

SOME ASPECTS OF THE TEACHINGS OF HANS HUT (c. 1490-1527)

A Study of their Origins in South Germany and their
Influence on the Anabaptist Movement 1526-1531

by

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B.A., University of British Columbia, 1951

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department
of
HISTORY

We accept this thesis as conforming to the
required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

April, 1958

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ABSTRACT

Hans Hut has usually been considered a revolutionary chiliast who stirred up the South German peasants against the civil and religious authorities. Because he was associated with the Anabaptists the last year and a half of his life the character of Anabaptism and its relation to Protestantism have been called into question.

My task has been to determine from Hut's tracts and confessions and from the testimonies of his friends and enemies what Hut taught in the general areas of church and state. In studying the origins of his teachings it was necessary to consider the influence of two men: Thomas Muentzer, a Spiritualist and leader in the Peasants' Revolt, and Hans Denck, a Humanist scholar and partner in the South German Anabaptist movement. Tracing Hut's influence on the South German Anabaptist movement from 1526 to 1531 involved a study of the writings of Ambrosius Spittelmayer, Austrian university student from Linz, Hans Schlaffer, former Catholic priest from Upper Austria, Leonhard Schiemer, student for the priesthood in Vienna and Franciscan monk for six years, Wolfgang Brandhuber, pastor at Linz, Peter Ridemann, shoemaker from Silesia, Leupold Scharnschlager, a teacher from the Tyrol, Jörg Probst Rothenfelder, a painter from Switzerland, and Pilgram Marpeck, a civil engineer from the Tyrol.

Hut conceived of the church as a covenant community of disciples following after Christ, going the way of the cross and suffering, baptized on confession of faith, practicing sharing of goods, and sent to preach the Gospel to all men. Hut was convinced that Christ would soon return to establish His Kingdom and bring the world to an end; until then obedience to the authorities was expected of all Christians.

Although the influence of Thomas Muentzer on Hut can be traced in common terminology and some teachings about the Christian life, he did not cause Hut to take a revolutionary position once he took up the cause of Anabaptism. Hut's view of discipleship, the covenant, and the nature of the church are quite foreign to Muentzer.

Hans Denck's contribution to the Anabaptist movement lay in his struggle with, and clarification of some of the theological presuppositions of Anabaptism. Denck was concerned about the

problems of man's free will and God's sovereignty, the relationship of the ceremonies of Old and New Testament, the role of the Spirit and faith in understanding the Scriptures, and the tension between sin and righteousness, law and Gospel, love and discipleship, church and world. Hut's concern about the nature of the church and its missionary task did not contradict with Denck's teachings so the two men were able to cooperate as co-founders of the South German Anabaptist movement. When Hut's eschatology caused friction he agreed to refrain from propagating his ideas.

Through his influence on Hans Schlaffer, Wolfgang Brandhuber, and Peter Ridemann, Hut contributed to the origins and the teachings of the Moravian Anabaptists, later called Hutterian Brethren. Hut's emphasis on community and sharing prepared the soil for communal living and Christian communism. His concept of the missionary apostolate was carried on more effectively by the Hutterites than any other Anabaptists of the sixteenth century. Hut's general view of discipleship and the nature of the church are also reflected in Hutterite writing and practice.

Hut's influence on Leonhard Schiemer and, through him and other apostles, on Pilgram Marpeck and Leupold Scharnschlager contributed to the origins and teachings of the South German Anabaptist movement that centered in Strassburg and Augsburg. The common position (Gemeindetheologie) represented by South German Anabaptist codices makes it difficult to determine who is responsible for specific Anabaptist ideas and concepts but since Hut was one of the earliest writers and leaders of the South German brotherhood it is not out of question to suggest that the items which appeared first in his writings and reappear in later writings, constitute part of his contribution to the South German Anabaptist movement. Among these are his emphasis on the covenant, on suffering and the cross, on rebirth, the imminent return of Christ, and the need for unity in the church.

Hut's teachings challenged the totalitarian character of church and state in his day and contributed, on the one hand, to the crumbling of the corpus christianum, and on the other hand, to the erection of the principles of the separation of church and state and religious freedom.

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the Head of my Department or by his representative. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My interest in pursuing a subject in the field of intellectual history goes back to the stimulating lectures and discussions with Dr. William J. Rose, visiting professor in Slavonic and Eastern European history at the University of British Columbia. At an important point in my pursuit after a thesis area it was Dr. Margaret Ormsby who encouraged me to work in the field of the Reformation. It was under her help and guidance that I made my first ventures into historical research, and considered historical method and theories of history for the first time.

My interest in Anabaptism goes back to my father, who was a twentieth century "Anabaptist" without knowing it. I am indebted to Dr. Harold S. Bender and his lectures in Anabaptist and Mennonite history for an introduction to the "flesh and blood" of Anabaptism. Without the excellent collection in the Mennonite Historical Library, a monument to Dr. Bender's labor of love, and the untiring assistance of its curator, Nelson P. Springer, this thesis would not have come into being.

Dr. Robert Friedmann, an outstanding authority on Austrian and Moravian Anabaptism, not only provided inspiration all along the way but also read the whole manuscript and made many valuable suggestions. Mrs. Elizabeth H. Bender read the first two chapters and ironed out much clumsiness of style and obscurity of thought. I am very grateful to Prof. A. C. Cooke, my advisor, for keeping me aware of the larger implications of the study and the underlying problems and pre-suppositions, and for doing this while suffering the inconveniences of corresponding by mail and despite an extra-heavy schedule.

Above all I am indebted to William Klassen, doctoral candidate at Princeton Theological Seminary, a research colleague and friend who saw the thesis through every stage of its existence. The hours of discussion in which every major problem I encountered in pursuing my subject was aired are reflected at more places in the thesis than either of us are aware of. He also read the entire manuscript with the critical eye of a scholar and a friend.

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INTRODUCTION

ANABAPTISM AND THE REFORMATION

Before looking at the influence of Hans Hut (c. 1490-1527) on the rise and spread of Anabaptism in South East Germany it may be helpful to review the relationship of Anabaptism to the total Protestant Reformation and the larger historic forces of the sixteenth century. This is especially necessary because of the radical re-assessment of Anabaptism that has taken place among historians in Europe in the last 100 years and in America in the last generation.

In his recent edition of Spiritual and Anabaptist writers in the Library of Christian Classics, G. H. Williams of Harvard says, "From all sides we are coming to recognize in the Radical Reformation a major expression of the religious movement of the sixteenth century. It is one that is as distinctive as Lutheranism, Calvinism, and Anglicanism, and is perhaps comparably significant in the rise of modern Christianity."¹ No one reading the three standard surveys of the Reformation in English would find any basis for believing this statement. J. P. Whitney dismisses the Anabaptists in three pages giving the impression that they were an insignificant peripheral phenomenon.² According to Preserved Smith the Anabaptists were the bolsheviki of the Reformation.³ Thomas Lindsay did his best with the sources available before 1903 but reflects the traditional view of the enemies of Anabaptism by devoting half of his space to the revolutionary Kingdom at Münster (1534-35).⁴ This interpretation of Anabaptism must be considered inadequate firstly, because it relies almost exclusively on the testimony of enemies and partisans, and secondly, because the primary

sources of Anabaptism were not yet readily available. More radical solutions to the problems of church and state than those of Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin, were just about stamped out by Roman Catholics and Protestants alike. Anabaptist histories, tracts, confessions, and hymns were only printed in small editions, if at all, and even these were destroyed when possible by the authorities, making Anabaptist source materials rare.⁵ The primary sources that are now available, however, make necessary a thorough revision of the prevailing judgments of those called "Anabaptist."

Not only is four centuries of partial interpretation by defenders of state-church Protestantism being called into question but it is being suggested that it was exactly the ideas of the Anabaptists that found expression in the sects of seventeenth century England, in the great Free Church communions of England and America, and in Western Christendom's tradition of human liberty and toleration. H. N. Brailsford has said, "The English Puritan Left can be understood only when we realize that it drew much of its inspiration directly from the Swiss, German, and Dutch Anabaptists."⁶ Ernest A. Payne has proposed that the bases of free society in our modern Western world are to be found in Renaissance Humanism, sixteenth century Anabaptism, and the Independents of seventeenth century England.⁷

The foundations of these sweeping claims must be tested in a discussion of the changes that have taken place in the study of the origins and basic principles of the Anabaptists. In 1843 Leopold von Ranke decried the fact that there was no competent treatment of Anabaptism available.⁸ In 1922 Karl Holl said, "It is a grievous lack that we still possess no really exhaustive and comprehensive picture

of the Anabaptist movement."⁹ This is still true today but substantial advances have been made in fitting the historical facts together. It will still be some time before a comprehensive treatment of Anabaptist thought will be available.

The name "Anabaptist" has usually been used to cover the whole Left Wing of the Reformation.¹⁰ During the Reformation and later it was used in a derogatory way as a sign of abuse and slander. Many still use it to designate a heretic and revolutionary. Actually the name was applied to all those who separated themselves from the state churches and it led to their persecution by both Protestants and Roman Catholics. The major Protestant Reformers, Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin, and their associates Melancthon, Rhegius, Menius, Bullinger, and Bucer, were the bitterest foes and persecutors of the Anabaptists.¹¹ The Reformers were primarily responsible for the fact that until the nineteenth century "Anabaptist" was synonymous with Muentzerite and Münsterite and the sedition, licentiousness, and heresy of which they were guilty. Re-baptizing itself was made punishable by death in 529 A.D. under Justinian and this law was reinstated in the Imperial code of January 4, 1528.¹² Some mediaeval sects had rejected infant baptism but none had adopted adult baptism, so that it was in defiance of a thousand year tradition that the first adult baptism based on Biblical principle, took place in Zürich, January 21, 1525.

A. Origins and Classification of Anabaptism.

Many theories have been advanced concerning the origins of the Anabaptists. Ludwig Keller is responsible for emphasizing the mediaeval origin, especially through the Waldenses.¹³ According to his view a

remnant of faithful Christians survived down through the Middle Ages of whom the sixteenth century Anabaptists were the heirs. No concrete evidence has been found to support this view, although the question has again been raised by Delbert Gratz' study of the Bernese Anabaptists.¹⁴ Ritschl is responsible for stressing the Spiritual Franciscans as the forerunners of the Anabaptists.¹⁵ Research has not justified this interpretation on historical grounds although ideologically there is some relationship. Most scholars now acknowledge the sixteenth century origins of the Anabaptist movement but on the one hand, there are those who find the origins in the Zwickau prophets, Thomas Muntzer¹⁶ and the socio-economic conditions that led to the Peasants' War,¹⁷ and on the other hand those who find the origins in the group of dissenters who gathered around Zwingli in Zürich.¹⁸ There are still many unanswered questions about the relationship of the movements that began in each area but Zürich is now generally recognized as the place of origin of Anabaptism proper.

Not all members and movements of the Radical or Left Wing of the Reformation can rightly be called Anabaptists. As a result of the work of Ernst Troeltsch,¹⁹ Alfred Hegler,²⁰ and Walter Koehler²¹ three larger groups are usually distinguished, the Anabaptists, the Spiritualists, and the Evangelical Rationalists or Anti-Trinitarians. This larger classification is not always satisfactory for some important figures do not fit into any class and might warrant a type of their own. They have, however, helped to establish some order where before there was only confusion. It is quite obvious that a neat and simple classification within these larger groups is out of question, and yet attempts continue to be made. Williams has suggested that the Anabaptists

can be divided into three groups, revolutionary (Melchior Hofmann, Münsterites), contemplative (Hans Denck, Louis Hetzer, Adam Pastor), and evangelical (Conrad Grebel, Jakob Huter, Menno Simons); and the Spiritualists into three parallel groups, revolutionary (Thomas Muentzer), rational (Sebastian Franck), and evangelical (Caspar Schwenkfeld). The Evangelical Rationalists are represented by men like Lefevre, Juan de Valdés, Servetus, Ochino, Castellio, Biandrata, and Socinus.²²

After all the possible sub-classifications have been made it must not be forgotten that probably 80 to 90 per cent of the Radical Reformation was Anabaptist and of all the Anabaptists 80 to 90 per cent were Evangelical, main-line Anabaptists. Because some of the sub-classifications are represented by single individuals it is probably more useful to speak of the main line Anabaptists and marginal Anabaptists. The general distinction between Anabaptists and Spiritualists is significant, however, and does help to clarify some of the confusion about the origins and character of the Anabaptist movement. What are some of the crucial differences between Anabaptists and Spiritualists?

In a summary way it could be said that the ultimate source of divine authority for the Anabaptists was the New Testament and for the Spiritualists, the Holy Spirit. The Evangelical Anabaptists accepted only the New Testament as normative for doctrine, ethics, and polity, and from the New Testament the imitation of the historic Jesus as normative for discipleship. This implied a disciplined brotherhood exercising the ban and an itinerant ministry of evangelists and apostles. In one instance it meant disciplined organized communism. This introduces another general but very significant distinction between

Anabaptists and Spiritualists. The Anabaptists gathered disciplined communities of believers stressing individual discipleship and corporate discipline, whereas the Spiritualists were utterly individualistic and quietistic, except for the radical egalitarian zeal of Muentzer. The Spiritualists rejected water-baptism and the Lord's Supper and thought only in terms of conventicles. The Anabaptists looked to the past, to the New Testament, to the martyr church of antiquity, and participated in the restoration of the fallen church. The Spiritualists looked to the future and a true church of the Spirit that had not yet been re-established.²³ Littell has shown that in this matter the Spiritualists and Reformers were agreed in their criticism of the Anabaptists for trying to realize the Kingdom on earth.²⁴ This is why there is no martyr book or martyr hymnal in the sixteenth century to compare with that of the Anabaptists.

The factor common to the whole left wing of the Reformation was dissent from the "magisterial Reformation"²⁵ of Protestantism. This does not mean, however, that there was a common understanding of the separation of church and state and the biblical distinction between church and world. Hubmaier, Muentzer, and Schwenkfeld, for example, saw no reason why a Christian could not participate in the affairs of the government through office-holding or military service. The further distinctions between Anabaptists and Spiritualists will become clearer as the origin and course of the Radical Reformation in continental Europe is traced.²⁶

B. The Spread of Anabaptism in the Left Wing of the Reformation.

The first radical upsurge of the Reformation came late in 1521 at Wittenberg while Luther was in refuge at the Wartburg. Luther's

popularity had attracted a wide variety of men with mixed social, economic, revolutionary, and religious hopes to the cause of the Reformation. At Zwickau Marcus Thome (Stuebner) became the leader of a group that demanded a return to the usage of the Apostles under the guidance of the Living Spirit. Drawing from chiliastic (Joachim of Fiore), mystical (Tauler) and prophetic sources (Hussite), he predicted that the Turks would soon invade Europe, that the world would come to an end in a mighty battle, and that the righteous would be elevated and the godless annihilated.²⁷ He soon won Muentzer and Carlstadt to the new cause and even caused Melancthon to waver in his support of Luther.

When Luther heard of these deviations he returned to Wittenburg and stopped the Radical Reformation in mid-flight. He attacked its Puritan legalism, its inspirationism, its repudiation of infant baptism, and its chiliastic world-view.²⁸ After leaving Wittenberg Muentzer's spiritualism gradually turned revolutionary and in the spring of 1525 he gained the support of the peasants in a mighty attempt to usher in the Kingdom of God by force and violence. Carlstadt, Schwenkfeld, and others left Wittenberg disappointed and disillusioned and became wanderers propagating an individual spiritual religion. This earliest upsurge in the Radical Reformation cannot truly be called Anabaptist. Infant baptism was repudiated but adult believers' baptism was never introduced and no permanent gathering of believers resulted. This development is more important in the light of its influence on Luther's view of the Church than in its effect on the Radical Reformation.

Before 1522, Luther had been contemplating a reordering of the Church as a fellowship of believers but he was frightened by the Zwickau

prophets, Muentzer's claims to special illuminations of the Spirit, and the revolt of the Peasants, so he threw in his lot with the princes and decided to remain with the mediaeval parish-concept of the church (Volkskirche).²⁹ In his Address to the German Nobility he spoke in terms of the corpus christianum and after the revolt of the peasants, dissent was regarded as a breach of brotherly relations that was classed with perjury, rebellion, and blasphemy.³⁰ Luther's attitude to the Schwärmer was moulded by a series of unfortunate events. That he identified the Schwärmer with the Anabaptists and became responsible for encouraging the death penalty upon them is one of the tragic aspects of the Reformation.

The church which Carlstadt headed at Orlamünde from spring 1522 to September 1524 might have been an exception to the spiritualist and revolutionary character of the North German Radical Reformation but the principle of voluntary religious association was never introduced nor were there any other parallels to the Anabaptist movement that originated in Zürich in 1525.

The character of the Radical Reformation in Zürich and throughout Switzerland differed substantially from that in Saxony. As a result of Erasmus' influence at the University of Basel, Zwingli and others interested in reform were encouraged to study the Bible in the original languages and to cultivate inward religion. Lay reading groups appeared in Zürich, St. Gall, and in other places that cultivated Biblical radicalism among the common people.³¹

It was in Zürich in a circle around Zwingli that the first radical tendencies in Switzerland became evident. Zwingli and Vadian had opposed infant baptism on biblical grounds in the early 1520's but when

it became clear that the gathering of a church by believers' baptism was incompatible with the state-church, Zwingli chose the latter.³² A group of young, able men around Zwingli appealed to the New Testament alone, concerning the mass, baptism, and the nature of the church, and called for courage and consistency in carrying through reforms. Zwingli came to believe that the nature of the change and the rate at which it should take place could be determined by the city council. This did not satisfy the radical group and when they pressed on despite Zwingli and the magistrates, civil and ecclesiastical authority united to threaten religious deviation with banishment and death.

The leader of the small group of radicals in Zürich was Conrad Grebel,³³ a humanist student at the universities of Basel, Vienna, and Paris, and the son of the leader of the city council, Jakob Grebel. With him were Felix Manz, Wilhelm Reublin, Georg Blaurock, Simon Stumpf and others. In the disputation of January 1523, there was unity of radicals and reformers against the Roman church, but during the summer Stumpf approached Zwingli about gathering a church of believers and Zwingli declined. At the disputation in October, 1523, the radicals called for the complete abolition of the Mass and the restitution of apostolic Christianity. This view of the church finally led to the first adult baptism on January 21, 1525 and to the banishment of the group from Zürich. Fritz Blanke has described the founding of the first Free Church of the modern world as it came into being in Zollikon among the refugees from Zürich in the spring of 1525.³⁴

After leaving Zürich, Grebel, Manz, Reublin, and Blaurock became evangelists and apostles of the new faith and carried it quickly to the districts around Zürich and on to St. Gall, Berne, and Basel. Manz

was the first Anabaptist martyr. He was tried in Zürich and on refusing to recant was cast into the Limmat River in January 1527. This was the beginning of a long line of martyrs but also the beginning of a great missionary ingathering. Driven by persecution and the Great Commission they became the first missionary community of the modern world.

