

We reply: If your faith is as you say, why do you not do the things which he has commanded you in His Word?..... Since you do not do as He commands and desires, but as you please it is sufficiently proved that you do not believe<sup>25</sup> that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, although you say so.

In similar vein Hans Hut wrote in his Mystery of Baptism: "No one can attain to the truth unless he follows in the footsteps of Christ.... For no one can learn the mysteries of divine wisdom in the den or murderer's cave of all knavery, as they think in Wittenberg or Paris". Truth is therefore not abstract and ideological but existential in nature. It is not discovered in the universities but in the footsteps of Christ in everyday living. Thus the learned are not in the universities, courts, or bishop's palaces. In the school of discipleship God constantly reveals himself to the learned and unlearned alike. The measure of understanding is not relative to the level of intellectual ability, but to the measure of openness, of abandonment to God and his

3. Against the captivity of the church.

Had there been Anabaptists in 1520 Luther would undoubtedly have spoken for them in his Babylonian Captivity of the Church. But again they went behind all that to question the assumptions about the church and its place in European society. The church, they insisted was captive to ancient crippling assumptions to such a degree that it was really no longer the church. The Anabaptists rejected the whole notion of the corpus christianum or the communitas christiana, and in so doing consciously set themselves against the whole traditional, venerable, 1000-year-old order of society.<sup>28</sup> This order is aptly and concisely summarized by Gerhard Zschäbitz:

In the rite of baptism the Catholic Church received the new terrestrial citizen without delay into its ranks and thus bound him ideologically to his role in the order of society which the Church helped to form. Already in his minority she committed him to the recognition of the ecclesiastical and with it the magisterial role and function. This spiritual bonding to the magical effectiveness of the sacraments which enclosed all of life paralyzed the thought and action of man, for outside the Church eternal damnation threatened the rebellious who, in heretical rejection of the spiritual commandments, at the same time stood in opposition to the total apparatus of secular authority.<sup>29</sup>

Allowing for individual differences in development and formulation a similar situation became normative in Protestantism. Both Luther and Zwingli initially had difficulty with the rite of infant baptism because of their emphasis on faith, but both retained it because infant baptism was the link between church and society.<sup>30</sup> Zwingli made the baptism of infants a civic obligation,<sup>31</sup> and Luther too appears to have regarded the opposition to infant baptism as seditious.<sup>32</sup> The reason for the gradual dependence on the support of secular authority for both Luther and Zwingli was

the desire to preserve the cultic unity of the people in the given political jurisdiction.<sup>33</sup> The magistrate was the only authority, however, who could enforce that unity. It was natural therefore that in 16th-century Protestantism as in medieval Catholicism the secular authority became the church disciplinarian.<sup>34</sup>

Anabaptists regarded this fusion of church and society as the "Fall" of the church. Membership in the church, the company of Jesus, was to them a matter of personal faith and commitment since Jesus made serious demands on his followers. The church was therefore the company of disciples, consciously committed to his way. Questions of faith could not be made matters of law since faith was God's gift and could not be either awakened nor extinguished by legal means.<sup>35</sup> Therefore matters of faith were to be dealt with within the community of faith and not by a power outside of it.

This was in fact the enunciation of the principle of religious liberty. It was already included in Grebel's letter to Müntzer,<sup>36</sup> and turns up in Anabaptist writings everywhere.<sup>37</sup> In 1534 the Anabaptist Kilian Aurbacher wrote to Martin Bucer:

It is never right to compel one in matters of faith, whatever he may believe, be he Jew or Turk. Even if one does not believe uprightly or wants to believe so, i.e., if he does not have or want to have the right understanding of salvation, and does not trust God or submit to Him, but trusts in the creature and loves it, he shall bear his own guilt, no one will stand for him in the Judgment.... And thus we conduct ourselves according to the example of Christ and the apostles and proclaim the Gospel according to the grace that He has entrusted to us; we compel no one. But whoever is willing and ready, let him follow Him, as Luke shows in Acts. That this then also is an open truth, that Christ's people are a free unforced, and uncompelled people, who receive Christ with desire<sup>38</sup> and a willing heart, of this the Scriptures testify.

Hans Denck, one of the most attractive of the early Anabaptist leaders, put the matter this way:

Such a security will exist, also in outward things, with the practice of the true Gospel that each will let the other move and dwell in peace - be he Turk or heathen, believing what he will - through and in his land, not submitting to a magistrate in matters of faith. Is there anything more to be desired? I stand fast on what the prophet says here. Everyone among all peoples may move around in the name of his God. That is to say, no one shall deprive another- whether heathen or Jew or Christian, but rather allow everyone to move in all territories in the name of his God. So may we benefit in the peace that God gives.<sup>39</sup>

All of this was a repudiation of the concern for cultic unity. It is no wonder therefore, that the reformers one and all vehemently rejected religious liberty. For them it was anarchy.<sup>40</sup> In calling for religious liberty Anabaptists exposed themselves to the charge of sedition. It was in fact a call for a pluralistic society; that meant the dismantling of the monistic ones in which they found themselves. And when they proceeded in January, 1525, to the formation of a new community the chief offence was not a theological but a political one.<sup>41</sup> The nature of the sacred, of faith, and of the church were the points at which the religious protest was made.

## II. The Economic Protest

This is really, so far as Anabaptist thought and practice is concerned, a part of their view of the church. But the issue too easily gets hidden within the religious framework which does not deal with its broader social implications.<sup>41a</sup> Hence the special isolation and treatment of the subject here.<sup>42</sup> We should be reminded that Anabaptist views on the matter of private property and interest and usury were scripturally based and assumed to be an integral part of a christian life style.<sup>43</sup>



Rarely do Anabaptists get as passionate as they do when they deal with economics. Their indignant statements usually constitute part of the reply to the charge of communism of property. Thus Menno Simons wrote in 1552 about the Protestant clergy:

Is it not sad and intolerable hypocrisy that these poor people boast of having the Word of God, of being the true, Christian church, never remembering that they have entirely lost their sign of true Christianity? For although many of them have plenty of everything, go about in silk and velvet, gold and silver, and in all manner of pomp and splendour; ornament their houses with all manner of costly furniture; have their coffers filled, and live in luxury and splendour, yet they suffer many of their own poor, afflicted members (notwithstanding their fellow believers have received one baptism and partaken of the same bread with them) to ask alms; and poor, hungry, suffering, old, lame, blind, and sick people to beg their bread at their doors.

...Shame on you for the easygoing gospel and barren breadbreaking, you who have in so many years been unable to effect enough with your gospel and sacraments so as to remove your needy and distressed members from the streets ....<sup>44</sup>

Peter Rideman, writing in 1542 makes a broad indictment of the whole private commercial enterprise:

This only we regard as wrong: when one buyeth a ware and selleth the same again even as he bought it, taking to himself profit, making the ware dearer thereby for the poor, taking bread from their very mouths and thus making the poor man nothing but the bondman of the rich....They say, however, "But the poor also profit in that one bringeth goods from one hand to another!" There they use poverty as a pretext, seeking all the time their own profit first, and thinking only of the poor as having an occasional penny in their purse.<sup>45</sup>

As can be gathered from these statements it is a protest against the neglect and economic exploitation of the poor by the rich. But for Anabaptists this was a question of faithfulness to the Gospel. Hence their own attitude to property and its use.

All Anabaptists agreed that in the Kingdom of God of which they knew themselves to be citizens there could be no "mine" and "thine." Among the Hutterian Anabaptists in Moravia and the

Anabaptists of Münster this developed into a complete community of goods involving both production and consumption.<sup>46</sup> Among the majority a community of goods involving only consumption was normative. In both instances the community of goods was part of their ordering of the new community of the disciples of Jesus. They had no intention of implementing it as a program for the whole society. Much less did they accept as an economic principle that the poor anywhere had a right to the possessions of the rich.<sup>47</sup>

They simply believed that within the community of faith there should be no need. The earliest records testify to this. Georg Blaurock and Felix Manz, two of the original leaders in Zürich said that a good christian would distribute what he had to those in need.<sup>48</sup> A year later Balthasar Hubmaier stated:

Concerning community of goods, I have always said that everyone should be concerned about the needs of others, so that the hungry might be fed, the thirsty given to drink, and the naked clothed. For we are not lords of our possessions, but stewards and distributors. There is certainly no one who says that another's goods may be seized and made common, rather, he would gladly give the coat in addition to the shirt.<sup>49</sup>

Ambrosius Spitelmeier insisted in 1527 that a true christian should own nothing, everything should be "ours", since christians say "our Father."<sup>50</sup> These statements could be multiplied many times over.<sup>51</sup> With the above-named exceptions (Hutterians and Münsterites) personal property was allowed among Anabaptists. It was not made common, but was treated as such.