As persecution increased in Switzerland the Anabaptists began to spill over into South Germany and into Tyrol. At Easter time 1525, Reublin appeared in Waldshut and won Balthasar Hubmaier³⁵ for the new faith. He in turn won his congregation and in a short time baptized 360 converts. This is one of the few cases where an Evangelical congregation was won over bodily to Anabaptism. Hubmaier was forced to flee from Waldshut toward the end of the year and after a brief imprisonment in Zürich he set out for Moravia.

Late in March, 1526 Hubmaier arrived in Augsburg and won and baptized Hans Denck, a young humanist teacher who had been forced to flee from Nuremberg because he would not agree with the Lutheran supporters. Denck maintained that faith, the Scriptures, and the Spirit had no meaning apart from death with Christ and resurrection to newness of life; that outer baptism only has meaning if there is an inner covenant with God, and that participation in the Supper only takes on meaning as the individual becomes willing to refuse false comfort and to accept suffering. In May, Denck won and baptized Hans Hut and these two together, Denck with his writings and Hut through his evangelistic activities, became the co-founders of the South German Anabaptist movement.

Hut represents the only historical link between the Radical Reformation of Saxony and the Anabaptist movement of Switzerland. He

is the only important Anabaptist leader of South Germany who had been under the direct influence of Muentzer and had supported his program. After his baptism Hut swept through Franconia and Königsberg on a successful evangelistic tour returning to Augsburg February 1527. He remained in Augsburg ten days, baptizing many and establishing the congregation, but then he left on a missionary journey that took him over Passau to Nikolsburg, Moravia and from there to Vienna and through Lower and Upper Austria, Salzburg and back to Augsburg where he arrived on time to take a leading role in the Martyr Synod August, 1527. On September 15, 1527 he was taken captive in Augsburg never to be released.

Some of the disciples of Hut, i.e., Schiemer, Schlaffer, and Brandhuber, carried the faith to the Tyrol where it flourished in 1527 but then met very severe persecution. From the Tyrol Jakob Huter went up to Moravia where he was able to reorganize and unify the Anabaptist communal settlements that later bore his name.³⁶ Pilgram Marpeck and Leupold Scharnschlager, also won to the faith by disciples of Hut, were forced to flee from the Tyrol in 1528 and made their way to Strassburg.

The communistic Anabaptist settlements in Moravia were founded by refugee South German and Swiss Brethren who did not find in Hubmaier's great church at Nikolsburg the discipline which they read about in the New Testament. In 1529 under pressure to take the oath a group of 200 followers of Jacob Widemann went out into the country, laid all their belongings on a cloak and resolved to live the life of sharing depicted in Acts 2 and 4. Under the able leadership of Wolfgang Brandhuber a strong economy based on skills and crafts was established that kept them as far as possible from compromising with the world in war and

commerce. Ridemann was the early author who gave the communal system its confessional grounding. Peter Walpot headed the first large-scale lay missionary organization of the modern world. Every spring a corps of lay evangelists was sent out into Middle and South Germany to return in the fall with a harvest of converts. Some apostles stayed out for years and many were caught, imprisoned, and executed. Their work was especially effective in Württemberg and Hesse. The settlements back in Moravia represent the first large-scale communist experiments in modern times.³⁷

While the line of faith went out from Zürich through Reublin, Hubmaier, Denck, Hut and Schiemer to South East Germany, Austria, and the Tyrol; at the same time Michal Sattler carried the faith from Zürich to Strassburg and South West Germany in 1526. From this time on Strassburg became a center for Anabaptists of all kinds and for representatives of all brands of the Radical Reformation.³⁸ Denck arrived late in 1526 and in 1528 Scharnschlager and Marpeck arrived. Some of the leaders who gathered here from 1526 to 1531 were Gross, Hetzer, Hofmann, Joris, Marpeck, Scharnschlager, as well as representatives of the Lutheran and Reformed faiths. It was here that the lines between Reformers and Anabaptists, and Spiritualists and Anabaptists were worked out in discussions and disputations. The conversation between Marpeck and Schwenkfeld³⁹ continued on until the middle of the century, Marpeck's center of work being Augsburg after 1540. Marpeck's contacts with the Anabaptist groups in Switzerland, South Germany, and Moravia and his efforts at bringing them together has been illuminated by the recently discovered Kunstbuch.⁴⁰

The two most important Anabaptist meetings of the early years convened at Schleithem in February, 1527 and at Augsburg in

August, 1527. Michal Sattler was the guiding spirit at the Schleithelm meeting and is the author of the Schleithelm confession.⁴¹ The Swiss Anabaptist position on baptism, excommunication, Lord's Supper, separation from the world, the church, nonresistance, and the oath are crystallized in this confession. The meeting at Augsburg was under the leadership of Hans Hut and was an action group rather than a meeting to discuss the faith. Instead of drawing up a confession, Anabaptist apostles were commissioned to go to all the adjoining areas. It has been called the Martyr Synod because most of the leaders in attendance were executed in the following three years.

One of the leaders at Strassburg who did not represent the evangelical Anabaptist position but played an important role in the dissemination of the Anabaptist faith was Melchior Hofmann.⁴² His activities as an agitator and evangelical preacher took him to Wittenberg, Stockholm, Kiel, Amsterdam, Strassburg, and many points along the Rhine. He worked together with Nicolaus Amsdorf, Thomas Muentzer, Carlstadt, Knipperdollinck, and Campanus at different times in his colored career. Although the Swiss and South German Anabaptists disowned him because of his millenarian views and his heretical Christology he was instrumental in carrying Anabaptist doctrines to the Netherlands. He was imprisoned in Strassburg in 1533 not to be released until 1540, but in the meantime his chiliastic ideas had contributed to the building of the New Jerusalem at Münster in 1534-35.

The incidents that led to the tragic attempt to erect the New Jerusalem at Münster are well known. Bernt Rothmann, representative of the Lutheran cause in Münster, began the movement to a radical reformation by adopting the Zwinglian view of the Supper and repudiating infant

baptism. When Jan Matthysz, one of Hofmann's followers, arrived in Münster, and established himself as a prophet, and called for the founding of a holy community separated from the unbelieving godless, Rothmann joined him. The revolutionary step that separated them from all peaceful and evangelical Anabaptists was the decision to expel all those from the city who would not join them. This was a confusion of the voluntary principle and the parish principle; everyone was welcome but the resultant church was to be coterminous with the whole city community. Word spread rapidly that Münster was the key city of the New Age. After a second prophet, Jan of Leyden, arrived, communism and polygamy were introduced and not long after Jan set himself up as "King David." Missioners were sent out with the message that after a time of suffering and revolution the messianic age would be ushered in. The wild dream was brought to a sudden and tragic end when Protestant and Roman Catholic troops combined to destroy the Kingdom with the utmost cruelty.

Even though the congregations in the Netherlands had been founded by Hofmann, and even though Obbe Philips the first leader of the Anabaptists in the Netherlands had been a follower of Hofmann, the majority of these groups never went over to the revolutionary position. Prophetism and chiliasm and the divisive influence of David Joris and Adam Pastor could have thrown the northern Anabaptists into hopeless confusion and frustration had it not been for the inspiring and effective leadership of Menno Simons.⁴³

As a priest, Menno had been caused to doubt the Mass in 1528 on reading Luther. In 1530 he was stirred by the Scriptural command for believers' baptism, but it was not until 1535 that the plight of the

struggling evangelicals finally led him to forsake the priesthood and take up leadership in the Anabaptist sect. From 1535 to his death in 1561 he travelled secretly from town to town binding together the shattered fragments of a great movement and building of them a church. From 1535 to 1555 the Anabaptists constituted the larger part of the Protestant movement in Holland. From Holland, Anabaptist refugees fled to many parts of northern Germany and as far as the Vistula delta.

Dutch Anabaptist refugees probably contributed to the rise of independent and separatist movements in England⁴⁴ in the sixteenth century but no organized movement developed there. As early as 1534 the name Anabaptist occurred in an English Statute and there were representatives from England at an Anabaptist synod held at Bockholt in 1536. By 1549 books by Calvin and Bullinger against the Anabaptists were translated into English. It is believed that Robert Browne, the father of English separatism was influenced by the Anabaptists.⁴⁵

English refugees in Holland in the early seventeenth century affiliated with the Mennonites and on their return shared in the founding of the Baptist Church. The early English Baptists through John Smyth provided only one of the many bridges by which the ideas of the continental radicals passed over to Britain. Besides these direct historic connections it is quite correct to say that all the English Free Churches are indebted to the Anabaptists.⁴⁶ There were earlier parallels in England to the Fifth Monarchy Men, Levellers, and Diggers, and even behind the Quakers were the Seekers and Familists who at times reflect Anabaptist thought.⁴⁷ It is important to keep in mind that all the English sects maintained an interest in the state, something that is not typical of the continental Anabaptists of the

sixteenth century. Technically it is just as wrong to refer to the Fifth Monarchy Men as Anabaptists as it is to refer to the Italian Rationalists⁴⁸ as Anabaptists or to the Polish Anti-Trinitarians as Anabaptists.

C. The Interpretation and Contribution of Anabaptism.

The rapid spread of the Anabaptist movement in German speaking lands is an indication that the soil was fertile and had been prepared by Lutheran and Reformed teaching and by groups such as the Brethren of the Common Life. Just how much credit should be given to the fluid social and economic conditions is difficult to estimate.⁴⁹ In parts of Switzerland, Austria, the Tyrol, Germany, and Holland it reached the proportions of a popular movement that was stopped only by severe persecution. It spread without formal organization, without much literary guidance, and was soon driven underground by harsh persecution. In the light of these conditions it is no wonder that there were some aberrations and excesses.

No ideology can survive unless it is related to the large historic forces that provide the atmosphere in which a movement can live. Since the early sixteenth century was a time of social unrest, economic upheaval, attempted reform, and revolutionary dreams there has been a temptation to interpret Anabaptism as a cause or an expression of these forces.⁵⁰ The research of this century has shown that evangelical Anabaptism in Switzerland, South Germany, Moravia, and Holland was primarily a religious movement, but this does not mean that it can be divorced from the social forces and movements of the sixteenth century. Little attention has been given in the past to the determinative

influence of social factors as a background for understanding the Protestant and sectarian social ethic. Some of the social forces that relate more specifically to the following study will be mentioned here.

It seems that many of the craftsmen and peasants of the sixteenth century found themselves displaced in an economy made fluid by commerce with Asia and wealth from America.⁵¹ It is no coincidence that these two classes were the centers for revolt. The fact that the same classes supported both Muentzer's revolutionary eschatology, and fled to the Hutterite communities in Moravia, should not, however, cloud the difference between the motives in each instance. Wandering journey-men and craftsmen without a fixed place of residence were a common sight in Europe at this time. Other social classes were also effected. It is important to know that the Reformation almost led to the liquidation of the clergy as a distinct class in parts of Europe. Together with this went the rise of Humanism and the stimulation of lay intellectuals. The role of the clergy and humanists in the origin and spread of Anabaptism has usually been underestimated.⁵² It was as true in the sixteenth century as it has always been, that the social classes with the largest stake in the status quo were least open to a new, radical message.

The fact that Hans Hut was a wandering craftsman who came under the influence of Luther's reform ideas, was then inspired by Muentzer's revolutionary program, but finally joined the Anabaptist movement, is an illustration of the unstable social conditions and the shifting intellectual atmosphere. The mixture of social and religious factors should not blind one from considering which was dominant in a particular instance. Increasing numbers from all classes were forced to become

mobile as a result of religious persecution. This is the primary reason for Hut's wandering in the last few years of his life, together with a new factor: the religious compulsion to carry out the Great Commission.

Paul Peachey has traced the change in the sociological center of gravity of the Anabaptist movement as it spread in Switzerland.⁵³ It arose in an academic and theological milieu, was spread largely by craftsmen, and then moved from the bourgeois classes to the peasantry. Prolonged persecution turned it into a purely rural phenomenon. This description of the sociological progression in Switzerland can be applied in general to the course of Anabaptism wherever it arose in Europe, with the possible exception of some places in Holland and North Germany.

Anabaptism is now widely acclaimed as the pioneer effort in the modern world to achieve the great twin principles of religious voluntarism and of the separation of church and state.⁵⁴ Other distinctive teachings common to evangelical Anabaptism are the baptism of adults on confession of faith and commitment to discipleship; a brotherhood type of church with sharing; full liberty of conscience; a love-ethic including nonresistance and total rejection of warfare and the use of force; and the non-swearing of oaths. Bainton has summed up their contribution as follows:

"...the Anabaptists anticipated all other religious bodies in the proclamation and exemplification of three principles which are on the North American continent among those truths which we hold to be self-evident: the voluntary church, the separation of church and state, and religious liberty. From the days of Constantine to the Anabaptists these principles, to us so cardinal, had been in abeyance."⁵⁵

The recognition of the obligation resting on all Christians to charity, community, and evangelism might also be mentioned as central to Anabaptist thought.

If the principles just outlined represent the position of the largest branch of the Radical Reformation why did the Reformers initiate and encourage the harsh persecution that nearly led to the extinction of the Anabaptists? The answer to this question lies in the fact that behind the rather innocent concern of the Anabaptists for a voluntary church of believers loomed a view of the relationship of church to society that was incompatible with that of the Reformers. Leaning on the mediaeval synthesis, Luther and Zwingli both consciously embraced the religious and secular order in the corpus Christi.⁵⁶ In their eyes the borders of the church and society were considered coterminous. This is the ideal of the "Volkskirche" or state-church. If church and society are truly related to this intimate way, then the demand of the Anabaptists for the separation of church and state must be looked upon as "revolutionary." This is the central explanation for the strange fact that Roman Catholics and Protestants agreed in saying that failure to observe infant baptism was worthy of persecution and death. The agreement of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism in this matter illustrates the fact that the principle underlying the relationship of Anabaptism to Protestantism was the same as that between Anabaptism and Catholicism. Understood in sociological terms the totalitarian social order, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic, could not tolerate in its midst an autonomous, voluntary, noninclusive social grouping.⁵⁷

The union of church and society in the corpus christianum took place, according to the Anabaptists, when Constantine accepted

Christianity as the official religion of the Empire. "From the time when the conversion of the Emperor Constantine first placed the power of the Roman Empire on the side of Christianity, the history of churches is beset with anomalies."⁵⁸ This was the downfall of the church and it was not until the sixteenth century that God began raising up the church again by calling it to be separate from the world and the state. It was as a result of the original union of church and state that all the evils crept into the church. As soon as the Anabaptists challenged the basic presupposition of the corpus christianum, all the other tenets and principles of their faith followed in logical succession.

"Church discipline; a level of ethical requirements distinct from the average behaviour of the average citizen; economic fellowship within the local congregation, whether through common ownership of goods or through the deacon's office; baptism upon confession of faith; refusal of the oath and of civil office; all the foci of disagreement with the Reformers fell into place as parts of a consistent whole once one dared, at the price of scandal and persecution, call into question the Constantinian synthesis, and to conceive of the church as being distinct from the world."⁵⁹

The history of the Reformation is being rewritten. It is now acknowledged that the first great battles for modern liberty were waged against the authority of the Church by the sects of the sixteenth century. This was a time when both Protestants and Roman Catholics tended to be untrue to the principle of freedom of conscience for both claimed that their religion should be that of the people as a whole. In later centuries men in the Western world agreed that no government should be allowed to decide the form of Christianity for its citizens and then set out to suppress those who dissent from their choice. "The tragedy of the Protestant Reformation. . . was that on the one

hand it broke up the misconceived corpus christianum and yet in practice presupposed its continuation."⁶⁰ The Anabaptists knew four centuries too soon that "Christian Europe was an illusion and Reformation a never-finished renewal."⁶¹

FOOTNOTES

INTRODUCTION: ANABAPTISM AND THE REFORMATION

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- ² James P. Whitney, History of the Reformation (London: Macmillan Co., Ltd., 1940).
- ³ Preserved Smith, The Age of the Reformation (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1920), p. 244.
- ⁴ T. M. Lindsay, A History of the Reformation (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941). First published in 1907.
- ⁵ A survey of in-group records and writings appears in Franklin H. Littell, The Anabaptist View of the Church. An Introduction to Sectarian Protestantism (Boston: American Society of Church History, 1952); Studies in Church History VIII, pp. 9-11.
- ⁶ Quoted in Ernest A. Payne, The Anabaptists of the Sixteenth Century and Their Influence on the Modern World (London: The Carey Kingsgate Press, Ltd., 1949), pp. 5-6.
- ⁷ Ibid., p. 7.
- ⁸ Leopold von Ranke, History of the Reformation in Germany (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1905), p. 728. First published in 1843.
- ⁹ Karl Holl, "Luther und die Schwärmer," Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte I (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1923), p. 424.
- ¹⁰ See Harold S. Bender, "Anabaptists," Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, ed. Lefferts A. Loetscher, Vol. I (1955), p. 35.
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- ¹² A copy appears in Gustav Bossert, ed., Quellen zur Geschichte der Wiedertäufer: Herzogtum Württemberg (Leipzig: M. Heinsius Nachf., 1930); Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte XIII:I, pp. 1*-2*.

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND AND METHOD

A. The Field.

1. The State of Research on Hut.

Although it was early recognized that Hans Hut played a very important role in the spread of Anabaptism in South Germany,¹ no research was done on his life, thought, and influence until Christian Meyer published Hut's confessions in 1874.² In 1893, Alexander Nicoladoni threw considerable light on Hut's work in Upper Austria³ and in 1901 Friedrich Roth's history of the Reformation in Augsburg carefully analyzed this Anabaptist center and studied Hut's role there.⁴ Georg Berbig, in 1903, threw new light on Hut's activities in Franconia⁵ and Paul Wappler in 1913 on his influence in Thuringia.⁶

It was not until 1913, that a detailed study of Hut's life was undertaken. Wilhelm Neuser, writing at the University of Bonn, outlined an ambitious study of his life and thought but only completed a part of his life for a thesis.⁷ Neuser has pieced together the facts of his life from the sources in a masterly way. His work is limited in its usefulness because it only covers a part of his life and by the fact that most of the sources have since been published in the Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer.⁸ A few new sources have turned up since 1913, but nothing that would change the picture to any extent.⁹

In recent research on the South German Anabaptist movement it has become increasingly apparent that a thorough study of the teachings and influence of Hut is necessary.¹⁰ Most scholars have felt that Hut had

a negative influence on the South German Anabaptist movement; on the contrary, Bergsten, studying Pilgram Marpeck and Caspar Schwenkfeld suggests that Marpeck is greatly indebted to Hut, much more than to Denck.¹¹ But neither Bergsten nor the many scholars who decry Hut's influence on the Anabaptist movement, have attempted to prove their point.

An important aspect of research in Hut's thought is his relationship to Thomas Muentzer. Grete Mecenseffy has indicated that radical revolutionary and eschatological influences crept into the South German Anabaptist movement from Muentzer through Hut.¹² Robert Friedmann suggests that a comparative study of their world view and thought concepts excludes this possibility.¹³ Both regret the fact that a thorough and systematic study of the teachings of Hut has not yet been made.

Some of the most recent light on Hut's relationship to the South German Anabaptist movement has come from the newly discovered Kunstbuch,¹⁴ in which one of Hut's major writings appears with many other South German Anabaptist tracts. All of these tracts and epistles reflect Hut's influence, as Heinold Fast has pointed out.¹⁵ The omissions and additions that were obviously made in editing Hut's tract throw considerable new light on the development of thought among South German Anabaptists. In the course of a generation after his death, Hut's insights were sharpened and modified as the character of the opposition changed, but his basic position was not significantly altered.

2. Trends in Research on Anabaptism in General.

There has been a tremendous increase in serious Anabaptist research in the last generation.¹⁶ This has been stimulated by the new problems that the Church has had to face in the twentieth century

and facilitated by the publication of the original source materials.¹⁷ Two important trends can be noted in reviewing this research. First, most of the energies have of necessity been consumed in gathering and organizing the historical facts. Only very recently have attempts been made to grapple with the thought and theology of the Anabaptists.¹⁸ It is generally recognized that the task of the new generation of Anabaptist scholars will lie in this area. Secondly, most of the energies of the Anabaptist scholars of the past generation have been devoted to the study of the Dutch Mennonites, the Swiss Brethren and the Hutterian Brethren. Only very recently has the South German Anabaptist movement been recognized as a semi-independent development with certain points of distinctive theology. Jan Kiwiet has pioneered this view in his studies on Denck and Marpeck.¹⁹ The Kunstbuch has also added to the view that the South German Anabaptist movement must be studied as a phenomenon not synonymous with the Swiss Brethren and the Hutterites.

A study of Hans Hut must be closely related to these two trends. It must first of all be a study of his thought and influence rather than merely an historical account of his life. This means that the categories of religious and intellectual history must be applied and that Hut must be seen over against the thought of his contemporaries. Since Hut was the cofounder of the South German Anabaptist movement it will at the same time be a study in the origins of the movement as over against the Swiss beginnings and as a background for the movement in Moravia.

3. Interpretations of Anabaptism.

There are two basic reasons for the speculative and erroneous interpretation of Anabaptism. In the first place, research has been limited primarily to historical facts and differences among sixteenth century Anabaptists themselves have not been clarified.²⁰ In the second place, confusion is compounded by the fact that the interpretations by their enemies and the failure to distinguish between the moderate Anabaptist brotherhood on the one hand, and on the other the revolutionary doctrines of Thomas Muentzer and the Münsterites and the spiritualism of Hans Bunderlin, Sebastian Franck and Caspar Schwenkfeld, have persisted down to our own day.²¹

If there is anything that scholars generally (though not unanimously) agree on it is that the Anabaptist movement was primarily a religious phenomenon.²² It was not, as their enemies have charged, the desire for free love, economic improvement, social justice, or an attempt to overthrow the government that motivated the Anabaptists, but rather the desire to follow Christ and to be God's people. Troeltsch helped to clarify some of the religious confusion of the sixteenth century by interpreting the Anabaptists sociologically as a sect.²³ It gradually came to be felt, however, that if the whole Left Wing of the Reformation is classed as sectarian something must be done to distinguish between the divergent elements represented in this heterogeneous group.²⁴ Johannes Kuhn was the first to suggest that Nachfolge Christentum characterized a part of the left wing.²⁵ This was developed further by Harold Bender, who placed discipleship as central and added to it the voluntary church and pacifism.²⁶ Franklin Littell has suggested that the view of the church as a

"true church" gathered and disciplined upon the apostolic pattern represents the essence of Anabaptism.²⁷ Paul Peachey interprets the view of state-church relations to be central.²⁸ Robert Friedmann has most recently advanced the "two kingdoms" view.²⁹

In studying Anabaptism not too much is accomplished by disputing about which part of Anabaptist life and thought is central. Discipleship and the view of the church do lie close to the core but a whole view of Christian faith, life, and order is involved. Variations among Anabaptists themselves must not be overlooked. A simple classification that excludes men like Denck and Hut is not very helpful. Each leader stands and falls on his own merits as do also the branches of the larger movement.³⁰

B. The Approach.

1. The Writings and Confessions of Hut.

Of Hut's literary efforts only two tracts, a letter and a small concordance have become known, besides some hymns of lasting value. Ein christlicher Unterricht (A Christian Instruction) was published by Johannes Landtsperger in 1527.³¹ The main part was republished in Mittheilungen aus dem Antiquariat S. Calvary, in 1871.³² In this tract there are a list of forty contradictory Scripture references. Thirty-nine of the forty appear in an earlier work by Denck. If they were inserted by Hut it demonstrates a clear reliance on Denck.³³ The writing itself is based on a three-fold breakdown of the Apostolic Creed.

There are no extant copies of his tract Vom Geheimnis der Tauff, (The Mystery of Baptism) except as they appear in numerous Hutterite codices. It is believed to be identical with the "book with the seven

seals" that Hut refers to at his trial in November 1527.³⁴ Both works appear in several Hutterite manuscript books and both were published by Lydia Müller.³⁵ Vom Geheimnis der Tauff, except for the last part and a number of other omissions, appeared in the Kunstbuch of 1561. Both tracts were written sometime between his baptism in May 1526 and his imprisonment in September 1527. It is probable that they were written early in this period.

The open letter which Hut wrote to the Anabaptist brotherhood was probably written in Augsburg in August, 1527. When it came into the hands of Urbanus Rhegius in Augsburg he replied in 1528 with a pamphlet, Sendbrief Hans Hutthen etwan ains Ruernemen Vorsteers im Wieder tauff-
forden. Verantwortet durch Urbanum Rhegium.³⁶ Lydia Müller again has printed the main section of the epistle.³⁷ It is a short document and it is believed to have been sent with Anabaptist apostles commissioned by the Martyr Synod.

The Rathsuebuechlein containing a short catechism, prayer, and a concordance of 78 items was found in the possession of Eitelhans Langenmantel when he was arrested and is commonly attributed to Hut. It was published by Roth without the Scripture references in a study of Hans Langenmantel.³⁸

The confessions of Hut all date from the time of his imprisonment in Augsburg. Ten records of his answers have been published in Meyer's study³⁹ and one more appears in Schornbaum's collection of Anabaptist source materials for Bavaria.⁴⁰

The confessions of friends and followers of Hut that throw most light on his teachings have been printed in Berbig, Wappler, Nicoladoni

and Schornbaum.⁴¹ The influence of Hut on other South German Anabaptist leaders can be traced best in Müller's two volumes of South German tracts and epistles.⁴²

2. The Problem.

In the study of Hut's teachings it will be necessary to review what his contemporaries, friendly and hostile, thought of him, and examine the verdict of history and the problem it presents.

It seems very clear that the sentence which the court at Augsburg passed on Hut in 1527, powerfully influenced the position of later writers concerning him. The sentence accuses him specifically of holding infant baptism in contempt, of raising up a league to overthrow the authorities, and in general of heresy, revolution, and seduction. He was further accused of claiming special revelations from God, participating in the Peasants' War, inciting the common man to annihilate the authorities, associating with Muentzer, leading the pious citizens of Mühlhausen and Franconia astray and, while in prison, attempting to strangle his guard in an effort to escape by violence.⁴³

Sebastian Franck was one of the first to interpret Hut in this negative light. In his estimation Hut was the founder of a new sect that wanted to annihilate the ungodly and encouraged community of goods and of women.⁴⁴ Schwenckfeld was of the same opinion.⁴⁵ Most Roman Catholic and Protestant writers condemned him as dangerous. Johannes Faber, for example, called him an arch-heretic and lying fraud⁴⁶ and Sender revived the superstition about a flask which bewitched those who drank from it and caused them to join the Anabaptist movement.⁴⁷ Although Kessler was not as antagonistic he did accuse Hut of dating the coming of Christ, teaching that the

pious would eradicate the ungodly with the sword and implying that the devil would ultimately be saved.⁴⁸

More systematic than all these was Heinrich Bullinger's condemnation of Hut.⁴⁹ He dedicated a whole chapter in his last and final book on the Anabaptists to a refutation of Hut and his followers. Revolution, special revelations, and apocalyptic indifference to property are all refuted. Neuser has pointed out that Wigand, Ottius, Arnold, B. N. Krohn, G. A. Will, Heller, Hagin, Ritschl, Linden, Hegler, and Koehler all follow Bullinger with minor modifications.⁵⁰ Friedrich Rüdell,⁵¹ Lowell Zuck,⁵² Norman Cohn⁵³ and a host of other scholars have followed Bullinger as well since 1913. In the light of Fast's study of Bullinger and the Anabaptists it is no longer possible to accept Bullinger's position uncritically.⁵⁴

Not until Meyer's study of 1874 was the positive interpretation of the Geschichtsbuch⁵⁵ and the Martyrs Mirror⁵⁶ once more picked up. It is his opinion that after Hut's baptism his teaching was of all Anabaptists the most honorable and moderate.⁵⁷ Keller,⁵⁸ Nicoladoni,⁵⁹ and Hartmann⁶⁰ have followed Meyer and continued this interpretation.

The sharp difference of opinion on Hut is not accidental, however, or unjustified, for on most questions of his teaching there is strongly contradictory evidence, both in the writings of others who knew him and in even his own. It is therefore imperative to weigh the evidence very carefully, even though it is most probable that some of the contradictions will never be resolved unless new sources are found. This presents the greatest problem in the study of Hut's teachings.

3. Purpose and Plan.

The major task in this thesis is to determine in as far as the sources permit what Hut taught concerning church and state. In order

to do this a brief sketch of his life will be made relying as far as possible on the work done by Neuser. After a systematic presentation of his teachings, in which the contradictions will be stated and the weighing begun, it will be necessary to consider two divergent major influences on his life, that of Thomas Muentzer and that of Hans Denck. What is then known about Hut will be related to the writings and influence of other leaders of the South German Anabaptist movement. In the light of this conclusions will be drawn about the problem of Church and State in the life of Hans Hut and his associates.

C. The Setting.

1. A Brief Sketch of Hut's Life.

The Peasants' Revolt of 1524-1525 caught the imagination of a large proportion of the German population. When the peasants saw their hopes suddenly shattered and themselves violently suppressed a wave of disappointment spread over the masses. The apocalyptic dreams of the Zwickau prophets and of Thomas Muentzer had not materialized. The imminent change they had promised, viz., the purging of the world through the annihilation of the ungodly, and the beginning of a new Golden Age of righteousness, had come to naught. But with this one hope crushed, the theme of the Turks as being the judgment of God upon the ungodly and the authorities was once more picked up with renewed vigor.⁶¹

Hans Hut more than anyone else in the few years after 1525 was responsible for fanning the dying embers of hope and channeling them into new directions. The time of his greatest activity and widest influence is divided into two periods by his baptism on May 26, 1526.

The first period begins with the defeat of the peasants at Frankenhausen in March 1525, and finds Hut primarily under the influence of Muentzer. The second period comes to an end with Hut's death in Augsburg on December 6, 1527, and is characterized by his identification with the Anabaptist movement.

Hans Hut was a native of Haina near R mhild in Thuringia.⁶²

For four years after 1517, he was a sexton in the service of the knights Hans and George von Bibra of Schwebenheim in the village of Bibra near Memmingen. From about 1521 on, his work as a bookbinder and book-salesman took him to W rzburg, Bamberg, Nurnberg, Passau, and to Austria.⁶³ In the early twenties much of this work of selling and distributing pamphlets contributed to the propagation of the evangelical Lutheran faith. His interest in the new religious awakening often took him to Wittenberg where he attended the church services and lectures of the Reformers. These trips also brought him into contact with current radical ideas.

Sometime during the course of the year 1524 he met three craftsmen at Weissenfels with whom he discussed the necessity of infant baptism.⁶⁴ Since the Wittenberg theologians were not able to help him in this matter,⁶⁵ he was troubled by such Scripture passages as Matthew 28:20, Mark 16:16, and Acts 19:3, so he refused to have his next child baptized, insisting that if Christ and the apostles did not baptize children it might be best to postpone baptism until children had acquired understanding about the Christian life and the sufferings that accompany it.⁶⁶

When it became known in Bibra that he refused to have his child baptized, the lords of Bibra ordered a disputation and at the same time

demanded that he have his child baptized within eight days or sell his property and move out.⁶⁷ The decision to comply with the latter alternative was an important one in his life, for it was the beginning of a series of steps that led him into the hands of the Anabaptists. After a short imprisonment he left Bibra with his wife and five children, and in the summer of 1524 began a life of wandering. Some of his time in the fall of 1524 he spent in Nurnberg, where he met and stayed with Hans Denck⁶⁸ and Wolfgang Vogel, pastor at Eltersdorf. Hut probably had access through these men to the meetings of the radical Humanists of Nurnberg who were an active group until the trials of January 1525, that finally led to Denck's banishment.⁶⁹

In the spring of 1525 while peddling his books between Wittenberg and Erfurt Hut became involved in the Peasants' Revolt. In the hope of selling some of his books and pamphlets he made his way to Frankenhausen, where he heard Muentzer preach on a number of days before the battle of May 27, 1525. On the day of the battle he accompanied the troops but when his life was endangered he fled to safety. He was taken captive once by the Peasant forces but released at the command of Muentzer, and by the conquerors after the battle only to be freed again--probably because he was peddling Reformation tracts.⁷⁰ Muentzer knew Hut because he had visited him at Bibra early in the summer of 1524, at which time he left his exposition of the first chapter of Luke and Hut arranged to have it printed.

In June 1525, Hut was preaching in much the same spirit as Muentzer in Bibra. He was invited to speak on the subject of baptism by the pastor Jürg Haug von Juchsen.⁷¹ According to his own account he spoke on baptism, the Lord's Supper, ungodliness, and the mass,⁷²

and preached open revolt against the authorities.⁷³ Hut was not able to remain in Bibra long and soon resumed his life as a wandering agitator. Where he spent his time between June 1525, and his appearance in Augsburg May 1526, is not clear.

Hut's brief visit in Augsburg on Pentecost of 1526 became a turning point in his life. He stayed with his old friend Hans Denck, who had been baptized by Balthasar Hubmaier in March of the same year. With Denck was a friend, Caspar Ferber from the Inntal, who had also been baptized and told of the spiritual revival among those rebaptized in the Inntal.⁷⁴ Hut says that he had not heard of baptism for adults previously and had no desire to be baptized; having been persuaded by Denck and Ferber he allowed Denck to baptize him on May 26, 1526.

After his baptism, Hut left Augsburg for Franconia and Thuringia, now eagerly winning people for the Anabaptist cause. It is impossible to trace his activities accurately but a certain amount of chronology and geography are supplied by the sources from the areas in which he preached.⁷⁵

It seems that he began his Anabaptist activities at a mill near his birthplace Haina, for the miller and his brother were baptized by Hut. More important for the spread of the movement was the baptism of Jörg Volck of Haina, who thereafter accompanied Hut on his travels in Franconia. From Haina his work spread out into neighboring territories and he was soon baptizing followers in Rümhild, Breitensee, Gross-Walbur, Klein-Walbur, and Coburg. In Gross-Walbur he won Kilian Volckamer, and in Coburg Eukarius Kellermann took up the Anabaptist faith. These two men together with the latter's servant, Joachim Mertz, accompanied Hut on most of his missionary journeys.⁷⁶

In the fall of 1526 Hut travelled to Königsberg with his companions and gathered a small congregation. Hut gives a rather detailed account of a sermon he preached here.⁷⁷ The passages from Scriptures of Old and New Testaments and the Apocrypha all relate either to the final judgement or to the sword. It is not always clear whether the position he took was revolutionary or peaceful. He did say that the peasants were wrong in rising up against the authorities and that swords should be left in their sheaths until commanded otherwise by God, who would soon return to judge the ungodly. The righteous would be given authority to reign, rule and judge over the ungodly and God would overthrow all authority and power and bring the world to an end.

Hut also made excursions into the neighboring countryside with his companions. In Ostheim, Thoman Spiegel was won for the cause and a small group grew up here. In preaching that God was bringing the world to a sudden end, Hut apparently assured his listeners that before the end the Turks would invade Europe, overthrow the authorities and destroy countless multitudes. Christians should flee to Mühlhausen, Nurnberg and Hungary for God would wipe out the Turks and all that remained save for those who had been rebaptized. At the Aurachsmühle Hut preached for three days with great success whereas in Leutershausen no one received the "covenant." In Unfinden and Mechenried Hut again preached and baptized freely.⁷⁸

Leaving Jörg Volck to carry on the work in Königsberg, Hut left this area sometime in November 1526, planning to pass through Nurnberg to Augsburg. He passed over Zilgendorf to Uetzing where he baptized Mertain and Veit Weischenfelder along with a number of others. Hut's preaching here was of a peaceful nonresistant variety.⁷⁹ The congregation

soon grew to the point where a common purse had to be instituted; the message also spread into the surrounding villages. A large gathering met at the Hopfenmühle just before Christmas of 1526.⁸⁰ Hans Weischenfelder's report of this meeting indicates that Hut was preaching revolutionary doctrine. Mertain, on the other hand, says that Hut never preached anything revolutionary.

Shortly after this meeting Hut left to pass on to Nurnberg and Augsburg, but this time by way of Bamberg and Erlangen. Hut made his way to Bamberg in the company of Eukarius Kellermann, Joachim Mertz, Endres Ryss, Hans Weischenfelder, Sebastian, Thoman Spiegel, Jörg Volck and Kilian Volckhamer. After a short unsuccessful stay in Bamberg the group went on to Erlangen, lodging in the home of Hans Nadler, who received baptism with his wife. Soon there was a congregation of some thirty Anabaptists here. In a short time word spread to Altlangen, where Marx and Michel Maier entered the covenant brotherhood. Sometime around Shrove Tuesday (Fastnacht) Hut appeared in Uttenreut. The message Hut proclaimed here was of a very moderate variety.⁸¹ After preaching repentance and forgiveness of sins, Hut baptized about twelve persons and closed with the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The same night Hut moved on never to return; but behind him he left a small Anabaptist congregation.

A similar series of events took place in Eltersdorf, where the pastor Wolfgang Vogel joined the Anabaptist brotherhood. In early February 1527, Hut left his companions and travelled on to Nurnberg, planning to meet them at Erlangen on Sunday, February 17. In Nurnberg Hut worked at his trade for some time while propagating the Anabaptist faith during the evening. Hut was not able to remain here long. News

of the discovery and persecution of Anabaptists in the Königsberg area soon spread down to Nurnberg. Hut left, but in the meantime Vogel was placed on trial, Spiegel was imprisoned and the authorities in Bamberg and Coburg and throughout many parts of Franconia were notified and alerted. After a long series of trials Vogel was finally accused of revolutionary intentions and heresy and was decapitated on March 26, 1527. None of the charges placed against him are reflected in the lengthy confession we have from his hand.⁸² At Erlangen the Maier brothers, Hans Nadler, and others escaped before they were imprisoned.

In the meantime Hut spent nine to ten days in Augsburg.⁸³ He arrived at just the right time to establish the congregation on a solid footing. Hut baptized Langenmantel and his servants Hermann Anwalt and Margarethe, also Sigmund Salminger,⁸⁴ Konrad Huber, Gall Fischer and his wife, Peter Scheppach and his wife, and the wife of Georg Regel. Hut's zeal attracted men from all classes of society. The congregation here grew rapidly to the point where a treasury for the poor had to be organized. Before Hut left Sigmund Salminger was chosen as leader and two assistants, Jakob Dachser⁸⁵ and Jakob Gross⁸⁶ were appointed.