But for the Reformers and the magistrates such a distinction was difficult to take seriously, for to say that a christian ought never to claim anything as his own was, in their estimation, like throwing a torch into the tinderbox. There was in fact some basis for their apprehension, for the poor suffered especially between

1500 and 1565 from a combination of wage stability and steep price increases for goods.<sup>52</sup> Despite the fact that Zwingli and Melanchthon had both at one time spoken like Anabaptists on the question of private property,<sup>53</sup> they now regarded such convictions as seditious. In 1525 Zwingli was carefully inquiring into this view among his former followers.<sup>54</sup> Melanchthon became particularly fearful. He wrote in 1535. "This article attracts the undisciplined rabble, who don't want to work and waste more than they can earn honestly. That this teaching instigates robbery and sedition anyone can easily understand."<sup>55</sup>

While Anabaptists therefore expected a new attitude to property to prevail in their own community, and at no time advocated its extension to the whole society, it nevertheless represented a threat to the stability of society. Had the movement had a chance to grow it could most certainly have had major economic consequences. Of this the established authorities were properly apprehensive.

A further facet of this protest was the practice of usury, the charging of exorbitant interest. It follows naturally from the general argument of the exploitation of the poor by the rich. P. J. Klassen states that "any thought of exacting usury was foreign to a movement that was characterized by constant emphasis upon, and practice of, mutual aid."<sup>56</sup> Among the early Swiss Anabaptists abandonment of usurious enterprise was a condition for membership.<sup>57</sup> No clergyman should have anything to do with usury, particularly as it affected his living.<sup>58</sup> Pilgrim Marpeck also rejected usury as unbecoming to a Christian.<sup>59</sup> Menno Simons frequently listed usury as a vice along with others which any disciple of Jesus would avoid.<sup>60</sup> He was especially incensed at the exploitation of the poor by this means.<sup>61</sup> An Anabaptist from Hesse named Georg Schnabel bitterly

charges that among Lutherans usury continues to exploit the poor man, in fact that the situation is now much worse than under the pope. Even among pagans such oppression has not been heard of. And now those who draw this injustice to their attention are tortured with dungeon and rack. No wonder he threatens them with God's word. "Vengeance is mine. I will repay everyone according to his works."<sup>62</sup>

While the Anabaptists for the most part emphatically did not cherish dreams of violent overthrow and enforcing of communism, their views and practices did represent a threat to the established order since they set about to realize a counter-society. It will not do, therefore, to say that they were simply misunderstood.<sup>63</sup> They were understood very well, hence the violent opposition and efforts to exterminate them.<sup>64</sup>

### III. The Political Protest

The caveat introduced at the beginning of part II applies here as well. The political protest is not to be isolated from the religious basis in which Anabaptism was rooted. All the separate parts were defended on the basis of the Gospel, but especially the political protest along with the economic one drew against them the ire of theologian and magistrate, Protestant and Catholic alike.

When Conrad Grebel and his friends drew up the blueprint for a new church they made no place for the magistrate or Obrigkeit.<sup>65</sup> Not only that, but they insisted that no christian could hold a governmental office.<sup>66</sup> The refusal to participate in the magistracy is founded upon the biblical conception of the two orders, the old

and the new.<sup>67</sup> The Schleithem Confession of 1527 states that the role of the magistrate, while it is a necessary and God-given function, is exercised "outside of the perfection of Christ."<sup>68</sup> Menno Simons writes of two opposing princes and two opposing kingdoms, the one characterized by peace, the other by strife.<sup>69</sup> Government or the magistrate functions in that kingdom where strife is the norm writes Peter Rideman. Its citizens are those who do not subject themselves to God, and the magistrate was appointed to restrain them from evil. It is the "servant of God's anger and vengeance" and carries out its function with the sword, "to shed the blood of those who have shed blood."<sup>70</sup> Its function is God-given and consists of punishing the evil and defending and protecting the pious.<sup>71</sup> Menno Simons states it thus in addressing magistrates:

.....You are called of God and ordained to your offices to punish the transgressors and protect the good, to judge rightly between a man and his fellows; to do justice to the widows and orphans, to the poor, despised stranger and pilgrim; to protect them against violence and tyranny, to rule cities and countries justly by a good policy and administration...<sup>72</sup> to the benefit and profit of the common people.....

The state then is the restraining authority in that spiritual area which has not accepted the Lordship of Christ, but is subject to the prince of strife. The state exercises its restraint upon the violent with violence.

But the other area is that which has willingly and joyfully accepted the Lordship. It is the domain of the prince of peace.

Menno writes:

The Prince of peace is Christ Jesus; His kingdom is the kingdom of peace, His Word is the word of peace, His body is the body of peace; His children are the seed of peace; and His inheritance and reward are the inheritance and reward of peace. In short, with this king,<sup>73</sup> and in His Kingdom and reign, it is nothing but peace.

The Anabaptists knew themselves to belong to this kingdom of peace. They belonged to the new order in which radically different ways of acting were the norm, and they could not participate in any actions that belonged to the old order. Therefore also they could not participate in the magistracy because that belonged to the old order of strife. "No Christian who makes his boast in his Lord is allowed to use and rule by violence," wrote Hans Denck. "It is not that the (magisterial) power is wrong in itself from the point of view of the evil world, for it serves the vengeance of God, but that love teaches her children a better way."<sup>74</sup> Menno Simons put it in this moving way: "Therefore we desire not to break this peace, but by His great power by which he has called us to this peace and portion, to walk in this grace and peace, unchangeably and unwaveringly unto death."<sup>75</sup>

Thus they did not reject government as such but rather considered it as absolutely essential. Since however it was instituted by God because of human sin, and was not an order of creation, it had only penultimate validity for them.<sup>76</sup>

The evident reason, then, for their inability to participate in the function of the state was that, because the kingdom of which Jesus was king claimed their first loyalty, they also had to live and act by its rules, and not by the rules of a penultimate order. The norm of the penultimate order in which the magistrate had his function was violence and strife, and the means to deal with it were violent, i.e., the sword. But the norm in the ultimate order of Jesus is love. Thus all violence is forbidden the disciple. Therefore also, he cannot participate in war.

This was a particularly sore point in the Europe of the 1520's,

for all of Europe feared the aggressiveness of the Ottoman Turks. When Michael Sattler said he would not fight against the Turks that was something like saying today that one will not fight against communism or against decadent capitalism, depending upon who the objector is. Refusal to fight meant that one was ready to let the infidels conquer Christian Europe. Even to say one would not fight without actually refusing, weakened the defense of Europe. Thus the Anabaptist protest against war was not made in a vacuum by any means.

Moreover we must remember that whenever Anabaptists spoke on this matter they were addressing themselves to professing Christians, and that the European wars were always wars between professing Christians. Anabaptists were therefore giving evidence of ecumenical concern by directing themselves against what they insisted was a glaring contradiction, Christian oral confession of allegiance to the Prince of peace and the denial of it in action. Sattler's words are to the point:

If warring were right, I would rather take the field against so-called Christians who persecute, capture, and kill pious Christians than against the Turks....The Turk is a true Turk, knows nothing of the Christian faith, and is a Turk after the flesh. But you who would be Christians and who make your boast of Christ persecute the pious witnesses of Christ and are Turks after the spirit!<sup>78</sup>

In this context of fear and apprehension they nevertheless completely rejected the use of the sword. Conrad Grebel wrote that the "gospel and its adherents are not to be protected by the sword, nor are they thus to protect themselves..... True Christian believers.. do not use worldly swords or war, since all killing has ceased with them - unless, indeed, we would still be of the old law."<sup>79</sup>

Menno Simons wrote:

All Christians are commanded to love their enemies; to do good unto those who abuse and persecute them; to give the mantle when the cloak is taken, the other cheek when one is struck. Tell me, how can a Christian defend scripturally retaliation, rebellion, war, striking, slaying, torturing, stealing, robbing and plundering and burning cities, and conquering countries?

Formerly people who knew no peace, he writes, they are now called into peace.

Therefore we desire not to break this peace, but by His great power by which He has called us to this peace...to walk in this grace and peace, unchangeably and unwaveringly unto death.

And Peter Rideman once more:

There is therefore no need for many words, for it is clear that Christians can neither go to war nor practice vengeance. Whosoever doeth this hath forsaken and denied Christ and Christ's nature.<sup>81</sup>

It is at this point also that the issue of religious liberty enters the picture again. Since the Middle Ages it had been accepted practice to put dissenters and unbelievers to death. It was done for their own good, it was argued. It prevented them from falling even further into error and sometimes torture and the stake brought them to "repentance." A variant of that position showed up in Anabaptism at the notorious Kingdom of God of Münster. These people argued that the only way to deal with the wicked persecuting unbelievers who would not join them was to kill them all. About these Menno writes:

Some say, the Lord wants to punish Babylon and that by His Christians. They must be His instruments.

And to this he replies:

All of you who would fight with the sword of David, and also be the servants of the Lord, consider these words, which show how a servant should be minded. If he is not to strive or quarrel, how then can he fight? If he is to be gentle to all men, how can he lay aside the apostolic



weapons? He will need them. If he is to instruct in meekness those that oppose, how can he destroy them?<sup>82</sup>

Men will not come to the truth by violence and killing. Only patience and love and gentleness can accomplish that. Violence and killing are rejected in obedience to Christ because they are not the means to be used to achieve Christian ends.

The third issue in the political protest was the oath. The basic statements on the oath simply restate the dominical prohibition of swearing any oath at all.<sup>83</sup> The oath is not used by disciples of Jesus since it is designed to ensure that truth is spoken. The disciple speaks the truth as a matter of course since he belongs to the Truth which is Christ.