After his work in Augsburg was accomplished it was Hut's intention to return to Erlangen, but since the authorities were now hot on his trail, return was impossible. Hut then decided to visit the Anabaptists in Moravia with his companions Eukarius von Coburg, Joachim Mertz, and Hans Weischenfelder. Early in April 1527, the four wandering apostles turned in at Passau where they were received by Georg Nespitzer, the brother-in-law of Eukarius. His interest in the new doctrines had been aroused earlier and when Hut arrived and read to him from Old and

New Testaments he and his wife were baptized and received into the covenant of the Lord. Hut explained that the covenant consists of a readiness to forsake one's sins and a willingness to discipline one's brother when he sins, and to help him in time of need.⁸⁷ Hut remained here until April 21, and then continued to Moravia with Eukarius and Joachim as well as Georg Nespitzer and his wife.⁸⁸ Hans Weischenfelder stayed behind to tend the flock at Passau.

At Nikolsburg the Anabaptist cause was flourishing. Balthasar Hubmaier had been there about a year preaching Anabaptist doctrines. Leonhard, Lord of Liechtenstein, joined the movement and soon a multitude of men and women were baptized into the faith.⁸⁹ Nadler reports that up to seventy were baptized in one day.⁹⁰

Shortly before Hut arrived trouble had begun in the congregation when a group led by Jacob Widemann began calling for community of goods and rejection of the sword in every form. The latter point was crucial at this time in Austria since the Turkish threat made the payment of a wartax compulsory as well as military service. Widemann maintained that government and the Spirit of Christ could not mix and that no Christian could under no circumstances use the sword. Hubmaier opposed this flatly and maintained that under all circumstances obedience to the authorities is obligatory.⁹¹

When Hut arrived in Nikolsburg he was forced into this debate. He sided with Widemann, believing that the Christian must suffer patiently under the authorities until God would bring the world to an end; this meant that Hut's weight in the debate went to the Stäbler rather than to the Schwertler.⁹² Hans Schlaffer's account however, shows that this was not the only point of conflict between Hubmaier

and Hut.⁹³ Antagonism also centered in the ease with which members were accepted into the brotherhood. The church at Nikolsburg under Hubmaier, as at Waldshut, lacked some of the Anabaptist voluntarism in the matter of baptism and church membership. The subject matter of the discussions between Hubmaier and Hut is difficult to determine. Nadler suggests that Hut's Seven Articles⁹⁴ were up for debate; but since he was not present his word alone is not absolutely authoritative.⁹⁵ But it is substantiated by Georg Nespitzer, who also reports that the Seven Articles of Hut were debated.⁹⁶ Hut, on the other hand, says in his confessions that Hubmaier set up a list of articles against him and lists eleven of them.⁹⁷ Hut denied all but one of them and when it appeared that he would be imprisoned on account of them he fled. Neither the eleven articles that Hubmaier is supposed to have formulated nor Hut's Seven Articles have anything to do with the question of the wartax and the sword. It is now clear that the Anabaptists were not responsible for the notorious Nikolsburg Articles⁹⁸ that Hut has so long been accused of supporting. If Hubmaier raised 52 articles, as Hut suggests, it is possible that the questions regarding the sword and concerning the three and one-half years of the Prophet Daniel were among them.⁹⁹

From Nikolsburg Hut made his way to Vienna with Oswald Glait,¹⁰⁰ arriving there early in June. While they were in Vienna fifty converts were baptized. The most important of them was Leonhard Schiener who reports that after hearing Hut preach for two days and finding nothing evil in it he accepted baptism from Oswald Glait.¹⁰¹

From Vienna Hut proceeded on to Melk, where he is said to have baptized fifteen persons. At Steyr, Hut was introduced into the company

of respected citizens by Jakob Portner, the chaplain of Count Regendorf. Leonhard Dorfbrunner, a former priest and chaplain at Pechlarn, was baptized here with a number of others. Hut escaped just before the whole group was arrested. Several were executed, a number were expelled, and only those who recanted were released. At Freistadt and Gall-neukirchen Hut baptized about twenty persons. At Linz Ambrosius Spittelmayer and a number more were baptized. Linz became the center of the Anabaptist movement in Upper Austria when the congregation at Steyr was broken up. Wolfgang Brandhuber and Hans Schlaffer spear-headed the Anabaptist movement here and in the environment. From Linz Hut passed on through Schörding, Braunau, Laufen, and Salzburg on his way to Augsburg.¹⁰²

Hut arrived in Augsburg on time for a gathering of Anabaptist leaders that has been described as the Martyr Synod. Because it was of a spontaneous character without official leadership it is probably inaccurate to refer to it as a synod and yet to deny that there was an important meeting of Anabaptist leaders and a great missionary sending out of apostles, is contrary to fact. The two most influential leaders in attendance were Hans Denck and Hans Hut. Whereas it had until recently been taken for granted that Denck played the most important role, it is now generally agreed that Hut was the dominant personality. Since Denck was not active as an Anabaptist in baptizing, commissioning leaders, and founding new congregations it is reasonably safe to assume that Hut took the initiative in calling the meeting and served as leader at its sessions. According to Georg Nespitzer¹⁰³ and Marx Maier¹⁰⁴ the major meeting at which the commissioning was done took place on August 24, 1527, in the home of Matthias Finder. A meeting

had been held a few days earlier in the home of Gall Vischer, the deacon of the Augsburg Anabaptist congregation. A third meeting at the home of the other deacon, Konrad Huber, was probably not attended by Denck.

The central theological problem was probably Hut's eschatology. Walter Fellmann suggests wrongly that there was general agreement on fixing the date of the return of Christ at 1528.¹⁰⁵ Hut and most of the disciples he influenced stated that the date of the return of Christ is unknown. Although the note of eschatological urgency and the constant threat of the Turks formed the basic setting for Hut's theology, it seems clear that if he ever taught the end of the world would come in 1528 he had abandoned this position by the summer of 1527. All the disciples from his Austrian ministry denied that Hut ever taught a revolutionary chiliasm and a fixing of the time at which God would culminate history. The problem of those that say he did so, of course, remains; this must be weighed against his own testimony and that of his closest and most influential disciples.

Hut remained in Augsburg after the Synod and was arrested on September 15, 1527, and tried for the first time a day later. The available confessions indicate that he was tried at least ten times, sometimes on the rack. The facts concerning his death are conflicting and in that respect typical of the many divergent reports concerning his life and thought.

His accusers relate that Hut was planning a violent escape. By setting fire to the straw in his cell, he hoped to lure his guard, intending to strangle him, take the keys, and escape.¹⁰⁶ On the other hand, his son related that as Hut lay in his cell like a dead man from the treatment he had received, his candle accidentally ignited the straw

and caused his death by asphyxiation.¹⁰⁷ At any rate, lacking respect even for the dead, sentence was pronounced the following day on his corpse, and his dead body was burned at the stake, December 7, 1527.

2. The Sociology of Hut's Activities.

If Hut's religious convictions and activities before his baptism could be characterized by revolutionary chiliasm and aimless wandering, his life thereafter was one of determination and total commitment to the propagation of the Anabaptist faith in the context of the Anabaptist brotherhood. But what kind of person was he, what form did the movement he originated take sociologically, and who were the authorities that had so much to say about him?

Hut must have been a dynamic person with many and varied abilities. He is described by the Nurnberg Council as follows: "The highest and chief leader of the Anabaptists is Johannes Hut, a well-educated, clever fellow, rather tall, a peasant with light brown cropped hair and a blond mustache. He is dressed in a gray, sometimes black, ridingcoat, a broad gray hat, and gray pants. He is from Königsberg and a book salesman by trade. He is also a cabinetmaker and adept at other trades."¹⁰⁸ Some of the other trades he plied, if necessary, were bookbinding, locksmithing, and the making of screws.

His religious fervor and intensity can be seen in his remarkable ability to move men. On his missionary tours Hut appeared like an Old Testament prophet with a New Testament group of disciples around him. He would turn up suddenly in some out-of-the-way place and leave just as suddenly, thus evading the authorities. As long as he was not known he could perform his trade during the day and spread the faith during the evening. At times he conducted his meetings at night so

that men would not have to leave their work during the day.¹⁰⁹

Once he was being hunted he had to move secretly, accepting sustenance from his friends and converts. His eloquence and knowledge of the Bible together with a note of urgency fascinated people and won them quickly to the Anabaptist cause. On a number of occasions Hut visited a place for the first time some evening and after a few hours of preaching and baptizing would move on leaving a small Anabaptist congregation. This ability gave rise to fantastic reports about his powers and influence. Legend says that he changed the color of his clothing and his name,¹¹⁰ that he instituted secrets that were carefully restricted to a select few who recognized each other by mysterious signs,¹¹¹ and that he had in his possession a book that was given to the Prophet Daniel¹¹² and a secret fluid that could be used to beguile men.¹¹³

In a typical meeting he would preach Christ crucified, showing that he was obedient to the Father in suffering and unto death. He would tell them that the Gospel must be preached to all creatures and whoever believed and was baptized would be saved. A man must be willing to follow Christ in suffering, affliction, distress and persecution. There was no time to lose in making this decision for God would soon come to judge the world. After the sermon Hut baptized and welcomed into the brotherhood those who desired it. After the simple baptism, the Lord's Supper was celebrated, Hut explaining that Christ was not present in the bread and wine but that it was a memorial of His suffering.

As long as possible, Hut preached openly and in the homes of friends, but as time went on he was driven to preach in out-of-the-way mills, in meadows, in brick kilns, in woods, gardens and basements.

He found the best response among tradesmen,¹¹⁴ but men in the professions--priests, sextons, students--were also attracted. In his confessions he accounted for about 250 men that he baptized but there were probably many more.¹¹⁵

Although Hut has all the marks of a charismatic leader he was not so carried away by the moving of the Spirit that he was oblivious to the form of the Church. He was careful to provide sufficient organization to maintain order, preserve the faith, and keep the brotherhood united while expanding. His preaching had a strong congregational note and an emphasis on brotherly love and sharing, covenant loyalty and discipline. Leaders, and at times also deacons, were chosen to head the local groups. He commissioned most of the wandering apostles himself.¹¹⁶ Only those who were sent by the Church should preach and baptize. Finally, to establish the brethren in the faith, to face the missionary challenge, and to keep the larger brotherhood unified, Hut planned larger meetings that he referred to as councils. The only one that materialized during his lifetime was the one at Augsburg, August 1527.

3. Political Opposition of Hut's Activity and Influence.

The area of Hut's activity and influence was under Hapsburg domination during the 1520's. Ferdinand I was Archduke of Austria after 1521 and after 1526 King of Hungary and King of Bohemia. Charles V was Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire from 1519 to 1556, and though some Protestants looked to him with hope in the early twenties, he remained strongly with the old Roman Church. In Bavaria the reigning dukes were William IV and Louis, who also represented the old order and were responsible for the horrifying watchword, "All Anabaptists are to be punished with death. Whoever recants will be beheaded;

whoever does not recant will be burned."¹¹⁷ This command was carried out with great severity, for between 1527 and 1581, 223 Anabaptists were executed in Bavaria alone. According to one source the Inn Valley in Tyrol saw the burning of no fewer than 1,000 Anabaptists between 1527 and 1530. At Linz in 1529, 70 brethren were put to death in one procedure.¹¹⁸

Because this area was under the control of the Roman Church there were no debates or disputations between the Anabaptists and their opponents. This is significant in a period of rapidly changing religious ideas. In Switzerland there were about forty disputations between the Anabaptists and their enemies between 1523 and 1540. This gave the Anabaptists opportunity to demonstrate that they were not sectarian but were willing to converse about points of difference from state-church theologians and officials. The disputations provide a valuable and unique source for the place of the Anabaptists in the intellectual history of sixteenth-century Switzerland. Debates, recorded discussions, and disputations were also conducted in Strassbourg and at other points up the Rhine. Although this type of source material is missing for the southeast German area, the ruthless persecution by the authorities did drive the Anabaptists to write more tracts, confessions, and epistles than in other areas.

The government opposition to the Anabaptist movement in the South German area followed in the trail of Hut's labors.¹¹⁹ The first mandate directed specifically against Anabaptists was that of Bishop Weigand of Bamberg in March 1, 1527. In the same month Nurnberg issued an edict against Hans Hut. On October 11, 1527, while Hut was in prison, Augsburg threatened membership in an Anabaptist group with

corporal and capital punishment. On October 18 and 27, 1527, Matthias Lang, Cardinal of Salzburg, ordered raids to hunt out the Anabaptists. On April 18, 1528, he decreed the death penalty for Anabaptist preachers. On November 1, 1527, Regensburg announced severe corporal punishment for adult baptism and for sheltering Anabaptists. On November 5, 1527, Dukes William and Louis of Bavaria required all Anabaptists to be seized and on January 26, 1529, Styria ordered the seizure of Anabaptists and the burning of their homes.

Ferdinand I was most active in attacking the Anabaptists.¹²⁰ On August 20, 1527, while the Martyr Synod was in session, Ferdinand issued a general mandate against all Protestants. On October 23, 1527, a special mandate against the Anabaptists was proclaimed for Upper Austria that was reissued January 16, 1528. A similar mandate was issued on February 4, 1528 for Lower Austria. On February 27, 1528, Ferdinand stipulated that rebaptized persons be put to death in spite of recantation. On March 24, 1528, this was further sharpened by ordering death by fire for Anabaptist preachers and beheading for the penitent. On April 1, 1528, a note of leniency appeared in a mandate for Upper Austria; pardon was to be granted to Anabaptists if they voluntarily recanted, accepted church penance, and betrayed their preachers!

The mandate of Emperor Charles V passed at Spéyer on January 4, 1528, less than a month after Hut's death, extended the persecution of Anabaptists to the whole empire. Henceforth no Anabaptist was safe any longer. The imperial decree was in short order supported by further mandates by princes, bishops, and cities. On February 22, 1528, the Swabian League decided to send out 400 horsemen as scouts to ferret out

Anabaptists. When the Diet of Speyer on April 22, 1529, assented to the imperial mandate of the previous year persecution of Anabaptists reached its ultimate severity.

Since the teachings of Hut were responsible for the flow of so much blood in South Germany, they must be looked at carefully.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND AND METHOD

- 1 C. A. Cornelius, Geschichte des Münsterischen Aufruhrs (Leipzig: T. O. Weigel, 1855), pp. 42, 49 f.
- 2 Christian Meyer, "Zur Geschichte der Wiedertäufer in Oberschwaben: I. Die Anfänge des Wiedertäuferthums in Augsburg," Zeitschrift des Historischen Vereins für Schwaben und Neuburg I (1874), pp 207-256. Hereafter, Confessions.
- 3 Alexander Nicoladoni, Johannes Bunderlin von Linz und die oberösterreichischen Täufergemeinde in den Jahren 1525-1531 (Berlin: R. Gärtners Verlag, 1893).
- 4 Friedrich Roth, Augsburgs Reformationsgeschichte I 1517-1530 (München: Ackermann, 1901).
- 5 Georg Berbig, "Die Wiedertäufer im Amt Königsberg i. Fr. i. J. 1527/28," Deutsche Zeitschrift für Kirchenrecht 13. Bd., 3. Heft (1903), pp. 291-353. Also "Die Wiedertäufer im Ortslande zu Franken, im Zusammenhang mit dem Bauernkrieg," ibid., 22. Bd., 3. Heft (1912), pp. 378-403.
- 6 Paul Wappler, Die Täuferbewegung in Thüringen von 1526-1584 (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1913).
- 7 Wilhelm Neuser, Hans Hut. Leben und Wirken bis zum Nikolsburger Religionsgespräch (Berlin: Hermann Blanke, 1913). This volume includes only two of the six chapters that made up the original thesis. The chapter titles are: (1) Gegenwärtiger Stand der Forschung. (2) Quellenschau. (3) Bis zur Wiedertaufe. (4) Der täuferische Agitator. (5) Hut's Tätigkeit in Thüringen und Franken. (6) Das Nikolsburger Religionsgespräch. Only numbers three and six are published. A typewritten copy of the other chapters is located at the Goshen College Library. Hereafter the references to the typewritten copy will have MSS after them.
- 8 The Verein für Reformationsgeschichte undertook in the 1920's to publish all the Anabaptist source materials available in German archives. The following volumes were used in this study: (1) Karl Schornbaum, ed., Quellen zur Geschichte der Wiedertäufer: Markgraftum Brandenburg, Bayern I (Leipzig: M. Heinsius Nachf., 1934), Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte XVI:2. Hereafter, Bayern I. (2) Lydia Müller, ed., Glaubenszeugnisse oberdeutscher Taufgesinnten I (Leipzig: M. Heinsius Nachf., 1938), Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte XX. Hereafter, Glaubenszeugnisse I. (3) Karl Schornbaum, ed., Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer: Bayern II (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1951), Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte XXIII. Hereafter, Bayern II. A second volume

of Glaubenszeugnisse edited by Lydia Müller and Robert Friedmann was available in typewritten manuscript at the Goshen College Library. Hereafter, Glaubenszeugnisse II, with the number of the tract and (MSS) after the page reference.

9 One of Hut's confessions that Meyer missed has been printed in Bayern I, pp. 41-44.

10 Jan J. Kiwiet, "The Life of Hans Denck," MQR XXXI (1957), pp. 227-259; idem., "The Theology of Hans Denck," MQR XXXII (1958), pp. 3-27; idem., Pilgram Marbeck, Ein Führer in der Täuferbewegung der Reformationszeit (Kassel: J. G. Oncken Verlag, 1957). Hereafter, Kiwiet, Denck and Kiwiet, Marpeck.

11 Torsten Bergsten, "Pilgram Marbeck und seine Auseinandersetzung mit Caspar Schwenkfeld," Kyrkohistorisk Arsskrift (1957), pp. 1-58. Only the page proofs were available.

12 Grete Mecenseffy, "Die Herkunft des oberösterreichischen Täuferturns," ARG 47:2 (1956), pp. 252-258.

13 Robert Friedmann, "Thomas Muentzer's Relation to Anabaptism," MQR XXXI (1957), pp. 75-87.

14 Jürg Maler, ed., Das Kunstbuch (manuscript, 1561). This manuscript codex of ca. 740 pages was discovered in 1955 in the Bürgerbibliothek at Bern, Switzerland by Dr. Heinold Fast and Dr. J. F. G. Goeters. It contains in addition to certain minor items, 42 letters and documents of 1527-1555, largely from the Pilgram Marpeck South German Anabaptist brotherhood. A typewritten copy prepared by Samuel Geiser is located at the Goshen College Library. Hereafter, Kunstbuch, with Geiser's pagination.

15 Heinold Fast, "Pilgram Marbeck und das oberdeutsche Täuferturn. Ein neuer Handschriftenfund," ARG 47:2 (1956), pp. 212-241.

16 See the article on "Historiography," in ME II (1956), pp. 751-769; Littell, op. cit., particularly Chapter I, Former Treatments of Anabaptism, pp. 1-18, and Chapter II, The Quest for the Essence of Anabaptism, pp. 19-49. A list of 62 doctoral dissertations relating to Anabaptist and Mennonite history written since World War II was prepared for the Mennonite World Conference in Karlsruhe 1957, and will appear in the published proceedings.

17 For those not described above in footnote 8, see the introduction to Manfred Krebs, ed., Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer: Baden und Pfalz (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1951), Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte XXI.

18 See Littell, op. cit.; Frank Wray, "History in the Eyes of the Sixteenth Century Anabaptists," (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Dept. of History, Yale University, 1953); Hans Hillerbrand, "Die Politische Ethik des Oberdeutschen Täuferturns" (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Erlangen, 1957); John Howard Yoder,

"Das Schweizerische Täuferium in Gespräch mit der Reformation," a typewritten companion volume to his Basel dissertation now in publication; Heinold Fast, "Heinrich Bullinger und die Täufer" (Unpublished Th. D. dissertation, University of Heidelberg, 1957).

19 See above, footnote 10.

20 See Robert Friedmann, "Conception of the Anabaptists," Church History IX (1940), pp. 341-365; idem., "Recent Interpretations of Anabaptism," Church History XXIV (1955), pp. 132-151; Littell, op. cit., pp. 19-49.

21 See Littell, op. cit., pp. ix-xii.

22 A good example of this appears in the chapter on the Anabaptists in Roland H. Bainton, The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century (Boston: Beacon Press, 1952).

23 Troeltsch, op. cit., pp. 693 f, 729 f.

24 Attempts to do this are described in Friedmann's studies, see above, footnote 20.

25 Johannes Kühn, Toleranz und Offenbarung (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1923), p. 224.

26 Harold S. Bender, "The Anabaptist Vision," MQR XVIII (1944), pp. 67-88; idem., "The Anabaptist Theology of Discipleship," MQR XXIV (1950), pp. 25-32; idem., "The Anabaptists and Religious Liberty in the 16th Century," MQR XXIX (1955), pp. 83-100; idem., "The Pacifism of the Sixteenth Century Anabaptists," Church History XXIV (1955), pp. 119-131.

27 Littell, op. cit., p. xi.

28 Paul Peachey, "Social Background and Social Philosophy of the Swiss Anabaptists, 1525-1540," MQR XXVIII (1954), pp. 102-27; idem., "Anabaptism and Church Organization," MQR XXX (1956), pp. 213-28.

29 Robert Friedmann, "The Doctrine of the Two Worlds," The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision, ed. by Guy F. Hershberger (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1957), pp. 105-18.

30 Some of the differences among Anabaptists are due to the fact that they were encountering different opponents at different places and at different times. The point of view is also important in interpreting Anabaptism. Seen over against the world, discipleship is crucial, but seen over against the state-church and the Spiritualists the view of the church is central. In seeking to find what the Anabaptists had in common it is important not to forget that there were some things that the Anabaptists had in common with the Reformers, the Spiritualists, and the revolutionaries.

- 31 See Karl Schottenloher, Philip Ulhart. Ein Augsburger Winkeldrucker und Helfershelfer der "Schwärmer" und "Wiedertäufer," 1523-1529 (München: Dr. F. P. Daltner und Cie, 1921), pp. 60-4.
- 32 (Berlin: 1869), pp. 156-66.
- 33 They appear in Hut in Glaubenszeugnisse I, pp. 29-31; and in Denck in Walter Fellmann, ed., Hans Denck Schriften 2. Teil, Religiöse Schriften (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1956), pp. 67-74. Hereafter, Fellmann, Denck.
- 34 "Das buch mit den syben sigeln" (Confessions, p. 240).
- 35 Glaubenszeugnisse I, pp. 12-37.
- 36 See Christian Neff, "Urbanus Rhegius," Mennonitisches Lexikon, III (1957), pp. 486-87.
- 37 Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 12.
- 38 Friedrich Roth, "Zur Geschichte der Wiedertäufer in Oberschwaben. II. Zur Lebensgeschichte Eitelhans Langenmantels von Augsburg," Zeitschrift des Historischen Vereins für Schwaben und Neuburg XXVII (1900), pp. 38-40.
- 39 Confessions, pp. 223-45.
- 40 Bayern I, pp. 41-44.
- 41 See above, footnotes 3, 5, 6, 8.
- 42 Glaubenszeugnisse I and II.
- 43 Confessions, pp. 252-3.
- 44 Sebastian Franck, Chronica, Zeytbuch vnd Geschycht Bibel von Anbegyn bisz inn disz Gegenwertig M. D. xxxj. Jar (Straszburg: Balthasar Beck, 1531), pp. 444^b, 449^b f.
- 45 In K. Ecke, Schwenkfeld, Luther und der Gedanke einer apostolischen Reformation (Berlin: Warneck, 1911), p. 205 f.
- 46 Neuser, op. cit., p. 2 (MSS).
- 47 Ibid.
- 48 Emil Egli and Rudolph Schoch, Johannes Kesslers Sabbata (St. Gallen: Fehr'sche Buchhandlung, 1902), pp. 272-3.
- 49 Heinrich Bullinger, Der Widertoeufferen vrsprung/ Fürgang/ Secten/ Waesen/ Fürnemen vnd Gemeine jrer leer Artickel (Zürich: Christoph Froschauer, 1561), pp. 42^b-44^a.

- 50 Neuser, op. cit., pp. 3-4 (MSS).
- 51 Friedrich Rüdell, "Die anarchischen Tendenzen bei den Wiedertäufern des Reformationszeitalters. Dargestellt auf Grund ihrer Obrigkeitsanschauung," (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Erlangen, 1950), p. 44 f.
- 52 Lowell H. Zuck, "Anabaptist Revolution through the Covenant in Sixteenth Century Continental Protestantism" (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Yale University, 1954), p. 64 f.
- 53 Norman Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millennium. A History of Popular Religious and Social Movements in Europe from the Eleventh to the Sixteenth Century (London: Secker and Warburg, 1957), p. 275.
- 54 Fast, op. cit., pp. 206-11.
- 55 Josef Beck, ed., Die Geschichts-Bücher der Wiedertäufer in Österreich-Ungarn (Wien: Carl Gerold's Sohn, 1883), pp. 22, 34, 35.
- 56 Thieleman J. van Braght, The Bloody Theater or Martyrs Mirror (Scottdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1951), p. 433. The first edition was published in the Netherlands in 1660.
- 57 Meyer, op. cit., p. 218.
- 58 Ludwig Keller, Ein Apostel der Wiedertäufer (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1882), p. 41 f.
- 59 Nicoladoni, op. cit., p. 22, footnote 2.
- 60 Neuser, op. cit., p. 5 (MSS).
- 61 Wappler, op. cit., p. 26 f.
- 62 Along with Neuser, op. cit., see also J. Hartmann, "Hut," Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie, Vol. XIII (1881); S. Hegler, "Hut," Realenzyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche 3 ed., Vol. VIII (1900); Walter Koehler, "Hut," Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, Vol. III (1912); W. Wiswedel, Bilder und Führergestalten aus dem Täuferium 3. Bd. (Kassel: J. G. Oncken, 1929), pp. 125-36; Johann Loserth and Robert Friedmann, "Hut," ME II (1956).
- 63 Confessions, p. 245.
- 64 Confessions, pp. 223-4. Cf. Fast, ARG, p. 217, footnote 21.
- 65 Confessions, p. 224:7.
- 66 Confessions, p. 250.
- 67 Confessions, p. 250:11.
- 68 Confessions, pp. 229:6, 230:9.

- 69 Kiwiet, Denck, p. 236 f.
- 70 Neuser, op. cit., p. 22.
- 71 A tract of his is printed in Glaubenszeugnisse I, pp. 3-10. It is dated 1524 and manifests a spirit that has much more in common with Hut than with Muentzer. Dr. Robert Friedmann has suggested in a letter that Jörg Haug might have been the first one after the battle of Frankenhausen to direct Hut into moderate and peaceful paths.
- 72 Confessions, p. 251.
- 73 Confessions, pp. 249, 251.
- 74 Confessions, pp. 224, 245. Fast believes that the reference here should be to the Swiss Anabaptists and not to the Inntal (ARG, p. 217, footnote 30). Unless some new sources turn up I am inclined to agree with Fast.
- 75 The only full account of Hut's activities in Franconia, Thuringia, and at Nikolsburg is in Neuser's thesis. I have documented the account from recently published source materials where I felt it was necessary. See above, footnotes 7 and 8.
- 76 Neuser, op. cit., pp. 47-8 (MSS).
- 77 Confessions, pp. 241-2.
- 78 Neuser, op. cit., pp. 50-3 (MSS).
- 79 Ibid., p. 57.
- 80 Ibid., p. 59.
- 81 Ibid., p. 62.
- 82 Wiswedel, Bilder I, pp. 152-69.
- 83 Confessions, p. 224.
- 84 See Schottenloher, op. cit., pp. 81-3.
- 85 Ibid., pp. 72-81. He attributes the tract, Ein Göttlich vnnd Grüntlich Offenbarung: von den wahrhaftigen Widerteuffern 1527 (Augsburg: Ulhart, 1527), to Jacob Dächser. It had earlier been attributed to Eitelhans Langenmantel.
- 86 Roth, Augsburgs Reformationsgeschichte I, pp. 224-39.
- 87 Neuser, op. cit., pp. 29-30 (MSS).
- 88 Nicoladoni, op. cit., p. 207:17.

- 89 Beck, op. cit., p. 48.
- 90 Bayern I, p. 132.
- 91 See Paul Dedic, "Nikolsburg," ME III (1957), pp. 883-6.
- 92 Ibid., p. 884. Hubmaier's followers were called the group of the "sword" and Widemann's the group of the "staff."
- 93 Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 123.
- 94 See Appendix II.
- 95 Bayern I, p. 153.
- 96 Ibid., p. 194.
- 97 Confessions, p. 232.
- 98 Vide W. Wiswedel, "Nikolsburg, Articles of," ME III (1957), pp. 886-8.
- 99 Hubmaier complained against the application of the three and a half years to the present. See C. Sachsse, Doctor Balthasar Hubmaier als Theologe (Berlin: Trowitzsch and Sohn, 1914), p. 401.
- 100 Wilhelm Wiswedel, "Oswald Glait von Jamnitz," Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte Dritte Folge VII, Bd. LVI, Heft 4 (1937), pp. 550-64.
- 101 Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 80.
- 102 Loserth and Friedmann, ME II, p. 848.
- 103 Bayern I, p. 187.
- 104 Ibid., p. 199.
- 105 Fellmann, op. cit., pp. 17-8.
- 106 Confessions, p. 253.
- 107 Rudolph Wolkan, Geschichts-Buch der Hutterischen Brüder (MacLeod, Alta., and Vienna: Carl Fromme, 1923), p. 47.
- 108 Bayern II, p. 8, and Wappler, op. cit., p. 245.
- 109 Confessions, p. 225.
- 110 Confessions, p. 221.
- 111 Nicoladoni, op. cit., p. 173.
- 112 Confessions, p. 240.

113 See Leonhard Schiemer's tract, Volget nun vom Flaeschlen, gantz clærlich endteckt, was es bedeytet, allen Frommen Troestlich zu leesen, in Glaubenszeugnisse I, pp. 72-77.

114 The following is a list of some of the trades represented among his converts: needle makers, linen weavers, cabinet-makers, millers, butchers, coopers, smiths, stone masons, carpenters, hoe makers, tailors, brick layers, grinders, and shoemakers. Cf. Neuser, op. cit., p. 43 (MSS).

115 Confessions, p. 226 f.

116 A list of the men that Hut commissioned to serve as Anabaptist apostles would be impressive. See the list of those in attendance at the Martyr Synod in ME III (1957), pp. 529-31.

117 ME I, p. 251.

118 See Paul Showalter, "Martyrs," ME III (1957), pp. 521-5; also John Horsch, "Persecution of the Evangelical Anabaptists," MQR XII (1938), pp. 3-26.

119 A list of the mandates directed against the Anabaptists appears in ME III (1957), pp. 446-53.

120 Grete Mecenseffy and Robert Friedmann, "Ferdinand I," ME II (1956), pp. 322-3.

CHAPTER II

THE TEACHINGS OF HANS HUT

A. The Church.

The centrality of the church in Hut's writings and life is striking. Hut must be acknowledged as one of the greatest evangelists and congregation founders of the whole Left Wing of the Reformation, making him in a sense the Apostle Paul of the South German Anabaptist movement. Although he had no direct relationship with the founding disciples in Zürich¹ (1523-25), he entered into their heritage and became one of the greatest propagators of the new faith. The primary sources for his view of the church and the Christian faith are his two major tracts.

After his baptism on May 26, 1526 in Augsburg, the Church-brotherhood was the key to Hut's view of the Christian faith and the work of God in the world. In his confessions Hut referred continually to "his brotherhood,"² and his teachings concerning baptism, the covenant, the Lord's Supper, community of goods based on love, discipleship, and church leadership are all set in the context of the new brotherhood that God was raising up among men. He speaks of following Christ "and His chosen ones,"³ and of preaching Christ crucified, "but not alone Christ the head, but rather the whole Christ with all His members."⁴ When speaking of suffering he can also refer to Christ suffering "in all His members."⁵ Paul's figure of the members and the head, the Body of Christ, is very common in Hut's writings and plays an important part in his view of the nature of the church.

1. Suffering Discipleship.

Hut believed that it is impossible to know Christ and be a member of His Body without being willing to suffer with Christ. The path from the realm of the world into the realm of the church can never by-pass the experience of suffering, affliction, and persecution. "For no one is able to arrive at the truth unless he follows in the steps of Christ and His chosen ones in the school of affliction (Trübsal)."⁶ Men must give themselves in obedience to Christ and suffer the will of God in body and soul in order to attain salvation.⁷ Whoever did not walk in His footsteps and in His way and did not want to bear the cross of Christ, would never know or possess Christ.⁸ In order to receive the righteousness that Christ provided for His own by the Cross men must be willing to bear the cross in order to be made righteous. With other Anabaptists, Hut criticized the easy faith and easy justification that the Reformers preached.⁹ Without accepting the claims of perfectionism Hut believed that righteousness was desired by Christ and was possible for voluntary, disciplined members in the Body of Christ.

Besides the figures of following in the steps of Christ and bearing His cross, Hut also used the parable of the Word becoming flesh in Christians even as Christ was born in Mary.¹⁰ When this becomes true the life, suffering, persecution, death, and resurrection are also relived in the Christian. "This will not come to pass except through pain, poverty, and misery within and without."¹¹ The imitation of Christ and suffering are accompanied by the virtue of resignation (Gelassenheit). If the preaching of the scribes and priests does not lead to reformation of their lives, it is because "They lacked the discernment which one receives through suffering and poverty, which leads

to separation from the world and resignation, and on the other hand to incorporation in the Body of Christ where all understanding is revealed."¹² It appears as if everyone wants to know Christ but no one wants to suffer with Him. If the Spirit of God were known through sensual pleasure and the pomp of this world the world would be full of Christians.¹³ Christ disguised and hid Himself from man by coming in the flesh. It is in suffering the highest resignation that He has revealed and is revealing Himself to His brothers. Here the grace of God is first discovered; here the highest degree of divine righteousness and the beginning of divine mercy is found. Here man becomes conformed to Christ and completely united with his brothers into one Body.¹⁴

2. Community of Goods.

Hut does not have much to say about community of goods but he does say a number of times that those who are one Body and community in Christ practice sharing. In the Body of Christ, the Kingdom of God, all goodness, mercy, honor, and praise are present in the Holy Spirit, "there all things are common, nothing private."¹⁵ The covenant means submission in obedience to Christ and expresses itself in, "godly love to all brothers and sisters with body, life, property, and honor, regardless of the evil gossip and misunderstanding of the world."¹⁶ This total commitment of every area of the believer's life to the brothers within the brotherhood was very clearly and forcefully delineated in Hut and his converts. It has some similarity to the love-communism of the early Church as Troeltsch has described it. For Hut, property was one of the areas of the total life that had to submit to the purposes and responsibilities of the Kingdom of God.

Hut compared the ambitions and temptations in a Christian's life to the branches of a tree that must be cut off before the trunk can be worked into a log for building purposes including among these branches the desire for property, fields, and pastures.¹⁷ No man has a right to a particular vocation or to property; a Christian must be willing to forsake all for the Kingdom of Christ.¹⁸

When Hut was questioned about his teaching on property he said that he never taught or forced anyone to sell his property. Surplus, however, should be directed to helping the needy and should the wealthy sell land, vineyards, and other things in order to share with their poorer brethren, he saw nothing wrong with it.¹⁹ Certainly he never encouraged anyone to sell his property so as to be able to move to a location from which an overthrow of the government could be staged.²⁰ There is no basis in Hut's teachings and activities to justify the charge that Hut required the wealthy to give their property and riches to strangers.²¹ It is quite possible, however, that his emphasis on the subordination of property and possessions to the Church-brotherhood had some bearing on the beginnings of the Hutterite movement.²² He certainly was responsible for providing the background for the easy transition from South German and Austrian Anabaptism to the Moravian communal settlements. In South Germany, however, sharing was never formally organized although it remained a vital part of the covenant commitment.

3. "The Mystery of Baptism."

When Hut was asked what the central teaching and article of the Anabaptist covenant and brotherhood was he answered,²³ "The Gospel of Christ the crucified who suffered for us and was obedient to the Father unto death and what this means for us, namely that we must be willing

to follow Christ and suffer for His sake whatever is placed upon us, even unto death."²⁴ In the light of the church and its challenge to men, this means three things: the preaching of the Gospel, faith, and baptism.²⁵ Baptism will be looked at first, and the other two in relationship to it.

Hut's view of baptism must be seen in the light of his own experience. Before his baptism his message and influence had been primarily revolutionary and individualistic but afterwards his concern was the expansion of the corporate Body of Christ. For him to identify himself with the Anabaptist movement, in the realization that his previous insights were faulty, meant a deep struggle. He had received some stimulus and direction from Luther's teachings and some inspiration from his contacts with Muentzer. Previous to his baptism he had also paid the bitter loss of house and home for his convictions. To admit that all this was not the culmination of what God was doing in the world and to realize that there was a Church-brotherhood to which he could relate his life was a great step in his life. His age, approximately 38 years, did not make it any easier.²⁶

In justifying his baptism to the authorities he gave the following reasons for having accepted it: Caspar Ferber's description of the Christian life of some brothers in the Inn Valley who had received baptism;²⁷ the absence of reformation in the lives of the followers of Luther;²⁸ and the Scriptural order, i.e., first preaching, then faith, and then baptism. According to the last chapter of Matthew, one is to teach first and then baptize. Nowhere in the Holy Scriptures did Christ command that infants be baptized nor did He or the apostles ever baptize any infants.²⁹

Hut dedicated his longest single tract to the interpretation of baptism, About the Mystery of Baptism, both the Sign and the Essence: the Beginning of a Right and True Christian Life.³⁰ Hut began his writing by lamenting the distortion of the Gospel by the new evangelicals, who after having driven the Pope, monks and priests from authority were doing no better themselves.³¹ Out of the false faith which they preached no reformation of life followed. In order to change this he suggested that the biblical order, preaching, faith, and then baptism, be observed. Wherever this order was not maintained there could be no true Christian congregation.