But the refusal to swear oaths brought them into direct conflict with the states of the time. For the function of the oath was not only to assure that truth was spoken; it was also employed to ensure political loyalty. It had been the adhesive of feudalism and was still used in 16th century Europe as a means of cementing the body politic. Melanchthon, for example, "felt that the very structure of civil order and government was secured by the swearing of oaths. Without the civil oath, society would disintegrate into anarchy, since people would have no compulsion to obey the God-ordained authorities in society."<sup>84</sup> Thus the city of Strassburg, for example, had an institution known as the Schwörtag (the Day of the Oath), on which all citizens swore an oath of allegiance to the state in front of the Cathedral.<sup>85</sup> This oath involved fidelity as well as the readiness to support the state in time of war. Recorded incidents from 1531 and 1534 indicate that Anabaptists refused to take this oath. Thus Anabaptists were well enough aware that when they refused to swear oaths that included the

loyalty oath.<sup>86</sup> This refusal to swear the loyalty oath of course cut very close to the foundation of the state. When citizens refused to swear allegiance the state was in danger, and prosecution was the natural consequence. But Anabaptists could not in good conscience swear the oath of allegiance because it committed them to the exercise of violence and confirmed a view of the function of the state which they could not hold. No wonder that they were always suspected of sedition.<sup>87</sup>

By their theology of the state and its practical consequences as outlined they clearly rejected the absolutist divine right claims of the state and severely restricted its area of jurisdiction. No 16th century authority could ignore such a challenge.

The authorities, civil and ecclesiastical saw in Anabaptism a conspiracy against the social order.<sup>88</sup> In fact this was the chief basis for their persecution by Protestants as well as Catholics. The good moral lives of these people no one could deny<sup>89</sup>, but it was uniformly interpreted as hypocrisy. They were wolves in sheep's clothing.<sup>90</sup> Zwingli could think only of insurrection when he encountered their views<sup>91</sup>; Luther and Melanchthon both regarded the Anabaptist view of the state, rejection of oaths, and community of goods as incontrovertably seditious.<sup>92</sup> Moreover for both of them any false teaching was blasphemy and that in turn was seditious.<sup>93</sup> The Anabaptist teaching about baptism or the Supper or good works was therefore an offence against the state.

By the imperial decrees of Jan. 4, 1528 and April 23, 1529 Anabaptism became an imperial offence, a crimen publicum. The Anabaptist had become an enemy of the state. The latter decree states that no ecclesiastical action against them is necessary.<sup>94</sup> Horst Schraepler claims that not one single Anabaptist was tried

before an ecclesiastical court in all of the 16th century.<sup>95</sup>

Anabaptism was therefore a religious movement that was neither Catholic nor Protestant. It was a christian movement of the most radical sort in that it questioned virtually all of the assumptions upon which 16th century society, culture, and church rested. A society with a still basically medieval mentality toward dissent could not allow Anabaptism to grow unhindered. Its assessment of the danger of Anabaptism to the existing culture was clearly perceived. Prelates and Reformers were wrong when they were certain that the movement must turn to violence, that "it was in the nature of things," to use Elton's phrase, but it was a threat even in its basic nonviolent stance.

Today, in a world finally recognized by Protestants and Catholics as secular, their challenge to the absolutism of secular church and sacral state has become the banner of many a Catholic and Protestant alike.<sup>96</sup> It turns out that the Anabaptist understanding of the relationship of church and state in terms of its basic assumptions is much more suited to today's situation than that of 16th century Catholic or Protestant. And we even see the development of similar consequences. The names of Daniel and Philip Berrigan and William Sloane Coffin Jr., Martin Niemöller and Dietrich Bonhöffer, Dom Helder Camara and Father Antonio Henrique<sup>97</sup> of Brazil make the point clear enough. Anabaptists are becoming the heroes of the New Left, and have been adopted by the followers of Marx as early proletarian revolutionaries.

Notes

1. Hajo Holborn, "The Social Basis of the German Reformation," The Reformation: Material or Spiritual?, ed. by Lewis W. Spitz, Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1962, 41-42.
2. For examples see Heinrich Bullinger Der Widertöufferen vrsprung, fürgang, Secten, wäsen, fürnemme vnd gemeine jrer leer Artickel... Zürich, 1561; Christoph Erhard, Gründliche kurzverfaste Historia Von Münsterischen Widertaufern: vnd wi die Hutterischen Brüder so auch billich Widertaufer genet werden im Löblichen Marggraffthumb Märhern deren vber die Sibenzehen tausent sein sollen gedachten Münsterischen in vilen änlich gleichformig vnd mit zustimmet sein, München, Adam Berg, 1588; Johann Jakob Hottinger, Historia der Reformation in der Eidgenossenschaft... Zürich: Bodmerischen Truckerey, 1708; Johann Kurtz, Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte für Studierende, 9th ed., Leipzig: August Neumann, 1885. See also Harold S. Bender, "The Historiography of the Anabaptists", Mennonite Quarterly Review XXXI (April, 1957), 88-89. This journal hereafter referred to as MQR.
3. G. R. Elton, Reformation Europe 1517-1559, London. Fontana Library, 1963, 103.
4. Much of the material in the MQR is of that nature as are most monographs up to the present. Even P. J. Klassen, The Economics of Anabaptism, The Hague. Mouton, 1964, and Clarence Bauman, Gewaltlosigkeit im Täufertum, Leiden: Brill, 1968, dealing with the most explosive issues of economics and the state do not clearly place them in the social and political context of the time. Beginnings are made by Cornelius Krahn, Dutch Anabaptism, The Hague: Nijhoff, 1968, who does not posit the oftenmade radical discontinuity between the "peaceful" and the "revolutionary" Anabaptists, John Oyer, Lutheran Reformers Against Anabaptists, The Hague: Nijhoff, 1964, 235 - 237, who refers to Anabaptists as revolutionary and radical in a socio-political sense, and John H. Yoder, Täufertum und Reformation im Gespräch, Zürich: EVZ-Verlag, 1968, 143. A recent popular treatment which shows the social and political relevance of Anabaptism is Arthur G. Gish, The New Left and Christian Radicalism, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1970, chapter 2.
5. Gerhard Brendler, Das Täuferrreich zu Münster, 1534-35, Berlin, 1966; Gerhard Zschäbitz, Zur mitteldeutschen Wiedertäuferbewegung nach dem grossen Bauernkrieg, Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1958.
6. A good example is Fritz Blanke, Brothers in Christ, Scottdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1951.
7. Harold S. Bender, "The Anabaptist Vision," Reprint from MQR (April, 1944), 1945.
8. Robert Friedmann, "Das täuferische Glaubensgut: Versuch einer Deutung," Sonderdruck aus Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte, Jahrgang 55, 1964, Heft 2.

9. John H. Yoder, "A Summary of the Anabaptist Vision", in An Introduction to Mennonite History, ed. C. J. Dyck, Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1967, 103-111. Hereafter referred to as Summary.
10. Op. cit., p.
11. Summary, 103.
12. It should be clarified here that they stood much closer to Zwingli on this point than to Luther, which is to be expected. Luther retained a sacramental position, i.e., that God's grace comes to man through the medium of Word and Sacrament. For Zwingli the sacraments are symbols. Nevertheless both Luther and Zwingli argued about the presence of Christ in the Bread and Wine, and it was at this point that Anabaptists parted company with both.
13. Printed in Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers, ed. G.H. Williams and A.M. Mergal, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1957, pp. 73-85. Hereafter referred to as SAW. See also a new translation along with photocopy and transcription of the original by J.C. Wenger, The Programmatic Letters of Conrad Grebel 1524, Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1970.
14. Ray C. Petry. A History of Christianity, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.; Prentice-Hall, 1962, 446-7.
15. Ibid., 327-8.
16. SAW, especially pp. 76-77.

The words at the Supper are words of institution, not consecration. "The bread is nothing but bread"; "an ordinary drinking vessel too ought to be used." The Supper is "not to be used in temples" which creates "external reverence." Peter Rideman in 1542 explicitly describes the Anabaptist rejection of church buildings as suitable places for worship:

"With regard to the buildings of stone and wood - these originated, as the history of several showeth, when this country was forced by the sword to make a verbal confession of the Christian faith. Further, men dedicated temples to their gods, and then made them "Churches", as they are wrongly named, of the Christians. Thus, they originated through the instigation of the devil and are built up through sacrifice to devils.... For that is also not God's will, for Christ hath no fellowship with Belial. Therefore, also, hath he commanded in the Old Testament that they should utterly destroy and break down such places, that they might not share in that fellowship. Nowhere doth he say, change it and use it aright; but saith break it down utterly.

Now, because the people did this not, but left the root in the earth, they not only brought not the heathen practices to the right usage, but they themselves forsook the right usage and surrendered themselves to all manner of idolatry, and they have now changed so much that they call "saints" what those called "gods". And for the same reason because the root is left in the

earth - they have gone farther and have built one house after another for their gods (or "saints" as they call them, and filled them with their gods and idols, and thereby show that they are the children of their fathers and have not left their fellowship." (Confession of Faith, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1950, 94-5.) Further Grebel states that "a server from out of the congregation" should say the words, and the whole rite should be conducted "without priestly garment or vestment." Finally, "none is to receive it alone", since "that was the beginning of the Mass that only a few would partake." See also SAW, 140-141 for statements on the sanctity of persons by Michael Sattler.

17. "It is true enough that the papists teach and believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that he sacrificed his flesh and shed his blood for us. But they also say that if we wish to partake thereof and share in it we must obey the pope and belong to his church, hear mass, receive the holy water, go on pilgrimages, call upon the mother of the Lord and the deceased saints, go to confessional at least twice a year, receive papistic absolution, have our children baptized, and keep the holy days and fast days in Lent. The priests must vow "chastity"; the bread in their mass must be called the flesh of Christ, and the wine the blood of Christ....."

And all of this the poor ignorant people call the most holy Christian faith and the institution of the holy Christian church. Although actually it is nothing but human invention, self-chosen righteousness, open seduction of souls, manifest deception of the soul, an intolerable make-a-living and gain of the lazy priests, an accursed abomination, provocation of God, shameful blasphemy, an unworthy despising of the blood of Christ, invented notions, and a disobedient refusal to bow to the holy Word of God. In short, a false, offensive religion and open idolatry, things concerning which Jesus Christ... has not left nor commanded us a single letter.

And this is not yet enough that they practice such abominations. But they proceed also to despise as vain and useless all the true fruits of faith, commanded by the Son of God himself. the genuine, pure love and fear of God, the love and service of our neighbours, and the true sacraments and worship."

Complete Writings of Menno Simons, ed. J. C. Wenger, Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1956, 332-333. Hereafter referred to as CWMS.

18. SAW, 76.
19. Ulrich Stadler, a leader of Moravian Anabaptists says in his Cherished Instruction that the ordinances of Christ "should constitute the polity for the whole world." Since, however, not everyone will follow Christ, those who do form the community which God desires and live according to his will in mutual truth, love and aid. (SAW, 278)

Similarly Peter Rideman writes:

"The Church of Christ is the basis and ground of truth, a lantern of righteousness, in which the light of grace is borne and held before the whole world, that its darkness, unbelief and blindness be thereby seen and made light, and that men may also learn to see and know the way of life. Therefore is the Church of Christ in the first place completely filled with the light of Christ as a lantern is illuminated and made bright by the light, that his light might shine through her to others." (Op. cit., 39-40).

20. A Complete History of Christian Thought, New York: Harper and Row, 1968, 228.
21. John S. Oyer, Lutheran Reformers Against Anabaptists, The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1964, 143. This was the view not only of Anabaptists. Oyer states and documents that this was the view of so important a person as Melancthon.
22. Hans Hut, "Of the Mystery of Baptism", appendix to G. Rupp, Patterns of Reformation, London, Epworth, 1969, 380. "For the teaching one hears from them is nothing else than: Have faith! and goes no farther." Cf. D. Bonhoeffer's discussion of "cheap grace" in Cost of Discipleship, London: SCM Press, 1959, 35-47.
23. Oyer, op. cit., 222 footnotes 1 and 2; Zschäbitz, op. cit., 79-80, cites a series of statements by Anabaptists which may be taken as representative of the movement as a whole. For an excellent statement by Menno Simons see CWMS, 209.
24. Elsa Bernhofer-Pippert, Täuferische Denkweisen und Lebensformen im Spiegel oberdeutscher Täuferverhöre, Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1967, 127.
25. CWMS, 96. Hans Denck said, "No one can know Christ unless he follow him in his life." On this further, Bender, op. cit., 15 and Friedmann, op. cit., 145.
26. Translated from Der Linke Flügel der Reformation, ed. H. Fast, Carl Schünemann Verlag, 1962, 82.
27. For a further aspect of this protest see Walter Klaassen, "The Bern Debate of 1538: Christ the Center of Scripture," MQR, XL, 151.

Because Anabaptists were concerned not with an ontological or essential state of justification but with a direct following of Christ according to his example in the Gospels, they had relatively little interest in the traditional doctrines of atonement and christology. Statements on these matters can be found especially in Menno Simons, but discussion of them is normally the result of being drawn into controversy. See Friedmann, op. cit., 153-4.

28. SAW, 74; Die älteste Chronik der hutterischen Brüder, hrs. A.J.F. Ziegelschmid, Carl Schurtz Memorial Foundation, 1943, 47.
29. Op. cit., 88.
30. Oyer, op. cit., 29-30; Zschäbitz, op. cit., 89-91.
31. Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer in der Schweiz I. hrs. von L. von Muralt und W. Schmid, Zürich, 1952, nos. 24, 25, 26.
32. Oyer, op. cit., 126.
33. Yoder, op. cit., 141.
34. Ibid., 145-6; Oyer, op. cit., 174-5, 198-200.
35. Both Zwingli and Luther had also held this view but their concern for cultic unity won out over an initial leaning in the direction of liberty of conscience.
36. SAW, 79-80.
37. Balthasar Hubmaier, "Von Ketzern und ihren Verbrennern," Balthasar Hubmaier: Schriften, hrs. G. Westin und T. Bergsten, Gütersloh, 1962, 95-100.  
Leopold Scharnschlager, "Aufruf zur Toleranz" in Der Linke Flügel der Reformation, hrs. Heinold Fast, Bremen, Carl Schünemann, 1962, 119-130. Menno Simons, "A Pathetic Supplication to All Magistrates", CWMS, 525-531; Harold S. Bender, The Anabaptists and Religious Liberty in the 16th Century, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970, has numerous other statements on religious liberty, as also Henry Kamen, The Rise of Toleration, New York: World University Library, 1967, 56-66.
38. Bender, The Anabaptists and Religious Liberty, 10-11.
39. Hans Denck: Schriften 3. Teil, hrs. W. Fellmann, Gütersloh, 1960, 66.
40. See John H. Yoder's discussion of the Urfehde as the way in which the Swiss Reformers insisted that they stood for religious liberty in Täuferium und Reformation im Gespräch, pp. 142-4. Cf. Luther's statement that though he did not intend to prescribe to anyone what he should believe yet he would not tolerate a dissenter in his principality. Quoted in Kamen, op. cit., 35.
41. Both Zwingli and Luther knew from their own thought the vision of the church the Anabaptists advocated. Frequently in the early 1520's Zwingli had spoken against any magisterial interference in the affairs of faith. See John H. Yoder, "The Turning Point in the Zwinglian Reformation," MQR, XXXII (April, 1958), 128-40. Luther's delineation of such a church is found in the preface to his "The German Mass, 1526," Selected Writings of Martin Luther 1523-1526, ed. J. G. Tappert, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967, 387-403.



- Zschäbitz is again right when he says: "Trotz allem ist die Taufe eine Verpflichtung zur Anerkennung des Vorrangs der Sondergemeinde, die sich schon durch ihre blosse Existenz gegen die obrigkeitlichen Instanzen und deren normative juristische und ethische Gesetzgebung richtete." op. cit., 93. See also Paul Peachey, Die Soziale Herkunft der Schweitzer Täufer in der Reformationszeit, Karlsruhe: Schneider, 1954, 102.
- 41a Such a treatment is D. Sommer, "Peter Rideman and Menno Simons on Economics", MQR, XXVIII (July, 1954), 205-223. He has assembled a lot of material but there is no indication that these views had any broader social implications.
- 42 See Zschäbitz, op. cit., 16.
- 43 This is also clearly recognized by the most critical of the Marxist interpreters Gerhard Zschäbitz in op. cit.
- 44 CWMS, 559. See also CWMS, 195, 528.
- 45 Confession, 127.
- 46 Johann Loserth, Der Communismus der mährischen Wiedertäufer im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert. Beiträge zu ihrer Geschichte, Lehre und Verfassung, Archiv für österreichische Geschichte, Bd. LXI, Wien, 1894. John Horsch, The Hutterian Brethren, Goshen, Ind.; The Mennonite Historical Society, 1931; Robert Friedmann, Hutterite Studies, Goshen, Ind.: Mennonite Historical Society, 1961, 76-85; 103-122. The bibliography on Münsterite Anabaptism is vast. See Cornelius Krahn, op. cit. 288-291 for the most significant titles.
- 47 P. J. Klassen, op. cit., 46.
- 48 Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer in der Schweiz. I Bd.: Zürich. hrs. v. L. v. Muralt u. W. Schmidt, Zürich: 1952, 216, 217. Hereafter referred to as TAZ.
- 49 Quoted in P. J. Klassen, op. cit., 32.
- 50 Else Bernhofer-Pippert, op. cit., 105, contains a lengthy quote from Spitelmeier's confession.
- 51 Other statements to be found in Klassen and Bernhofer-Pippert. Further see Zschäbitz, op. cit., 102-104; Urkundliche Quellen zur hessischen Reformationsgeschichte, IV Bd, Wiedertäuferakten, ed. G. Franz, Marburg, 1951, 174-175, (hereafter referred to as TA Hesse); CWMS, 558; Rideman, Confession, 88-91; SAW, 277-284.
- 52 Zschäbitz, op. cit., 160-161.
- 53 See H. S. Bender, Anabaptist Vision, footnote 53, p. 21. Zwingli said in 1523, "Even if we were not sinful by nature, the sin of having private property would suffice to condemn us before God; for that which he gives us freely, we appropriate to ourselves." Quoted in John Horsch, op. cit., 132.