The preaching of the Gospel is to be done using created things, i.e., "through the whole creation."³² He explained this by saying that God had given us created things that the visible might be used to understand the invisible. Christ, for example, explained the nature of life and eternity to the woman at the well by means of the material water she had given him to drink. Similarly any occupation or trade can become a book through which one learns to know the will of God. All of history can even be looked upon as "creature" through which we can learn what God has to say. This is not thought of as a substitute for the written Word of God, but merely a means for explaining the Gospel message to seeking people. A common use of this figure in Anabaptist writings of South Germany is the example of the suffering that animals must go through in order to be of any use to man; in the same way Christ had to suffer before His redemption became effective, and even so, man must suffer as he follows Christ and does the will of God.³³ Once the gospel had been preached and understood rightly it issued in obedience and suffering. This is faith. To these two baptism must be added.

Baptism must be understood in relationship to the concept of covenant. But interpreted baptism as a covenant made before a Christian congregation that had itself received the covenant from God and in the name of God had the power to extend it to those who desired it.³⁴ What the fellowship-brotherhood would bind on earth would be bound in heaven. Only those who had heard the Gospel, accepted it, and believed it could be added to the fellowship-community. This covenant was considered a commitment of obedience to Christ that manifested itself in love to all brothers and sisters with body, life, property, and honor, regardless of the criticisms of the world.³⁵ An individual making this commitment was assured through baptism that he was an accepted child of God, a brother or sister of Christ, a member of the Christian community and of the Body of Christ.³⁶ Baptism, following proclamation and faith, was not itself the true means by which men become religious, but was merely a sign, a covenant, and reminder of the commitment which would daily involve him in true baptism, which Christ called the water of all affliction (Wasser aller Trübsal). This figure referred to the process by which Christ washed, purified, and justified men from their lusts, sins, and evil deeds. If God is to justify a man he must remain quiet and allow God to accomplish His work in him. "In this manner the water of all affliction is the true essence and power of baptism and the means by which man sinks into the death of Christ."³⁷ This baptism was not introduced for the first time in the days of Christ but all the chosen friends of God from Adam on have experienced this baptism. Christ received this covenant from God in the Jordan when He testified of His obedience to the Father and His love for all men, even unto death.³⁸

The sign of the covenant of baptism is given and offered by the Christian community through a faithful servant, even as Christ received it from John, but the essence of baptism is a gift of God that He grants through the water of all affliction and through comfort in the Holy Spirit. Whoever desires to be a disciple of Christ must be baptized in this way and be cleansed in Spirit through the covenant of peace into one Body.³⁹

The latter part of Hut's tract on baptism is devoted to interpreting baptism as a covenant of rebirth (Wiedergeburt) and renewal in the Holy Spirit.⁴⁰ This is the only basis for an irreproachable community under God. Baptism as rebirth or regeneration is to be understood as a crucifixion and annihilation of lust and disobedience that arise in an individual against God. The way to eternal life is narrow if it leads to newness of life in God through the death of the old self. Seen in this light true baptism is nothing other than a struggle with sin through the whole of life.⁴¹

In his confessions Hut summarized and related baptism, the covenant, and the church as follows:

"Baptism consists of three things, Spirit, water and blood. They are in essence one and give testimony on earth. The Spirit refers to trust in the Word of God and commitment to live according to it. The Word calls this the covenant of God that He makes by His Spirit in the hearts of men. Beyond this God gave water as a sign of the covenant that a man might reveal himself openly and testify of his desire to lead an irreproachable life in true obedience to God and all Christians. Whoever transgresses and sins against God and brotherly love should be disciplined orally by the others. This is the ban⁴² that God refers to as the witness before the Church. Blood is the baptism that Christ mentioned to His disciples when He asked them, 'do you desire to receive the baptism with which I have been baptized?' This is the baptism that gives testimony throughout the world when the blood of one who has received it is spilled."⁴³

Hut had a high view of baptism and he gave it an important place. The following is an attempt to summarize its role: (1) Baptism is related to the beginning of a life of suffering discipleship (blood). (2) Baptism is connected with rebirth, regeneration, and the beginning of a renewal of one's life under the chastening hand of God. (3) Baptism is a part of one's injunction and incorporation into the Body of Christ as a living, functioning member. (4) Baptism is a public sign administered by the binding and loosing brotherhood to indicate the real baptism that takes place when one participates in the death of Christ through the water of all affliction. (5) Baptism is an expression of the covenant commitment of one's whole life to God and the brotherhood. (6) Baptism is the beginning of a life of love, admonishment, and discipline among covenant brothers. (7) Baptism is the beginning of a common struggle against sin and evil that lasts through all of life.

Hut's extant writings do not say much about the Lord's Supper. Nothing appears in his two major tracts, and in his confessions he merely answers the questions about transubstantiation.⁴⁴ He interpreted communion as a partaking in the bread and wine, not in the body and blood of Christ. Christ himself referred to the cup as the fruit of the vine. It was after He had offered the twelve bread and wine that He spoke of it as the new covenant in His blood, and it was after they had partaken that He laid down His life and gave His blood for them. All this convinces Hut that Christ gave His disciples bread and wine in remembrance of His sufferings and not His flesh and blood. On several occasions during his work in Franconia he observed the Lord's Supper.⁴⁵ It is possible that Hut was influenced in his view of the Supper as a memorial meal by Zwingli through some Swiss Anabaptists.⁴⁶

4. Church Order.

When Hut was asked in the course of a trial who the leading brethren in his brotherhood were he said that there were so many leaders and teachers that he would not be able to indicate them all. As examples he mentioned Jacob Dachser, Sigmund Salminger, Jakob Gross, Eukarius von Coburg, Joachim, and Leonhard.⁴⁷ He was quite sure that none of these were special disciples and apostles of the brotherhood. If somebody was to be sent on a special commission, they chose one from among the brethren. Although there was no doubt about the fact that Hut played a special role in the life of the Anabaptist movement of South Germany in the year 1527, he was quite right in saying that every group had its own leaders and when he visited them he merely proclaimed his message as one of them.

Hut consistently denied the oft repeated accusation that the Anabaptists in South Germany had special signs whereby they recognized one another.⁴⁸ When they met they merely called each other brethren and recognized each other by their Christian conversation and by their willingness to give an account of their faith. Even though the severity of the persecution from 1527 to 1530 made only a minimum of normal congregational life possible, this did not mean that the local groups did not function together and think of themselves as members of the church. The Martyr Synod was a glowing witness to the fact that they not only functioned as a church, but, driven by their missionary zeal and by persecution, they operated as a small missionary band. Any brother that was commissioned to go out as an apostle was merely instructed to comfort and teach the brethren wherever he would find them.⁴⁹ The letter which Hans Hut gave the Anabaptist apostles who

were commissioned by the Martyr Synod is an honor to his ecumenicity and peace-loving spirit.⁵⁰ In the letter he confesses that he has allowed the brotherhood to influence his teaching, and he appeals to all the brothers to manifest the same spirit for the sake of the unity of the Church. There is a contagious awareness in the letter of the breaking in of the Kingdom of God with power. Nothing was to hinder the spread of the Body of Christ in the crucial days in which he was living.

5. "A Christian Instruction."

Hans Hut's view and understanding of the Scriptures throws light on his concept of church and world. In his tract, "A Christian Instruction on how the Holy Scriptures are to be Compared and Judged,"⁵¹ he showed that the Church stands opposed to the world and is the culmination of God's redemptive work in history. The Church, according to Hut, is the reason for which Christ gave His life and the realm in which the Holy Spirit is working redemptively.

Hut's tract raised one main question: why do so many people misunderstand the Scriptures? He attacked the problem by analyzing three means by which men come to know God: (1) through His almighty power evident in created things; (2) through the severity and righteousness of the Son; and (3) through the grace and mercy of the Holy Spirit.⁵² These three are interrelated and all three necessary for a true understanding of God. There are three parallel areas of which the Scriptures speak: (1) Scripture tells us of created things and that man, tempted, confused, and blinded by them, turns from God; (2) Scripture speaks of suffering, affliction, and persecution, and how these lead man to turn from his lust and love for created things back to God; and (3) Scripture speaks of the perfection that is open to those who live by the command

of God through the Holy Spirit in the church.⁵³ In his tract he related these three areas to the three parts of the Apostolic Creed: We believe in God the Father, creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord, conceived of the Holy Spirit; and in the Holy Spirit, one holy community of saints and the forgiveness of sins.

Hut related these three categories of ideas by postulating that man (1) will only be released from bondage to the lust of this world and the love for created things, (2) through the cross of Christ, suffering and sorrow, and (3) thereby become a member of the Body of Christ through the Holy Spirit.⁵⁴ The second area, suffering discipleship, is the crucial one, for it is the only means whereby a man may pass from the world into the church. The great error of the false preachers was that they preached to the people about the church without ever telling them about the means of attaining membership in the Body of Christ. This makes an insolent, lazy people in whom no improvement in life is evident.⁵⁵ It is in the light of this threefold outline that Hut's influence on the South German Anabaptist movement will be analyzed, but before this is done it will be necessary to look at his eschatology, his attitude to the State, and the influence that Thomas Muentzer and Hans Denck exerted upon him.

B. The State.

1. Eschatology.

In discussing eschatology⁵⁶ it is easy to think of the aberrations it has produced rather than of its significant role in the life of the early church. On the one hand there is the example of the Münsterite episode with violence and bloodshed, a truly abortive attempt to bring

in the Kingdom of God by force and violence; but on the other hand there is the testimony of the early church, which was keenly aware of Christ's words about the signs of His coming and the close of the age. Paul spoke of Christ turning over the Kingdom to God, who will destroy every rule and every authority and power until He reigns over all His enemies.⁵⁷ A pertinent, frequently cited section of Scripture was Matthew 24.⁵⁸ Hut referred to these passages when he spoke of his hope in the return of Christ and he found in them many parallels to his own day and his own experience, such as the severe suffering of Christians, false prophets in the Evangelical and Roman Churches, and urgent rumors of the threatening Turkish armies. Hut's disappointment in the Wittenberg Reformers and the shattering of his confidence in Muentzer fanned the flame of his hope that God would soon return to judge the earth.

What did Hut actually say about eschatology? In his confession of November 26, 1527, he admitted that there had been a time when he believed according to Revelation 13 and Daniel 12, that God had given the world three and one-half years to repent. In the meantime those who believed in God would be persecuted and would suffer and there would be famine, disease and war. Then God would return to gather His own and they would punish the authorities and all sin.⁵⁹ The attitude of the court toward Hut's eschatology is clearly shown by the fact that the list of charges against him included predictions that the oppressed would rule and destroy all cities, the Kingdom of Christ would be established on earth, the righteous would take revenge on the ungodly, and the ungodly would be forced to turn over their property to strangers.⁶⁰

Although Hut denied each one of these charges his word was never accepted and after his death more details were added to this charge. By 1529 and 1530 Hut's teaching was pictured thus: three and one-half years after the Peasants' Revolt God would give the Anabaptists the sword to punish sin, annihilate the authorities, murder all those not rebaptized, and institute community of property and wives. Before this took place there would be wars, famine, disease and judgment; and the Turks would invade the land annihilating all those not doing the will of God. But with the coming of the Turks the Gospel would be proclaimed freely and those covenanted would flee to Hungary, Mühlhausen, and Switzerland. Those who had accepted the covenant would annihilate those left by the Turks and after this Christ would return and the Day of the Lord would begin and Christ's Kingdom would be established on earth.⁶¹

This is in summary what Hans Weischenfelder,⁶² in March 1527, accused Hut of teaching and what the authorities in 1529 and 1530 asked those who were recanting to acknowledge. Marx Maier⁶³ and Jürg von Passau⁶⁴ both recanted their previous Anabaptist positions and both admitted that Hut was guilty of the accusations the authorities had drawn up. But there is another aspect to Hut's eschatology that is easily overlooked. Even though Hut was more interested in Matthew 24, I Corinthians 15, and the books of Daniel and Revelation than any other early Anabaptist, there are other differences in his position more subtle and more obvious than the above accusations might indicate.

To begin with, the Turks are not mentioned anywhere in Hut's writings or confessions. If he did refer to them, which is quite likely, it was probably in a manner similar to others who were convinced that it would be a sorry day for Europe if they should gain control.

This would not be the first time that the church recognized a foreign foe as the scourge of God.

Hut did not relate the three and one-half years that God was giving the world to repent to any specific time, but on the contrary in his confessions he vehemently denied that anyone could know the day of Christ's return. "He believes that Christ will soon come to judge the world and all things in their present disorder, according to the clear indications of Holy Scripture. But what time and what hour it will be is hidden from all men. No one can know this but God alone."⁶⁵

While Hans Weischenfelder was testifying concerning Hut's revolutionary eschatology his brother Mertein gave exactly the opposite testimony. He said that Hut never spoke about the Turks or about an overthrow of the authorities; in fact, Hut said that if there were war one should not participate in it, if a lord asked for a penny he should be given two, and if he struck a man he should turn the other cheek. If the war cry were sounded and an individual was requested to go, he should rather flee to the woods or hide in a cave.⁶⁶ This testimony has more in common with the writings and confessions of Hut than does Veit Weischenfelder's and Marx Maier's testimonies. It is quite probable that men found in Hut what they were looking for and that someone with revolutionary tendencies would find some support in Hut's ideas.

Among Hubmaier's charges listed by Hut were the accusations that Hut claimed the Day of the last judgment could be fixed, that the Anabaptists would judge the world, that no ruler or prince of this world had accepted or acknowledged the truth, and that power would be taken from the authorities and be given to the Anabaptists.⁶⁷ Hut denied all these accusations and said that he knew no more about the judgment

and the Day of the Lord than was revealed in the Scriptures. He had merely gathered comfort from the Scripture so that those being persecuted might know of the reward that was awaiting them.⁶⁸

Furthermore, Hut maintained that God would do the judging on the Last Day, not man.⁶⁹ Some hearing him preach, who were still under the influence of Muentzer and the Peasants' Revolt, would naturally miss this distinction. There is an important difference between claiming that God, not men, would judge the world, and that God, not the church, would take the power from the authorities. In his confession of October 5, 1527, Hut said: "I know of no other future of Christ than as the holy Scriptures indicate; there will not be a temporal Kingdom but a spiritual one."⁷⁰ Ambrosius Spittelmayr, Hans Nadler, Leonhard Schiemer, and Hans Schlaffer all testify that Hut took this nonrevolutionary and biblical position.⁷¹

In the light of this testimony, what was it that Hut promised not to preach, according to the open letter that he wrote while at the Martyr Synod? Although there is no extant account of Hut's telling any of his converts in Austria about the three and one-half years, it is possible that he still held this position and that he agreed at the Martyr Synod to keep quiet about it. This was the point in Hut's alleged teaching that would have been most objectionable to Hans Denck and the other Anabaptist leaders gathered at the Martyr Synod. But the letter indicates that he went beyond this and promised to be quiet about the entire subject of eschatology. This places Marx Maier's report of three years later in suspicion for it is very unlikely that the sixty Anabaptists attending the Synod would have agreed on a fixed termination of the world as Maier suggested.⁷²

2. Obedience to the Government.

Since there was no basis in Hut's eschatology for the charge of a revolutionary attitude toward the authorities what further light do his confessions throw on his view and relationship to the authorities? Of the accusations directed against Hut three were concerned with a revolutionary attitude to government. They accused him of being one of Muentzer's disciples with the same revolutionary intentions, of inciting men to annihilate the authorities, and of agreeing with the pastor of Eltersdorf that the authorities are not Christian.⁷³

Hut admitted in his confessions that he had once been under the influence of Muentzer, "but since then he had changed his mind, and had been told and taught other things."⁷⁴ On two other occasions in his confessions he denied ever having been an adherent of the Muentzer sect.⁷⁵ He said repeatedly, "that he knows of no revolt directed against the authorities, either in action or otherwise. He has not encouraged revolt himself, nor has he helped anyone else."⁷⁶ He said that he believed firmly with Paul and Christ that one must be obedient to the authorities.⁷⁷ Barring the possible misunderstanding of his eschatology there is no basis in the sources for believing that he advocated anything but obedience to the authorities after the spring of 1527.

Hut had very little to say about the nature of government, its origin, its duties, and the limits to its authority. The few statements he made show that he believed that the origin and destiny of governments abide in God. In his preaching he was more concerned about their destiny than he was about any theorizing regarding their origin. He agreed with the Reformers and peaceful Anabaptists in confessing "that all power comes from God."⁷⁸ His leading disciples and followers, who

in other respects reflect his thought most closely, stated clearly that all governments have been instituted by God,⁷⁹ but that the exercising of government responsibilities was as sinful as man had become; the civil authorities did not always carry out their duty of protecting the good and punishing the evil. This conviction was substantiated by his own experiences with the civil authorities. When, as a result of scruples of conscience, he refused to have his child baptized, the civil authorities tried to coerce him with the threat of imprisonment and banishment. At Nikolsburg he was imprisoned because of his nonresistant position and had to flee to avoid the harsh hand of the authorities. In Augsburg he was imprisoned and severely tortured by the authorities because of his religious principles. This would have been enough to convince him that the authorities were not on the side of God, at least in this one area of the exercise of their authority.

That he recognized the limitations of governmental authority is shown in his refusal to swear an oath to the government if the occasion conflicted with the will of God.⁸⁰ This was in keeping with his conviction that the sword should not be drawn from its sheath except at the command of God.⁸¹ In other words, the Christian must be obedient to the authorities, but the authorities do not have an absolute right over his conscience.

3. Participation in Warfare.

There is one passage in Hut's confession of September 16, 1527, that presents a serious problem, since it does not clearly show whether or not Hut took the basically nonresistant position of the other Swiss and South German Anabaptists. A translation of the recorder's report follows:

He does not agree with the articles even though the furrier and others spoke about them and he has been disciplined on account of it. He showed them Scriptures to prove that swearing an oath for the authorities is not against God. If anything were contrary to God he would not swear it. Mangmeister also asked him about swearing to the authorities and he showed him that it was not against God. Concerning the oath he taught the brethren that the demand of the authorities to swear oaths in common state and civil matters is not forbidden. Men must obey the government, for some maintain that Christians should not engage in combat nor participate in warfare, but he showed them Scriptures to prove that they are obliged to do so (if they want to be subject to the authorities) even as Christ subjected Himself to the authorities. Whoever does not want to do this may sell what he has and move away. Some also maintained that Christians should not carry arms as in Switzerland for example, where they have made a regulation to this effect. He also denied this and showed them that it is not forbidden and is not against God. In a similar manner concerning dress, some had indicated that clothes must be simple, but he showed them that this is also not forbidden by God, for every man should be allowed to dress as he pleases.⁸²

There are four distinct matters involved here: the swearing of oaths, participation in warfare, the bearing and possession of arms, and conformity in dress. Concerning the oath, Hut did not interpret the Sermon on the Mount literally, but regarded it as an appeal to honesty. If in common state and civil matters the truth was clear and evident, one could verify the truth by means of an oath. This was not substantially different from the position of Denck⁸³ and Jürg Probst Rothenfelder.⁸⁴ The Swiss at times took a more literal position. Concerning the bearing of arms, Hut, putting a literal interpretation on Christ's statement that the disciples should sell their coats and buy swords,⁸⁵ thought there could therefore be nothing wrong with carrying and possessing a sword. The section concerning dress is probably an objection to a regulation made in St. Gall by marginal Anabaptists.⁸⁶ This statement is clear in all respects except in the matter of participation in warfare. Hut seems to say that in order to be obedient to the authorities it is necessary for a Christian to

participate in warfare. This kind of statement appeared nowhere else in his writings or confessions. Since this put him in a good light with the authorities there is very little likelihood that they falsified his answer. Hut's natural interest in being released would make him try to state his confession in as plausible terms as possible to quell the charge of sedition. Hut's statement must be seen in the context of an ardent plea on his part to prove that he always had advocated obedience to the authorities.