- 54 TAZ, 121; Zwingli and Bullinger, ed. G. W. Bromley, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1953, 276.
- 55 Quoted in P. J. Klassen, *op. cit.*, footnote 76, p. 41. Translation by W. Klaassen. See also Oyer, *op. cit.*, 152-3 on Melancthon's response to the Anabaptist position in detail.
- 56 *Op. cit.*, 105.
- 57 H. S. Bender, Conrad Grebel, Goshen, Ind.: Mennonite Historical Society, 1950, 276.
- 58 TAZ, 16; TA Hesse, 75.
- 59 Kunstbuch, 80.
- 60 CWMS, 213, 301, 424, 442, 444.
- 61 CWMS, 368-369.
- 62 TA Hesse, 175.
- 63 As P. J. Klassen does in The Economics of Anabaptism, 24-26.
- 64 This same phenomenon was present in the nonviolent civil rights movement of Martin Luther King and to some degree also in institutional reaction to the New Left. See Gish, *op. cit.*
- 65 SAW, 80.
- 66 "The Schleithem Confession., The Protestant Reformation, ed. H. Hillerbrand, "An Early Anabaptist Treatise on the Christian and the State", MQR, XXXII (Jan. 1958), 44, Fol. Ciiij (This reference is to a photocopy of the treatise). Pilgram Marbeck's Antwort auf Kaspar Schwenckfelds Beurteilung des Buches der Bundesbezeugung von 1542, hrs. J. Loserth, Wien und Leipzig, 1929, 303-04; Rideman, Confession, 105-108; Glaubenszeugnisse oberdeutscher Taufgesinnter II, hrs. Robert Friedmann, Gütersloh, 1967, 270-273; CWMS, 198.

While Conrad Grebel and the Hutterian Anabaptists insisted that no christian could be a magistrate this did not strictly apply to all Anabaptists. Menno Simons does leave that possibility open although he is not optimistic on the matter in the light of his experience (CWMS, 197, 204, 299, 922). Pilgram Marpeck takes a similar cautious position when he leaves open the possibility of a christian being a magistrate although it would be very difficult (Loc. cit., 304).

Anabaptists have frequently been charged with inconsistency in that their acceptance of the legitimacy of the state and their refusal to participate in it involves them in an insolvable contradiction. On this the following can be offered.

Leaving aside for the moment the theoretical question, it is clear that because of their basic espousal of nonviolence and refusal to use power in the traditional way of government or to

coerce anyone in matters of faith the question of their participation in government then is a purely academic one. The governments of Europe in the middle half of the 16th century were absolutist one and all, uniformly rejecting the principle of religious liberty.

On the theoretical question both Menno Simons and Pilgram Marpeck had some views. Neither sensed any inconsistency in calling on magistrates to exercise justice and righteousness since virtually all European magistrates and rulers claimed to be Christian. Since they professed to follow Christ there was in fact no inconsistency in the numerous Anabaptist calls on the magistrates to exercise Christlike behaviour, even though they themselves would not hold that office (even had they been able to do so). (CWMS, 117, 191, 299, 528-9). Again the magistrate was not exempt from the Gospel call to repentance and following Christ. Since Anabaptists believed that it was possible for all men to respond to the Gospel and become disciples that was true for magistrates and rulers as well. Hence frequent appeals to them to abandon their godless and violent ways and become humble followers of Jesus.

Directly related to this was the call to exercise their calling faithfully because it was given them by God who would, in the final judgment, require an account of them. They too were responsible to God (CWMS, 118-119, 194, 206).

What God required of them was to keep order "outside the perfection of Christ." Marpeck writes that God has erected natural statutes that are applicable to all men everywhere. They are not the sum of what men are capable of by God's grace, but they are sufficient for man's external needs (Kunstbuch, 47v). Marpeck as well as Menno saw rulers in Old Testament times appointed by God to exercise justice. They insisted that the rulers who were their contemporaries likewise could be expected to exercise justice and adequately fulfil their function according to God's will. Marpeck quotes Proverbs 8: 15-16 in support of his contention that all rulers, be they Jews, gentiles, or heathen, have available to them God-given natural wisdom to rule justly (Kunstbuch, 65v). But the magistrate does not need the wisdom of Christ for his function as a ruler, although it would most certainly be highly desirable. Nevertheless, the wisdom of Christ includes love of enemy, the cross, patience, nonviolence, all of which fit only with difficulty into the function of a ruler ("Vorrede zur Testamentserläuterung", in Pilgram Marbeck's Antwort, pp. 580-581). Menno insisted that the rulers could exercise their function faithfully and adequately with a lot less violence and oppression than they do, and quotes the Old Testament prophets at length to make his point (CWMS, 193; 196-197).

That a problem nevertheless remains is strongly felt by some Anabaptists. One response to a demand for explaining the contradiction referred to was much like Calvin's final justification for the uncomfortable doctrine of predestination:

Since the issue of magistracy and coercion surprises you so, namely that God ordained and instituted you and that you should yet be condemned and not saved in your office... My dear man, who are you to quarrel with God? Does that which is made say to the maker. Why have you made me thus? Where then lies the problem in the claim that God, when he desired to show his wrath and reveal his power, in great patience brought forth the vessels of wrath?

(Quoted in H. Hillerbrand "The Anabaptist View of the State", MQR XXXII (Apr. 1958) 101. My translation).

Nowhere in Anabaptist literature is there an attempt at a rational defence of their position. This quotation drives us back to their final authority, "the life and doctrine of Christ and the apostles." To this faith was subject and so was reason even if a clear inner consistency was not visible.

- 67 Robert Friedmann, "The Doctrine of the Two Worlds", Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision, ed. Guy Hershberger, Scottdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1957, 105-118.
- 68 See note 66.
- 69 CWMS, 554.
- 70 Confession, 104-105.
- 71 SAW, 141.
- 72 CWMS, 551
- 73 CWMS, 554.
- 74 Hans Denck: Schriften 2. Teil, hrs. W. Fellmann, Gütersloh, 1956, 85.
- 75 CWMS, 555. For further statements in the context of a thorough treatment of this issue see H. Hillerbrand, "The Anabaptist View of the State", MQR, XXXII (April, 1958), 83-110.
- 76 See John H. Yoder's very penetrating analysis of this whole issue in Täuferium und Reformation im Gespräch, 155-177.
- 77 SAW, 141.
- 78 Ibid.
- 79 SAW, 80.
- 80 CWMS, 555.
- 81 Confession, 109. For further evidence of this position see John Horsch, The Principle of Nonresistance as held by the Mennonite Church, A Historical Survey, Scottdale, Pa.: 1927;

H. S. Bender, Anabaptist Vision, p. 22-3; Bernhofer-Pippert, op. cit., 133-134.

82 CWMS, 46.

83 CWMS, 517-521, Confession, 114-5; Schleitheim Confession, article 7.

84 Oyer, op. cit., 171, 193; Bernhofer-Pippert, op. cit., 132.

85 Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer. Elsass, hrs. M. Krebs und H. G. Rott, Gutersloh, Vol. I, no. 238, Vol. II, nos. 355, 359, 374, 539.

86 Examples of this in TA Hesse, 395; H. Hillerbrand, "The Anabaptist View of the State", 105, footnotes 125, 126, 127.

87 Op. cit., 118-164.

A word should be said about the Münster episode of 1534-1535, since this was often appealed to as proof of the ultimate intentions of Anabaptists. The best recent summary has been made by Cornelius Krahn. It began with the chiliasm of Melchior Hofmann who preached about the coming Kingdom of God on earth although he never approved of militant chiliasm. When he was imprisoned in Strassburg the movement quickly passed into other hands. The chiliastic temperature went up as the persecution grew fiercer, and with it a stronger hope and expectancy of the coming of the Kingdom. Deprived of their rights in this world by church and state Anabaptists began to harbour thoughts of revenge and announced the coming judgment of God. The next step was the conviction that God would exercise his judgment on the wicked oppressors through the saints. But even though these views developed among the leaders, many simply looked to Münster, which had been identified as God's chosen city, as a city of refuge to save God's chosen ones. Once the city was besieged that fact itself contributed to the military action in the city as well as to the later reign of terror. Careful research has shown that there is no evidence of insurrection against authority or government on the part of the thousands who headed towards Münster upon invitation from those inside. The call to arms did not really come until the end of 1534, when plans were made to break the siege. There was violence in the city; those who did not accept baptism were given the choice of death or leaving the city. It is also unquestionably true that these people were Anabaptists. Further they were condemned as strongly by Menno Simons as by anyone for the godlessness of their chosen way. Nevertheless, without the slightest intention of defending the Münster Anabaptists Krahn's judgment is unquestionably correct when he says.

This event was no different from all other religious wars including those that led to the independence of the Netherlands and to the establishment of numerous territorial and state churches in various countries. (Krahn, op. cit., 260)

So is Yoder's:

....The revolution of Münster, with which uninformed historians still blacken the Anabaptist name, was not consistent Anabaptism, it was a reversion to the same heresy accepted by Lutherans and Catholics alike - the belief that political means can be used against God's enemies to oblige an entire society to do God's will. (Peace Without Eschatology? Scottdale, Pa.. Mennonite Publishing House, 1954, 15).

- 88 For a series of examples see Zschäbitz, op. cit., 145-148.
- 89 Bender, Anabaptist Vision, 16-17 gives a number of testimonies by enemies to their moral excellence.
- 90 Zschäbitz, op. cit., 159.
- 91 Yoder, Täuferium und Reformation im Gespräch, 139.
- 92 Oyer, op. cit., 122, 126-128, 169.
- 93 Ibid., 136-139 (Luther), 175, 176, 155, 156 (Melanchthon), 198-9, 205 (Menius); Zschäbitz, op. cit., 153.
- 94 Zschäbitz, op. cit., 149-150, Horst Schraepler, Die rechtliche Behandlung der Täufer in der deutschen Schweiz, Südwestdeutschland und Hessen 1525-1618, Tübingen: Ekkehart Fabian-Verlag, 1957, 21-22.
- 95 Schraepler, op. cit., 16.
- 96 See Michael Novak, "The Meaning of 'Church' in Anabaptism and Roman Catholicism: Past and Present", Voluntary Associations, ed. D. B. Robertson, Richmond: John Knox Press, 1966, 91-108.
- 97 National Catholic Reporter, May 29, 1970, p. 1.

Maurice Blondel's *Histoire et Dogme* in the French Modernist Crisis

Jean-Jacques D'Aoust  
Wells College, Aurora

The historiography of the modernist crisis within the Roman Catholic church has entered a new phase. In 1966, when I began research for my doctoral thesis at Yale, Roger Aubert, the famous historian of Louvain, could write in Concilium. "There has been a sudden and general revival of interest in the subject [the modernist movement] and a point which is of special importance to the historian is that documents long unavailable are now beginning to make their appearance."<sup>1</sup> Now that new documents are available, the historian needs to examine them carefully and will eventually re-assess and revise many previous conclusions based on insufficient information. Certain condemnations as well as certain exonerations will now seem unwarranted. For instance, many Catholic historians and biblical scholars will acknowledge today that Loisy was not as heretical as he might have appeared to some of their peers some sixty years ago. And again, Pope Pius X, although canonized as a saint, is now revealed in his involvement with a secret society aimed at spying and terrorizing those who did not follow the party-line of the integralism of the Sodalitium Pianum of Mgr. Benigni. When important documents of that secret society were discovered in Belgium in 1921, Maurice Blondel was informed immediately by his friend Fernand Mourret that his name had not yet been read in the papers under examination. In response to Mourret on March 16, 1921, Blondel wrote:

The documents you mentioned are historically very important. They reveal, for those who are knowledgeable, the scientific and moral insufficiency of occult modes of government and the painful intrusion of incompetent, sly politicians, of interloping agents, abnormal or subverted, in the most delicate spiritual decision-making process. I have had for a long time the impression that a plot had been devised to make the good Pius X see red, to cause an interior split within French Catholicism, to ruin our moral strength, to plan simultaneously the game of an authoritarian reaction and that of a German-style order . . . One must not forget that in spite of the

bluff of the young, generous for the most part, but without any solid intellectual foundation, our religious situation is deplorable and that since Leo XIII there has been, due to denunciations and reactions, a collapse of intelligent, laborious, and generous life among us.<sup>2</sup>

As I have been able to verify repeatedly, Blondel has suffered so much throughout his mature life from such suspicions and attempts at his condemnation that his three children who are still living in France react nervously whenever the traumatic experience of their father is mentioned.

Today, I intend to give a brief sketch of the literature on the French Modernist crisis, to follow it with a short biographical note on Maurice Blondel, along with a summary of the most important ideas which he developed in his treatise, Histoire et Dogme and to conclude with a few observations and recommendations for the research that still needs to be done.

The French Modernist crisis still has enigmatic aspects in the mind of every historian of Christianity. There is every likelihood that it will remain so for some years to come. The mass of literature which it provoked during the six years of its apogee from 1902 to 1908 was mostly controversial and partial. In defense of the modernists, several monographs and collections of documents were published, but as the modernists either submitted to the Roman condemnation or left the Church, their literature dwindled down. In defense of the official Roman Catholic position, every writer employed what might be called the "myth of modernism", the "crossroads of all Christian heresies," as it was defined by the encyclical Pascendi, for it provided him with an easy ploy to harass any tendency of which he disapproved. Nearly a generation went by before any kind of objective and impartial study was made.

The French Modernist crisis is a complex of innumerable tendencies to adapt the patterns of thought and action of the Catholics to the conditions of the modern world. As in all periods of social change, some persons



emphasize the value of antiquity, others point to the wealth of modernity, and few agree on the right balance between the two. The religious situation in France was tumultuous at the beginning of the twentieth century: the conflict between anti-clerical republicans and Catholic monarchists, the patronizing attitude of the bourgeoisie and its opposition to the social movements, the failure of the Christian democratic movement and the "affaire Dreyfus," the opposition to the papal policy of "ralliement," the rupture of diplomatic relations between France and the Holy See (1904), the separation of Church and State in France (1905), the condemnation of Modernism (1907), the condemnation of the Catholic social movement of Le Sillon (1910), the long domination of L'Action française until its condemnation in 1926, and so forth.

For the mass of nominal Roman Catholics in France, the Modernist crisis was a squabble in the sacristy. According to its latest historian, Emile Poulat, the French modernist movement was reserved to scholars who were indifferent to the great economic and political movements, strangers to the social and ideological influences which did not directly affect their own research. Without any popular support, this type of modernism could not succeed.

For English readers, one of the most objective accounts of the French Modernist crisis until this year, was written by Alec Vidler some thirty-six years ago. This was the essay which he wrote for the Norrisian Prize Essay at Cambridge in 1933. It was published in 1934 by the Cambridge University Press with the title, The Modernist Movement in the Roman Church: its Origin and Outcome. Since then, Vidler has come across so much new documentation that he thought for a while of giving us a new expanded revision of his earlier book. Instead of that, he opted for "an altogether new book with hardly any repetition of what [he] I had previously published." Consequently, both books are still to be read.

In his second volume, entitled, A Variety of Catholic Modernists (Cambridge U. Press, 1970) Vidler suggests two possible approaches to the study of the modernist period: "One is to start from the papal acts which defined and condemned modernism, especially the encyclical Pascendi." (p. 15) "The other way is, without presuppositions concerning orthodoxy or heresy, to look at the various persons or some of them who were involved in the movement that provoked the papacy to define and condemn the system which it called 'modernism', with a view of ascertaining what they conceived themselves to be doing, whether individually or collectively." (p. 15) Vidler chose to pursue the latter approach for the following reasons:

- 1) his interest was not a so-called theoretical modernism but persons who were presumed to have caused all the trouble,
- 2) modernism as defined by the pope was always regarded as a misrepresentation of what the so-called modernists themselves were actually doing.

Within the Roman Catholic communion, the most comprehensive account of the French Modernist crisis remains that of Jean Rivière, Le Modernisme dans l'Eglise: Etude d'histoire religieuse contemporaine (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1929). The Roman Catholic apologist Rivière did exactly what the Anglican Vidler refused to do. According to Rivière, "Modernism" has already been condemned, classified and indexed in the dictionary of heresies. To those who objected that the "Official Modernism" condemned by the syllabus Lamentabili and the encyclical Pascendi did not correspond exactly to the trends of renewal, reformation, and updating of Catholic thought and action, Rivière tried to prove how the official documents were factually accurate. Faithful to the neoscholastic methodology, Rivière prefaced his historical inquiries with the nominal and the real definitions of the "species Modernism." Rivière claimed objectivity by

remaining faithful to the official description of Modernism and finding historical evidences to justify that condemnation. If he showed any partiality, it was in favor of his former master, Pierre Batiffol.

More recently, two other monographs on the Modernist crisis have been published in English. The first, that of John Ratté, Three Modernists: Alfred Loisy, George Tyrrell, William L. Sullivan (Sheed & Ward, 1965), provides a useful summary of the issues involved for those unacquainted with the literature. Unfortunately, instead of new insights, it rehearses all the traditional condemnations of these three Modernists. The second study I want to mention is the English translation from the Italian of Michele Ranchetti, The Catholic Modernists. A Study of the Religious Movement, 1864-1907 (Oxford U. Press, 1969). Once again, Ranchetti adopts the dogmatic approach and proposes to illustrate how the so-called Modernism was twice condemned, "Pascendi, he writes, condemned it by examining its opinions, ideas, and doctrines individually, whereas the Second Vatican Council condemned it by pointing out, once again, the great conflict between charism and gnosis." Ranchetti does admit that "there is nothing particularly new" in what he is writing. "Most of the material has already been published." He has no revelations to communicate, he just wants to make sure that no one could or would ever imagine a connexion between the Modernists and the liberal Catholics during Vatican II. Unfortunately, Ranchetti's study is filled with inaccuracies and unfounded judgments. For instance, he identifies the editor responsible for the publication of the letters between Blondel and Valensin as Fr. Daniélou and calls it a "model critical edition". He identifies also the editor of the volume entitled Au Coeur de la Crise Moderniste as Rene Marle. In both instances, Henri de Lubac was the editor who refused to sign his name for fear of reprisals.