Hut can hardly have based his advocacy of participation in warfare on the concept of absolute obedience to the authorities, for he openly challenged such authority in the matter of swearing oaths and the baptism of his child. His statement that the man who cannot obey has the alternative of selling what he has and moving away, citing Christ as our example in that He did subject Himself willingly to the authorities is not clear. It is not likely that Hut was trying to imply that Christ would have participated in warfare, for he presents Christ as the suffering nonresistant Messiah. The weight of his argument seems to rest on the conviction that there is no simple or easy justification for any kind of disobedience to the authorities. That times might come when God calls for a different way he never denied. He was probably saying that, though the Scriptures do not teach disobedience on any point, they do not exclude the possibility of disobedience. This was at any rate Hut's practice.

There are some passages in the sources that seem to oppose his apparent support of participation in warfare. In his sermon at Königsberg in the fall of 1526, Hut said that it was permissible to possess a sword but it should not be drawn from its sheath until God

so commands.⁸⁷ In his confession of March 1527, after revealing a good understanding of Hut's basic position on preaching through created things, faith, baptism, and suffering, Mertein Weischenfelder said that Hut taught that one should love God above all things and one's neighbor as one's self.⁸⁸ In another confession he said that Hut taught one should help no one if the Turks should invade the country, but trust alone in God.⁸⁹ "Thirdly, concerning a revolution against the government, he said with emphasis, that he never heard the baptist (Hut) speak about a revolution against the government. In contrast he (Hut) said to him, 'if there is warring, do not go along, and if your lord demands a penny give him two, and if he strikes you on the cheek turn the other also. And if the cry of warfare approaches and men desire that you participate, you should rather flee to the woods and hide in a cave.'⁹⁰ Mertein Weischenfelder seemed convinced that Hut taught nonparticipation in warfare.

From the same area but testifying two years later is Hans Nadler.⁹¹ In his long confession he demonstrated his dependence on Hut concerning baptism, the covenant, creation, the role of suffering, discipleship, and church discipline. He confessed with Hut that the final day was near but that the date was unknown. He said that he knew nothing about a new Kingdom except that it was in the future and that the living and the dead would be judged at that time. About the authorities Nadler said that they were necessary because of evildoers and are all ordained of God whether they are good or bad. "One should not resist the authorities, for no Christian ought to engage in combat and fighting. Numerous brethren among us desire that we lay down our swords and arms. I have done this but it is no law; one may carry them or leave them according

to the strength or weakness of one's faith."⁹² Nadler taught that a Christian should demonstrate love and faithfulness to all men, offending none and doing good wherever possible. This would bring with it suffering and persecution for the sake of Christ.

Although the record of the proceedings at Nikolsburg is not at all clear, it does seem that Hut opposed Hubmaier in the matter of participation in warfare and the payment of the war tax. As will become evident in the last chapter, all Hut's disciples during his activities from Nikolsburg to his imprisonment in Augsburg, were of the peaceful, nonresistant type.

This still does not solve the question of Hut's nonresistance. Two conclusions must be drawn. (1) There is contradictory evidence on this matter that will not be solved unless or until new evidence comes into the picture. (2) Hut's influence on his friends and on the South German Anabaptist movement was basically nonrevolutionary and in favor of nonparticipation in warfare.

If the contribution of Hans Hut's life lies in the fact that he baptized more converts, founded more new congregations, and commissioned more Anabaptist apostles than any other early leader in South Germany, then the contribution of his teaching lies in his clear delineation of the crucial role of suffering discipleship, and the corporate nature and missionary character of the church-brotherhood. Like other great leaders and reformers Hut is not remembered because he made no errors and built up a consistent system of teaching, but despite these things. There are many contradictions in his writings and he was obviously preoccupied with the eschatological element in Scripture, but

he was spared from becoming the victim of these weaknesses because of his high view of the church and its unity. In his letter to the churches he stated his willingness to refrain from teaching his eschatological insights for the sake of the spread of the Church. It is because of this that his influence on the South German Anabaptist movement was primarily wholesome.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER II

THE TEACHINGS OF HANS HUT

- 1 See Harold S. Bender, Conrad Grebel (c. 1498-1526) The Founder of the Swiss Brethren (Goshen, Ind.: Mennonite Historical Society, 1950).
- 2 Bayern, I, pp. 41-2.
- 3 Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 14.
- 4 Ibid., p. 16.
- 5 Ibid., p. 14. This passage sounds very similar to one in the writings of Hans Denck: "No one can come to know Christ in truth unless he follows Him with his life" (Fellmann, op. cit., p. 45).
- 6 Ibid., p. 19.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Ibid., p. 34.
- 9 Ibid., pp. 13, 37.
- 10 Ibid., p. 34.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Ibid., p. 32.
- 13 Ibid., p. 26.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Ibid., p. 36.
- 16 Ibid., p. 20.
- 17 Ibid., p. 18.
- 18 Ibid., p. 22.
- 19 Bayern I, p. 44.
- 20 Confessions, p. 232; Bayern I, p. 44.
- 21 Confessions, p. 244.

22 Wolfgang Brandhuber's letter in Glaubenszeugnisse I, pp. 137-43 was a popular document among the early Hutterians.

23 Bayern I, p. 46.

24 Ibid., p. 42.

25 Ibid.

26 Wappler, op. cit., p. 232.

27 Confessions, p. 224.

28 Ibid.

29 Bayern I, p. 42; Confessions, pp. 223-4.

30 "Von dem geheimnis der tauf, baide des zeichens und des wesens, ein anfang eines rechten ~~war~~haftigen christlichen lebens" (Glaubenszeugnisse I, pp. 12-28).

31 Ibid., p. 14.

32 Ibid., p. 15.

33 Bayern I, p. 35 (Ambrosius Spittlemayer); Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 49 (Leonhard Schiemer); Ibid., p. 85 (Hans Schlaffer).

34 Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 20.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid., p. 21.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid., pp. 24-8. This is as comprehensive a treatment of the new birth (Wiedergeburt) as appears in any early South German Anabaptist tract.

41 Ibid., p. 25.

42 This is the only reference to the ban in the writings of Hans Hut.

43 Bayern I, p. 43; Confessions, p. 227.

44 Ibid., pp. 43-4; Confessions, p. 228.

- 45 See above, Chapter I, section C.
- 46 Jacob Gross would be an example. See Christian Neff, "Jakob Gross," ME II (1956), pp. 598-9.
- 47 Bayern I, pp. 41-2.
- 48 Confessions, p. 225.
- 49 Ibid., p. 226.
- 50 Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 12. See Appendix I for an English translation.
- 51 "Ein christlicher unterricht, wie göttliche geschrift vergleicht und geurtailt solle werden" (Glaubenszeugnisse I, pp. 28-37).
- 52 Ibid., p. 28.
- 53 Ibid., p. 29.
- 54 Ibid., p. 36.
- 55 Ibid., p. 37.
- 56 Littell, op. cit., pp. 70 f, 88 f, 106 f. This is probably the best treatment of the role of eschatology among early Anabaptists. See also Frank Wray, op. cit., pp. 224-52.
- 57 I Cor. 15:24-7 (RSV).
- 58 In order to provide a background for Hut's eschatology a paraphrase of a section of Matthew 24 follows. Christ said there will be wars and rumors of wars, kingdom will rise up against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes. Men will be hated for Christ's sake and will be delivered up to tribulation and put to death. False prophets will arise, and there will be greater tribulation than there has been from the beginning of the world. Men will flee to the mountains and a man in the field will not turn back to take his mantle. Two men will be in a field, one will be taken and the other left. For those eating and drinking with the drunken the Master will come on a day when they do not expect Him and He will punish them and they will weep and gnash their teeth. When the tribulation is at its height the tribes of the earth will mourn and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. He will gather all the nations before Him and will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will send out His angels with a loud trumpet call and they will gather His elect from the four winds. Of that day and hour no one knows, therefore men must be ready, for the Son of man is coming in an hour they do not expect.

- 59 Confessions, p. 239.
- 60 Ibid., pp. 243-4.
- 61 Wappler, op. cit., pp. 242, 244, 247-8, 280-1; Bayern I,
p. 188; Bayern II, pp. 178-9.
- 62 Ibid., pp. 242-8.
- 63 Bayern II, pp. 178-9.
- 64 Bayern I, p. 188.
- 65 Ibid., p. 44.
- 66 Wappler, op. cit., pp. 240, 243.
- 67 Confessions, p. 232.
- 68 Ibid., pp. 232-4.
- 69 Ibid., p. 242.
- 70 Ibid., p. 231.
- 71 See below, Chapter V, section B.
- 72 Bayern I, p. 199. Fellmann has accepted Maier's statement
as true (Fellmann, op. cit., pp. 17-8).
- 73 Confessions, pp. 243-4.
- 74 Ibid., p. 251.
- 75 Ibid., p. 243; Bayern I, p. 44.
- 76 Bayern I, p. 43.
- 77 Confessions, p. 227.
- 78 Bayern I, p. 43.
- 79 Ibid., p. 52. See also below, Chapter V, section B.
- 80 Confessions, p. 227.
- 81 See above, p. 38
- 82 Confessions, pp. 227-8.
- 83 Fellmann, op. cit., pp. 83-4, 110.
- 84 Kunstbuch, p. 194.

- 85 Confessions, pp. 241-2.
- 86 Egli and Schoch, Kesslers Sabbata, p. 164 f.
- 87 Confessions, p. 242.
- 88 Wappler, op. cit., p. 237.
- 89 Ibid., p. 240.
- 90 Ibid., p. 242.
- 91 Bayern I, pp. 131-41.
- 92 Ibid., p. 136.

CHAPTER III

HANS HUT AND THOMAS MUENTZER

In order to trace and discuss the influence of Thomas Muentzer on Hans Hut it will be necessary first, to trace their actual contacts in life and second, to study and compare their teachings. There are no references or even allusions to Hut in the letters and writings of Muentzer,¹ but during the course of Hut's trials he was repeatedly asked about his relationship to Muentzer and it is from his confessions that their encounters in life can be traced.

A. Contacts in Life.

The relationship began, according to the sources, with Muentzer's visit to Hut in Bibra for a night and a day sometime during the course of the summer, 1524.² Because Hut was acquainted with the book trade, Muentzer left a manuscript of a book for Hut to have printed. This book was a commentary on the first chapter of Luke that Muentzer wrote toward the end of June 1524, and submitted with a few changes to the censors on August 1, 1524. He took the original along to Mühlhausen, reworked it, and on his flight from Mühlhausen to Nurnberg, left it with Hut in Bibra.³

Although Hut denied it in his confessions, there might have been some relationship between the two previous to this visit. Muentzer was always very eager to see his writings in print, so that one finds it difficult to imagine that he would have left his commentary with Hut if they had not known each other previously. Since Hut was willing to accept the risk involved in having it published he must have had a certain amount of sympathy for the cause that Muentzer represented.

Both of them travelled rather widely and freely in Saxony, Franconia and beyond in the years after 1521, so it is possible that they knew one another. Because they both refused to accept the status quo and took an interest in Luther and the dissemination of radical ideas, it is conceivable that they were friends.

The only other contact between the two men that we know of took place the following spring at the battle of Frankenhäusen. Hut was on his way from Wittenberg to Erfurt during the time of the Peasants' War and hearing of the troubles at Frankenhäusen he went there with the hope of selling books.⁴ After arriving he was taken captive but released at the command of Müntzer. On May 16, the fateful day for the peasants, Hut also made his way up the hill but the shooting became too thick for him and he fled. In Frankenhäusen he was taken captive by the Hessian troops and although some of the prisoners were beheaded, he was released.⁵

The Sunday before this battle Hut heard Müntzer preach publicly in Frankenhäusen. He summarizes his impression of Müntzer's sermon as follows:

God almighty now desires to cleanse the world, so He has taken the power from the authorities and is giving it to the subjects. The authorities are becoming weak and in their weakness they will plead with the subjects, but they should not accept this in faith, for the authorities themselves have not kept faith. God is on the side of the subjects. On every small flag the peasants carried they had drawn a rainbow. Müntzer picked up this symbol and said that it was a sign of the covenant that God had made with them. Müntzer preached to the masses on three days previous to the battle and each day a rainbow appeared in the sky. Müntzer told them that this rainbow was a covenant and sign to show them that God was with them. All they must now do is fight heartily and be bold.⁶

Hut adds that he also saw the rainbow.

After Hut left Frankenhausen he returned to Bibra and preached in very much the same spirit as Muentzer: "the subjects should murder all the authorities, for the opportune time has arrived, the power is in their hands."⁷ It is because of this kind of preaching that Hut has been condemned as a disciple and follower of Thomas Muentzer. There are a list of accusations in the sources that illustrate this: "Because he has referred to Muentzer and those from Mühlhausen in his tract, we consider him to be one of Muentzer's sect with the intention of establishing it."⁸ The accusations directed at Hut are no different from those that could be directed against Muentzer.

It is on the basis of these accusations that Hut has been accepted as a disciple of Muentzer and that Heinrich Bullinger⁹ and his partisans down to Boehmer¹⁰ and Holl¹¹ have claimed Muentzer to be the father of the Anabaptist movement. If there is any way in which Muentzer was the father of the Anabaptist movement it would be through Hut. It is therefore important that a study of the relationship between these two men be made.¹² Their relationship is crucial for the interpretation of the origins of South German Anabaptism.

Hut did acknowledge the two mentioned encounters with Muentzer but he also said more. After having described Muentzer's first visit to him he said that he was not one of his sect, and though he had heard him preach a number of times he had not really been able to comprehend him.¹³ He probably said this in light of the change that later took place in his life. When he heard Muentzer preach death to the authorities and the cleansing of the world by God, he said that he really believed God was backing the war, and that the time had come for the fulfilment of the events as Muentzer described them.¹⁴ But they did not materialize

and since then, he said, his attitude had changed, "He has been told and taught other things."¹⁵ This is probably a reference to his baptism and identification with the Anabaptist movement.

The preaching that Hut did in Bibra just after the Peasants' Revolt assumed that the cause of the Peasants was a righteous one but in a sermon preached at Königsberg after his baptism he said outspokenly that the peasants were in error, that they had been seeking their own honor and not that of God.¹⁶ Before, he had said that the Christians must murder the authorities, but now he said that no Christian should take the sword out of its sheath until God bids him do so. Whereas he previously thought that the time was opportune for revolution and overthrow, now he said that God would initiate the Day of the Lord and the fulfilment of His Kingdom.¹⁷

If the Geschicht-buch¹⁸ of the Hutterian brethren, the Kunstbuch¹⁹ of the South German Anabaptists, and the Martyrs Mirror²⁰ accept Hut as a peaceful Anabaptist and faithful martyr, what is the relationship between his teaching and that of Muentzer? The contradiction between the claims of his accusers and his own testimony can only be probed by a comparison of their writings and by a study of their influence upon their friends and associates.

In studying the writings of Hut and Muentzer it is evident that there is some relationship and similarity between them. The problem, however, is not solved by determining this. The unique words and phrases²¹ that are repeated and the parallel concepts and ideas will be looked at in the light of their attitudes to Church and State.

B. Church.

The Church is probably the key to the difference between Hut and Muentzer. Muentzer had a rather vague concept of the renewal of Christendom by the immediate intervention of God assisted by the armies of the faithful. Hut worked in terms of local fellowships and the spread of the brotherhood until Christ would return. The goal that controlled Muentzer's view of the Church was the erection of the Kingdom of God by force. This is not clearly stated in the Prague Manifesto²² of 1521 but by 1524 his revolutionary principle was crystallized. In a summary way it could be said that Muentzer began his religious activities as a moderate and ended as a radical, whereas Hut began as a radical and made his major contribution as a moderate. A comparison of a number of key concepts from the last year of each man's life will illustrate this.

1. Covenant and Baptism.

The first time that Muentzer gave any insight into the nature of the covenant was in a letter to Schosser on July 25, 1524.²³ Outwardly the covenant was a sign of the union of the individual with God and at the same time it was a covenant among believers to encourage prophecy and new revelation. Everyone interested was invited to join the covenant and its purpose was expressed as the punishment of those who opposed it.²⁴ Beyond this the covenant was essentially a form of self-protection (Notwehr).²⁵ Although the duties of the covenant were both spiritual and political Muentzer was quick to insist that the essence was spiritual. It becomes clear, however, in his later writings that the revolutionary purpose of the covenant stood in contradiction to the ideal of despair and resignation instilled by the Cross.

The rainbow on the banners of the peasants was the only sign of the covenant of God to which Muentzer referred.²⁶ This is an example of Muentzer's belief in new revelations. Not baptism or some other biblical sign need confirm the new covenant if God grants a new revelation.

The practical manifestations of the covenant as they were developed in Muhlhausen and Allstedt are better described as a secret society or conspiracy than a Church. The fact that the covenant was immediately dissolved when the peasants were defeated and their leader killed, is a testimony to the fact that it was more political than spiritual. The covenant had been established to found the Kingdom of God by force but when God refrained from intervening on behalf of Muentzer and the peasants in the war, the covenant became inoperative by definition; one partner had not kept faith. Muentzer's covenant was more like that between an army and its leaders. If the army had been victorious the reign of the leader would have begun. Muentzer staked not only his life but also his theology on the success of the troops at Frankenhausen and when they failed his whole system of teaching including what he had to say about the Christian life and the Church, were shown to be bankrupt.

Hut's concept of the covenant had a completely different orientation. Even though it is possible that Hut first heard the word from Muentzer and adopted the concept of a covenant from him, he so filled it with new meaning that there is no real parallel between their respective uses of it.

For Hut the covenant is intimately related to baptism, which is interpreted as an expression of the corporate life of the church-brotherhood. The sign of baptism as a covenant with God is the means whereby the individual becomes a living member of the Body of Christ

in a local congregation. Baptism as a covenant must take place before a congregation, which, as the Body of Christ, can accept the new member into its midst. Hut's definition of the covenant is a classic statement of the South German Anabaptist position: "For this covenant is a commitment under obedience to Christ that manifests itself in godly love to all brothers and sisters with body, life, property, and honor, regardless of the criticisms of the world."²⁷ The sign of the covenant assured the believer that he was an accepted child of God and a member of the Christian community on earth.