Shortly after the condemnation of "la nouvelle théologie" by the encyclical Humani Generis in 1950, Henri de Lubac began a long series of publications as Documents sur l'histoire du modernisme.<sup>3</sup> A cursory glance and perusal of this huge and valuable documentation suffices to convince the reader of the major role that Blondel played in the French Modernist crisis. Unfortunately its tone is apologetic and its methodology is questionable. Great efforts are spent to show Blondel as one of the most clear-sighted and prudent thinkers who foresaw the peril, discovered the remedy, and with the publication of Histoire et Dogme, made a supreme effort to reconcile critical science with Catholic faith in harmony with an integral Tradition. Blondel is eulogized at the expense of many others, of course at the expense of the "modernists" such as Loisy, Hébert, Houtin, von Hügel, and Tyrrell, but also of the "traditionalists" such as Schwalm, Gayraud, Turinaz, Fontaine, Barbier, even of the Toulouse school of Batiffol and Rivière. With respect to methodology, it can be demonstrated that several letters brought forth as evidence have been cut up and distributed sometimes non-chronologically in places where they would best support the opinions of the compiler. The authors claim to reproduce all the letters of incontestable historical and doctrinal value, but readers using other criteria will judge that important letters have been omitted. Furthermore, sections of letters and words were dropped, and sometimes sections were rephrased. This is perhaps evidence of the diplomatic skill necessary to publish this extremely valuable documentation at a time when the least expression of sympathy for so-called modernistic ideas was immediately repressed. But it is certainly not "a model critical edition" as Ranchetti calls it. When impartial scholars are given easier access to this documentation, I am confident that my critical assessment will receive further confirmation. Nevertheless, I must say that I am grateful for the short-cuts that these

publications have provided me. If other scholars follow my recommendations, they too might find benefit in their careful use of them. With respect to these Documents sur l'histoire du modernisme, three observations need to be made: (1) at the present time, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to consult many of the original documents which de Lubac has published, (2) if we grant provisionally that the reproduction is "substantially" correct, there is still the problem of assembling together letters partially published in different books, or in different sections of the same book, (3) it is still possible to make use of this valuable documentation by overlooking its apologetic tone, by the use of internal and external cross-references, by collateral and complementary studies, and by verification with the original documents that are, or will eventually be accessible.

A more scientific history of Modernism was undertaken by Emile Poulat, a director at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique and professor at the Sorbonne.<sup>4</sup>

In contrast to Rivière and most other Roman Catholic historians of the Modernist movement, Poulat adopted an empirical approach in preference to a dogmatic one. He described tendencies and texts through which men reveal themselves. He pursued his research in three stages: (1) a complete survey of the accessible archives, (2) a prolonged familiarity with the main persons involved in the Modernist crisis through a careful perusal of unpublished documents and comparison with the memoirs and biographies, (3) a review of the printed material concerning the doctrinal controversy. In his own presentation, Poulat reserved the first place to the published material as being more complete and explicit, and used the unpublished material to provide a concrete and more human context.

To begin with Pascendi's definition of Modernism, "the cross-roads of all Christian heresies," as Rivière and other dogmatic historians did,

appeared to Poulat an impossible task, it would mean the description and assessment of nineteen centuries of Christian divisions. He preferred to limit himself to a modern crisis within the so-called unity of Catholic thought before it became a crisis of Catholic unity. As time is limited, I shall end at this point my brief survey of the literature on Modernism. And now, for the uninformed, I wish to provide a few biographical items on Maurice Blondel.

Maurice Blondel was born at Dijon on November 2, 1861, as the youngest of four children, in an old bourgeois family of lawyers, physicians, and civil servants. He received his secondary education at the Lycée of Dijon from 1870 to 1879, majored in philosophy with Alexis Bertrand and Henri Joly as his tutors, and received his licentiate in 1880. From 1881 to 1884, he studied at the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Paris. Among his fellow students were Henri Berr, Frédéric Rauh, Victor Delbos, and Pierre Duhem, among his favorite professors, Emile Boutroux and Léon Ollé-Laprune. The director of the school was successively Louis Pasteur, Fustel de Coulanges, and Georges Perrot. The predominant philosophies were those of Ravaisson and Lachelier. The skepticism of Renan and the dilettantism of the young Barrès fascinated a great number of students. Strong in his Catholic faith, Blondel proposed to be as scientific as possible. He received his "agrégation" in philosophy in 1886. From 1885 to 1889, he taught successively at the Lycées of Chaumont, Montauban, and Aix-en-Provence. In 1889, he requested a leave of absence to prepare his doctorate. There was a brief substitution at the Collège Stanislas in Paris from December 1890 to April 1891. On June 7, 1893, he received his doctorate. He married Rose Royer on December 12, 1894, and had three children, Charles, Elizabeth, and André, who are still alive. In 1895, he was appointed professor of philosophy at Lille, and in 1896, at Aix-en-Provence. He became a widower in 1919. In 1927, he retired

because of increasing blindness, but continued to dictate and publish some of his major works until he died on June 4, 1949, at the age of 88.

How did Blondel come to write Histoire et Dogme in 1904? Was it simply his answer to the Modernist crisis as focussed by the biblical question? It would be too long at this time to examine in detail the circumstances of this important treatise. Let me say briefly that ever since Blondel wrote the Letter on Apologetics in 1896, in which he criticized harshly the pseudo-philosophy of the neoscholastic revival as the right method of approaching the religious problem, he was accused of being an innovator seeking to undermine traditional beliefs, and the father of philosophical modernism. It is not surprising if two doctoral dissertations, one written by Katherine Gilbert, entitled, Maurice Blondel's Philosophy of Action (U. of North Carolina Press, 1924) and the other by Leicester Lewis, The Philosophical Principles of French Modernism (U. of Pennsylvania Press, 1925), both resulting from personal interviews with Blondel and others, besides research in published documents, --both these doctoral theses infer that the philosophy of modernism was essentially the philosophy of Blondel. In the opinion of a majority of Roman Catholics at the beginning of this century, Blondel was definitely a "modernist", in the opinion of most liberal Roman Catholics today, Blondel was very orthodox, a liberator of the "spirit" of Thomism, according to Father Henri Bouillard and Claude Tresmontant. Such disparate interpretations of the writings of Blondel invite the historian to make a more thorough and critical investigation. Let me now summarize the most important ideas which Blondel developed in his treatise, Histoire et dogme.

The publication of L'Evangile et L'Eglise in 1902 by Alfred Loisy caused a turmoil within French ecclesiastical circles. Rare were the priests acquainted with the modern critical methods applied to Scripture and Church history. Consequently, the debates over Loisy's "petit livre

rouge" became heated. Some radical progressives eventually rejected their Christian faith. Some conservative neoscholastics rejected the modern critical methods as leading to liberal Protestantism and apostasy. In this squabble in the sacristy, the ecclesiastical leaders took fright. Disciplinary measures were soon applied to safeguard the deposit of faith. Leo XIII was reluctant to curb the freedom of the scholars, while Pius X, a very holy man but not an intellectual, did not feel the same hesitation. Book after book was condemned by the Congregation of the Index, censures and excommunications deprived dozens of priests of all their privileges. As a precursor of the Modernist movement, Blondel was again an easy target for the reactionary forces. Fortunately, he enjoyed the protection of influential friends within ecclesiastical circles, both at the Roman Curia, and in France. Furthermore, he ~~dis~~associated himself publicly from every scholar who was censured or condemned. He circulated personal apologies for his orthodoxy among influential ecclesiastical leaders and observed faithfully all the measures of prudence recommended to him. He was even ready to make the "sacrifice of Abraham" and to commit an intellectual suicide if that were required to maintain his loyalty to the Church.

Pressed by his two ecclesiastical advisers, Wehrle and Mourret, Blondel undertook reluctantly to write "Histoire et Dogme." Blondel's treatise, "Histoire et dogme, Les lacunes philosophiques de l'exégèse moderne" was first published as three articles in La Quinzaine, on Jan. 16, Feb. 1 and 16, 1904. Three translations have recently been made, in Italian, German, and English. On the one hand, it was hard for him to criticize Loisy's biblical exegesis when he was not himself a biblical scholar, and when he agreed with him on the necessity of rejecting scholasticism in favor of modern critical methods. On the other hand, an outright criticism of Loisy could only encourage the neo-scholastic reactionaries, like Gayraud and company, to sabotage their common program



for the renewal of the Catholic intellectual life. The first article of Histoire et Dogme was a tempered criticism of the neoscholastic philosophy responsible for both extrinsicism and historicism. In the eyes of Mourret, this article appeared to be more anti-Gayraud and anti-traditionalist than anti-Loisy. Blondel was advised to disassociate himself more clearly from the modernists if he expected to escape condemnation. In the second article, Blondel repeated most of the objections raised previously in his correspondence with Loisy and von Hugel. Several of his criticisms had already been answered in the responses of Loisy and von Hugel. In particular, they all agreed on the futility of Christian apologetics based on history alone. From the correspondence and the articles examined in my research, it would appear that Loisy and von Hugel were even less inclined towards historicism than Batiffol and Lagrange, both of whom apologists usually picture as the opponents of historicism. A mixture of extrinsicism and historicism has indeed dominated the field of Roman Catholic apologetics until the eve of Vatican II.

In his last article on Histoire et Dogme, Blondel began with the two-sources theory, Scripture and Tradition, current in the Roman Catholic church between Trent and Vatican II. He soon rejected the unscientific notion of an esoteric transmission de ore in aurem of historical facts, received truths, accepted teachings, hallowed practices, and ancient customs. With the growing tendency towards written documents, he claimed, such a notion would lead to the "exhaustion of Tradition itself." In the light of his philosophy of action, Blondel preferred to speak of Tradition as encompassing the whole life of the Church, including the practice of all the faithful, the speculation of all the Christian scholars, and the exercise of the infallible magisterium assisted by the Holy Spirit. With such a comprehensive notion, he expected to overcome the extreme intellectualism and rationalism of both the neoscholastic theologians and the radical critical scholars. He succeeded in proving his loyalty to

the Church and his willingness to maintain an orthodox faith. He opened new horizons for Catholic scholars and inspired a whole generation of theologians to venture beyond the preliminary steps he had made.

The fundamental problem discussed in Histoire et Dogme concerns the scientific method for proceeding from history to dogma, and then reading history in the light of dogma. He labelled the two extreme attitudes to be rejected as extrinsicism and historicism. Extrinsicism subjects historical science to dogmatic presuppositions, while historicism reduces dogma to what can be ascertained by historical methods alone.

Blondel's notion of history is complex. In his own philosophy of action, he preferred to develop an integral phenomenology before tackling the problems of metaphysics. He expected the modern scientific historian to adopt the same method of immanence as he had done in philosophy. He conceived historical science as a strictly positive science which links together facts and events according to their natural determinism. Such a scientific synthesis, however, could only be an abstraction from real life, a phenomenal description preliminary to metaphysical and theological interpretations.

Besides this distinction between historical observations and historical interpretation, Blondel conceived a distinction between ordinary scientific history and Sacred History. He identified the latter with the whole life of the Church, including the practice of all the Christian faithful, the speculation of Christian scholars, and the infallible magisterium of the Church, assisted by the Holy Spirit. Thus, Sacred History was simply another name for Tradition. His distinction between the two kinds of history clearly raises problems for those who object to placing positive science on one side and supernatural life on the other.

Blondel began his treatise, Histoire et Dogme, with the intention of discovering a scientific method to explain the mutual relations between scientific history and dogmatic formulations, both conceived as intellectual abstractions from real life. He concluded by offering Tradition, also called Sacred History, that is, the whole life of the Church, as the bridge between history and dogma. In other words, the Church in the totality of its life was suggested to justify the historical foundations for dogmatic formulations and the dogmatic reading of history. His conclusion was much more clearly compatible with the position of an orthodox believer than with that of a scientist.

Blondel's notion of dogma is also complex. First of all, he distinguished between the primary object of faith, which is God revealing himself, and the secondary object, which is the human intellectual expression of that revelation. He distinguished between Christian faith (foi-confiance), which is absolute, and Christian beliefs (foi-croyance), which are relative. Because of his belief in the infallibility of the Church, he recognized the voice of God in the official teaching of the magisterium, and yet, he was aware that all human expressions are deficient and never adequate to their object, especially when that object is God revealing himself. Dogmatic formulations presented a dual value for Blondel: they enjoyed an absolute authority insofar as they point to divine revelation, but they were limited by their relative and inadequate modes of human expression.

Blondel's main objection against Loisy centered on Jesus' consciousness of his divinity. He agreed with Loisy that scientific history, by itself, is unable to prove Christian dogma. Consequently, biblical exegeses, conceived in a purely scientific fashion could never argue to the divinity of Jesus. If such belief forms the core of Christian tradition, Blondel wrote, it should be unscientific to exclude it from

Scripture. On the one hand, scientific history cannot by itself prove the divinity of Christ, on the other hand, scientific history should recognize this belief as central to Christianity. Blondel proposed a dilemma to the historian, either the a priori and unscientific denial of Christ's divinity, the rejection of the Christian supernatural, and the reduction of Christianity to the condition of natural religions; or the acceptance of Christ's divinity and the Christian supernatural, at least as a working hypothesis. According to Blondel, the interpretation of biblical texts and ecclesiastical history should then be in the light of the latter hypothesis. Although scientific history by itself can neither prove the supernatural, nor disprove it, it could at least use it as an hypothesis. On this hypothetical basis, Blondel believed that scientific history would prove to be not in contradiction with Christian dogma. While Loisy rejected any extra-historical principle for the determination of what is historical in Scripture, Blondel believed that, if the supernatural is incarnated in history, the scientific historian should be able to read it there. It would seem, then, that Blondel was presupposing faith. Both Loisy and Blondel were right in their rejection of historicism: history alone cannot prove the supernatural. While Loisy rejected any extra-historical principle for the determination of what is historical in Scripture, Blondel believed that, if the supernatural is incarnated in history, the scientific historian should be able to read it there. It would seem, then, that Blondel was presupposing faith. Both Loisy and Blondel were right in their rejection of historicism: history alone cannot prove the supernatural. While Loisy tried to develop an a-dogmatic methodology, Blondel tried to justify rationally his dogmatic reading of history. Their common problem still embarrasses many scholars.

It is important to remember that the study of Modernism has been handicapped by the partisanship of those involved. For some, the modernists have been heroes; for others, villains. The specter of Modernism still haunts the mind of "conservative" Catholics. Roma locuta est. Their concern with the modernists can only be to reiterate the earlier condemnations. The "liberal" Catholics, who might share the original intent of some modernists to renew the intellectual life within the Church, are very careful to indicate that their inspiration derives from men who have never been explicitly condemned by Rome.

Blondel in particular has been a center of controversy because "liberal" Catholics have wished to defend him against suspicion of compromising either with the modernists on the left or the reactionary scholastics on the right. While our own investigation no doubt also has its biases, it nevertheless analysed one body of material in greater detail than had previously been done. The picture of Blondel which emerges from these incidents is that of a man whose intellectual creativity and literary production seem to have been inhibited by the unhappily tense and polemical situation in which he lived and worked.

Until recent years, many of the problems raised within the Roman Catholic church by the French Modernist movement, far from having been solved by the radical disciplinary measures which abruptly ended the crisis, were simply shelved and removed from free and open discussion. In the liberalized atmosphere of Vatican II, contemporary Roman Catholic scholars, cautious in their efforts to avoid any affiliation with the condemned modernists, have nevertheless raised problems, if not identical, at least very similar to those of some seventy years ago. The nature and scope of revelation, the character and value of the Scriptures, the methods for biblical exegesis and hermeneutics, the origin and nature of the Church, the modes of expression for ecclesiastical authority and Christian tradition, the psychological, social, and cultural conditions for the

origin of Christian beliefs and practices, the history of dogmatic development, the contemporary need for demythologization, the increased understanding of man in contemporary society, and the need for the perpetual aggiornament of Christian doctrine and practice: all these problems occupied the mind of the French modernists and continue to be at the center of theological debates. Historians are invited to contribute their share by their rigorous application of a critical methodology.

#### Notes

- <sup>1</sup>Concilium, September 1966, p. 47.
- <sup>2</sup>Poulat, E. Intégrisme et Catholicisms Intégral (Casterman, 1969), p. 40, note 49.
- <sup>3</sup>Correspondance Blondel-Valensin, 3 vols. (Aubier, 1957-65); Au Coeur de la Crise moderniste; Le dossier inédit d'une controverse, présenté par R. Marlé (Aubier, 1960); Lettres philosophiques de Maurice Blondel (Aubier, 1961). We can add two other books edited by Claude Tresmontant, Correspondance philosophique Blondel-Laberthonnière (Seuil, 1961) and Le réalisme chrétien précédé de Essais de philosophie religieuse of Lucien Laberthonnière. Henri de Lubac is now preparing the publication of the Correspondance Blondel-Wehrlé, while his Jesuit confrère, André Blanchat, is responsible for the publication of the Correspondance Blondel-Bremond.
- <sup>4</sup>See in particular, Les Semaines religieuses: Approche historique et bibliographique. Paris: Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1958; Alfred Loisy: Sa vie, son oeuvre, par A. Houtin et F. Sartiaux; Manuscrit annoté et publié avec une bibliographie Alfred Loisy et un Index bio-bibliographique par E. Poulat. CNRS, 1960; Utopie ou anticipation? Le Journal d'un prêtre d'après-demain (1902-1903), de l'Abbé Calippe. Paris: Casterman, 1961; Histoire, dogme et critique

dans la crise moderniste. Paris: Casterman, 1962; "Néo-christianisme et Modernisme autour de Paul Desjardins," in Paul Desjardins et les Décades de Pontigny. Paris: PUF, 1964, pp. 77-103; "Une enquête anticléricale de pratique religieuse en Seine et Marne (1903) in Archives de Sociologie des Religions, 10 (1960), 109-131; "Travaux récents sur le modernisme," Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire, 4 (1963), 1159-1167; "La crise moderniste," in L'Information historique, 27 (1965), 110-114; "Modernisme et Intégrisme: Du concept polémique à l'irénisme critique," in ASR, 27 (1969), 3-28; Intégrisme et Catholicisme Intégral. Paris: Casterman, 1969.