Muentzer believed that the purpose of the covenant is to unite brothers against the godless; Hut taught that the covenant unites individuals to the Body of Christ, to loving membership with one another, and to the missionary task of preaching the Gospel. Muentzer thought the sign of the covenant was the rainbow, a symbol of the fact that God would assist the peasants in slaughtering the ungodly; Hut accepted the sign of believer's baptism, a symbol that the Spirit of God is present among His gathered people.

2. Community of Goods.

The only statement in the writings of Muentzer that led scholars to believe he taught community of goods was his confession from the rack in which he expressed the desire that "all become equal" (omnia sunt communia).²⁸ He also did say that everyone should be given according to his need and as opportunity presents itself,²⁹ but this is not sufficient basis for accusing Muentzer of teaching communism; even as Muentzer is falsely accused of introducing the annihilation of class distinctions, renouncing private property, and supporting the right to equality and freedom for all men. There is nothing in his writings

to support these claims. There is, however, a gradual transition in his life from an emphasis on religious reform to social reform. There is a growing concern for the improvement of the lot of the common man evident in his writings, even though he did not develop the details carefully.³⁰ Muentzer staked everything on a successful overthrow of the authorities; after that the consequences could be worked out. It is because of this that he gave so little thought to what he would raise up in the place of the authorities and the existing churches.

A theme that is repeated in his writings in 1524 is the accusation that the lords have precipitated the crisis in Germany by their greed. The needs and poverty among the common people was understood to be a result of the fact that the nobility had assumed control of everything.

"The old flatterer (Luther). . .has kept secret the origins of all stealing. He desires to gain the praise of men by spilling blood, for the sake of temporal goods. The ground and source of all gambling, robbery, and stealing lies with the lords and princes. They have taken all created things as their own possession; the fish of the streams, the birds of the air, and all plant life belongs to them. It is under these circumstances that they warn the poor that God has ordained, thou shalt not steal. This does not help the situation an iota, for if the poor man violates the law in some minor way he must hang. To all this Luther adds his amen. The lords are responsible for the enmity of the common man and they do not want to rid us of the cause of revolution. Under these circumstances conditions will never improve. If to say this means to be revolutionary, then let's begin."³¹

In Muentzer's tract, Die hochverursachte Schutzrede, the tension between his teaching about the cross and his concern for the temporal needs of the people is quite evident. To begin with Muentzer advocated the Peasants' Revolt to propagate the Christian faith and to rid society of the ungodly element that was hindering the faith, but to this he added the goal of improving the material status of the common man. Lohmann has pointed out that these are two diametrically opposed

grounds for drawing the sword.³² On the one hand it is done so that the common man might become a Christian and experience the Cross; and on the other hand it is done to relieve the need of the people, which he had already accepted as one aspect of the cross.

Whereas Muentzer might have cherished the hope of community of goods as an ideal for society, Hut advocated sharing for the Church-brotherhood alone. The difference between these two men centers on their different concepts of the Church and the World. Hut worked at the propagation of the Anabaptist brotherhood, advocating sharing as an expression of love and concern for the covenant brother. Muentzer directed his efforts at society at large and drew supporters from the suppressed elements of society. It is very unlikely in the light of this contrast to assume that there was any relationship between Muentzer's one isolated plea for equality and Hut's conviction that even property must be brought under the Lordship of Christ in the Church.

3. The Cross and Faith.

What are the qualifications for membership in the Church and what is to characterize the life of the believer? Muentzer's disappointment with Luther centered in the fact that he made it too easy for people to take up the faith. He preached the "honey-sweet" Christ and neglected the "bitter" Christ, for he made no mention of "the law, the fear of God, and the severity of Christ."³³ All Luther did was encourage men to have faith. This cannot issue in anything but a spurious faith. The true path to faith is the cross, but this does not mean only to believe in the cross but to be willing to experience it in body and soul. In pain, suffering, and sorrow man is released from his bondage to created things. When suffering and despair are at their height,

then the depths of the soul are bared; man stands in fear and trembling before God, hoping against hope. When this happens the Word of the living God springs forth out of the depths of man's own heart. This is the beginning of faith and a sign of the possession of the Spirit.³⁴

In the matter of justification Muentzer's mystical view of the cross (Kreuzesmystik) replaced any real doctrine of redemption or atonement (Erlösungsgedanken).³⁵ His emphasis on immersion in God and renunciation of the world was a direct result of the influence of Tauler.³⁶ In reality his advocacy of the spirit of renunciation, self-denial, and resignation was strongly contradicted by his activist program of violence and destruction. If salvation comes as a result of resignation then his reaction to social need stands in contradiction to his concept of redemption and the cross.³⁷ This cleavage at the center of his system did not go unnoticed by Muentzer himself. He always maintained that the only way to find knowledge of God was via the cross, but despite this he tried to justify his appeal for resistance by insisting that the authorities of church and state were keeping the common people from gaining access to the Scriptures. This argument never became a satisfactory bridge between his religious convictions on the one hand and his socio-political hopes on the other.³⁸

Although there is a similar concern in Hut for a faith that is expressed in suffering and discipleship, his orientation is quite different. Hut understood suffering to be conditioned by obedience to Christ and to the will of God as revealed in the Scriptures. There is no counterpart to Hut's concept of the new birth (Wiedergeburt) as a struggle with sin through the whole of life, in the thought of Muentzer. Contrary to Muentzer's extreme individualism and morbid

view of suffering Hut said one goes the way of discipleship together with the other members of the Body of Christ--the whole Church suffers. The experience of utter despair is not understood by Hut as the welling up of the Word of God from within the soul of the individual, as the mystics described it. Hut had a place for pain, poverty, and misery inflicted from within and without,³⁹ but this was not contradicted by violent opposition to the forces that were responsible for these afflictions. Hut taught that the Kingdom of God, will be established by God, not His followers, and that salvation is related to the present reign of Christ over His Body and not only to the future reign of God over all men.

4. The Scriptures and the Spirit.

Muentzer gave a high place to the individual's possession of the living Spirit for he had much more confidence in direct revelation and instruction by the Spirit than Luther and the Anabaptists did. The Word of God was hidden deep in the heart of the individual and with the possession of the Spirit it rose up and the individual became convinced that he had the living Word of God in him.⁴⁰ This experience assured a man that he was a member of the elect of God.⁴¹ The nature of this experience makes it possible to come to true faith in God without ever having heard or seen the Scriptures.⁴² The Scriptures are only a witness to the faith, not the power that calls it into being. Only after the experience does one have the key to the Scriptures with all its mysteries and apparent contradictions.⁴³ Once one has the Spirit, new revelations in visions and dreams are to be expected.

In the struggle between Luther and the Spiritualists such as Schwenkfeld, Sebastian Franck, Muentzer and others, the distinction

between outer and inner Word became important. Whereas Luther laid stress on the Scriptures (outer Word), the sacraments, and the Church, the Spiritualists emphasized the inner Word and its manifestations, thereby minimizing the sacraments and the visible church. There are two ways in which men have tried to explain the Word that arises out of man as the divine Word of God. Both find a basis in Muentzer.⁴⁴

One stream says that the flesh which Christ took on was spiritualized and became heavenly flesh, therefore Christ as the second Adam is drawing mankind up into the realm of the Spirit and the divine. The other stream emphasized the divine light that lighteth everyman coming into the world. This divine spark reflects the original nature of man and is God's point of contact with mankind. Revelation is that moment in a man's life when this spark of the divine is awakened.

Muentzer's view of inspirationism as a direct revelation to the soul of man through visions and dreams was probably a result of the influence of Storch.⁴⁵ In his Prague Manifesto he already attacked Luther's view of the Scriptures as the source of faith by saying one must possess the living Spirit in a way of which Luther was not aware.

In the light of his spiritualism and inspirationism it is interesting to observe how Muentzer used the Scriptures of Old and New Testaments. Although he rejected them as a source of grace and salvation he did bind himself slavishly to them as the norm for personal ethics and aspects of group life.⁴⁶ The law of God which man was to follow he found in the Old Testament rather than in the New. When using examples of men to be followed he rarely referred to Christ and the apostles, but rather to Gideon, Elijah, Jehu, and Joel.⁴⁷ This was particularly evident in the last years of his life when he was advocating revolution.

In this matter he was a forerunner of the Münsterite leaders and their emphasis on, and imitation of, the Old Testament.

In contrasting Luther's emphasis on the outer Word with Muentzer's on the inner, the Anabaptists are often identified collectively with Muentzer and the Spiritualist position. Wiswedel has attacked this generalization and shown that it is not true for the mainline peaceful Anabaptists.⁴⁸ In Hut's tract on the Scripture it is obvious that he relates discipleship very closely to the Scriptures, maintaining that the willingness to go the martyr way was a true response to the Word of God, within the context of the brotherhood. The challenge to go the martyr way and the insight into what this means for the Body of Christ are both derived from the Scriptures. Hut does disagree with the Reformers that they take faith too easily but he does not agree with Muentzer's alternative. The Spirit works in the heart of a disciple but he does it in relationship to the Word. There will, therefore, not be any new revelations to supercede the Scriptures. At this point the Scriptures are a control on any so-called new revelation and even the individual's interpretation of the Scriptures is subject to the Church which helps to keep men from the dangers of individualism and fanaticism. The fact that Hut was admonished by his brothers at the Martyr Synod in a certain area of his teaching is a good example of this concept. This is the only basis on which a common view of the Scriptures (Gemeindetheologie) can emerge.

The goal for Muentzer was individual direct communion with God based on new revelations. The goal for Hut was communion with God through the Scriptures, supported by the disciplined Church. A contradiction arises, according to Hut, when the words that Paul directed

at the Church are directed by the Reformers at those who are not willing to accept the means that lead into the Church, i.e., discipleship and suffering. The contradiction in Muentzer's position arises out of the fact that he spoke of the living Spirit and suffering, but never called for a gathered Church--the goal and context for all true discipleship and suffering.

C. State.

1. Eschatology and the State.

The difference in the eschatology of Muentzer and Hut is crucial for an understanding of the difference in their attitude to the civil authorities, but since eschatology and the state are so closely related in Muentzer's thought they will be considered together.

Already in 1521 in the Prague Manifesto, Muentzer said that once all men had been warned, those who remained indifferent would be delivered into the hands of the Turks for destruction. After this the true Anti-Christ would appear but he would be overthrown by Christ who would give the Kingdom of this world into the hands of His chosen ones.⁴⁹ It was not until the Erstenpredigt (Sermon before the Princes) and the Ausgedrückte Entblösung (A Clear Exposure), both of 1524, that the details and consequences of this view were worked out.

About March 1524, while Muentzer was in Allstedt, he organized a covenant of the elect (Bund der Auserwählten) that originally was made up of about thirty members. Shortly after being organized this revolutionary society undertook its first task: the burning down of a chapel near Allstedt.⁵⁰ Soon after this the council and the church of Allstedt joined the covenant and it was then organized on a firm military basis

with five covenant leaders headed by Muentzer, and strict orders to all members to be on guard and ready for military action.⁵¹ It was in this setting that Muentzer preached his sermon to the princes on July 13, 1524.

In this sermon his eschatology and attitude to the civil authorities are further developed. His program was first of all to include an invitation to the princes to join the covenant.⁵² If they refused, the sword would be taken from them and given to the people. It seems that Muentzer never counted too strongly on their assent, for his revolutionary program based on the support of the peasants, was fairly fixed by June 1524.⁵³

Muentzer's view of church history came to the support of his position. According to his interpretation the early church was only pure until the end of the apostolic period. The change took place primarily as a result of political and social factors. As long as the church was pure it was democratic and socialistic. With the development of a hierarchy and a trend toward authoritarianism the purity left the church.⁵⁴

Muentzer brought all these factors to a climax in his sermon by choosing Daniel chapter two as his text. His eschatological-dialectical position and its relationship to political-revolutionary action could easily be read out of this passage. His aim was to justify revolutionary resistance to the authorities. Using Daniel 2, he understood Christ to be the mountain from which the stone--the living Spirit--was taken to shatter the four kingdoms. The unbiblical mixture of church and state that had lasted to his own day made up a fifth epoch that must also be shattered by the living Spirit. This was a challenge to those who possessed the Spirit in his day to join the covenant that was dedicated

to destroying the ungodly. Since the fall of the Church it has been primarily the princes and authorities who had hindered the work of the "stone," so it was they who must be invited to join the covenant, and if they were unwilling they must be destroyed.⁵⁵

2. Government.

Muentzer traced the origins of government back to the time of Samuel when the people rejected God and asked for a king. God in His anger granted them a king and instituted civil authority, but in the sixteenth century God in His bitterness was going to annihilate the authorities and set up His own rule once more.⁵⁶ In its origins, therefore, civil authority was evil and godless. In order for the true faith to break through all princely authority would have to be wiped out.

The true purpose and responsibility of the government, according to Muentzer, was to cut off and do away with those who were resisting God. If the government was doing this it was a servant of God. If the civil authorities do not do this and resist the revelation of God (his own, for example) they must be destroyed in like manner as Hezekiah, Josiah, Cyrus, and Daniel did away with their enemies and as Elijah did away with the priests of Baal.⁵⁷ It is quite clear from his writings that Muentzer thought of himself as the new Daniel to lead the new revolution against the ungodly.⁵⁸ Everyone was welcome to join the covenant of the elect to accomplish this task. Muentzer probably hoped that all those who joined him would be men who had experienced utter despair and possessed the living Spirit, but since his league was not a disciplined Church he had no means of implementing this. From the Ausgedrückte Entblösung, it becomes clear that the Covenant of the

Elect was more like a secret society dedicated to revolutionary purposes than a Church, for the true Church will only come into existence when the elect are separated from the ungodly in the final apocalyptic-revolutionary event.

3. Comparison and Contrast.

A crucial difference between Hut and Muentzer grows out of their differing views of the great judgment. According to Muentzer it was a temporal-historical event, even though it brings all previous history to an end. On this final Day of the Lord, the elect of the new faith would annihilate the ungodly and thereby bring into existence the right Christian Church. Muentzer considered the final judgment, therefore, to be identical to the revolution that he was bringing to pass. This comes close to making himself equal to God and it is at this point that he was opposed by the Reformers and the Anabaptists. The latter maintained that the judgment would take place after Christ returned and that God would do the judging.

An important difference between these two men rests in the fact that Hut said the members of the Church of Christ must suffer on earth until Christ returns, whereas Muentzer taught that the elect should unite to destroy the ungodly, then Christ would return. Hut and Luther, though quite different, did make a place for the Church and the state in this present life. Luther was convinced they could cooperate; Hut thought the one must suffer under the other; but Muentzer saw them as absolutely irreconcilable. The two can only exist together until the elect are sufficiently organized to wipe out the other. This type of thought is based on the presupposition that the world must suddenly come to an end. It made no allowance for an intermediary period.

If the end does not come the whole system is doomed to failure, as Muentzer and the Münsterites were forced to experience. Hut, however, in giving up his revolutionary position, in identifying himself with a suffering Church on earth, and in allowing it to modify his eschatology, did become a partner in the founding of the free Church movement.

Holl might be right when he says that the concept of voluntary religious association can be found in Muentzer,⁵⁹ but the means by which you become a part of the group, and the purpose for which you join it, are so different from Hut's concept of the church that any other similarity is meaningless. Historically Hut and Muentzer were partners in the Left Wing of the Reformation, but when Hut joined the Anabaptist movement a year after Muentzer's death there was no significant way in which Muentzer influenced the origins or determined the character of the South German Anabaptist movement. Other radicals like Augustine Bader rose up in his place but they were not received into the Anabaptist brotherhood.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER III

HANS HUT AND THOMAS MUENTZER

¹ His major tracts appear in modernized German in Otto H. Brandt, Thomas Muentzer, Sein Leben und seine Schriften (Jena: Eugen Diederichs Verlag, 1933), and his letters in H. Böhmer and P. Kirn, Thomas Muentzers Briefwechsel (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1931). Muentzer's last three and most important writings have been edited in a critical edition by Carl Hinrichs, Thomas Muentzer. Politische Schriften mit Kommentar (Halle: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1950). A translation of Muentzer's Sermon Before the Princes appears in George H. Williams, Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957), pp. 47-70; The Library of Christian Classics XXV. Three of the most useful studies on Muentzer are Karl Holl, "Luther und die Schwärmer," Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte I (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1923); Annemarie Lohmann, Zur geistigen Entwicklung Thomas Muentzers (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1931); and Carl Hinrichs, Luther und Muentzer. Ihre Auseinandersetzung über Obrigkeit und Widerstandsrecht (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1952). Some of the above include extensive bibliographies.

- ² Confessions, p. 243.
- ³ Brandt, op. cit., p. 243.
- ⁴ Confessions, p. 239.
- ⁵ Ibid., pp. 239, 241.
- ⁶ Ibid., p. 241.
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ Ibid., p. 244.
- ⁹ Bullinger, op. cit., pp. 1a-8a.
- ¹⁰ Heinrich Böhmer, "Thomas Muentzer und das jüngste Deutschland," Gesammelte Aufsätze (Gotha: Flammberg Verlag, 1927), p. 221.
- ¹¹ Holl, op. cit., pp 423-5.
- ¹² The only attempt has been made by Robert Friedmann, "Thomas Muentzer's Relation to Anabaptism," MQR XXXI (1957), pp. 81-2.
- ¹³ Confessions, p. 243.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., p. 251.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.

- 16 Ibid., p. 241.
- 17 Ibid., p. 242.
- 18 Beck, op. cit., p. 22.
- 19 Kunstbuch, pp. 42-55. This is a slightly revised edition of Hut's tract on the mysteries of baptism.
- 20 van Braght, op. cit., p. 433.
- 21 A number of these have been listed in Grete Mecenseffy, "Die Herkunft des oberösterreichischen Täuferturns," ARG 47, Heft 2 (1956), pp. 257-8. "Creatur, Bruder Sanftleben, die zarten Schriftgelehrten, die Verwerfung des "falschen und ertichteten glaubens," Gelassenheit," as well as the concept of experiencing suffering and affliction in order to come to faith in God, are a few examples.
- 22 Böhmer and Kirn, op. cit., pp. 139-59.
- 23 Ibid., p. 74 f.
- 24 Lohmann, op. cit., p. 57.
- 25 Böhmer and Kirn, op. cit., p. 76.
- 26 Brandt, op. cit., p. 33.
- 27 Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 20.
- 28 Brandt, op. cit., p. 82.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Ibid., p. 30.
- 31 Ibid., p. 192.
- 32 Lohmann, op. cit., p. 68.
- 33 Brandt, op. cit., p. 129. Cf. Holl, op. cit., pp. 426-7.
- 34 Holl, op. cit., pp. 428-30.
- 35 Ibid., pp. 433-4.
- 36 Brandt, op. cit., p. 24.
- 37 Lohmann, op. cit., p. 60.
- 38 Ibid., p. 61.
- 39 Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 34.
- 40 Holl, op. cit., p. 430.

- 41 Ibid., p. 431, footnote 2.
- 42 Brandt, op. cit., p. 169.
- 43 Ibid., p. 131.
- 44 Holl, op. cit., pp. 437-8.
- 45 Brandt, op. cit., p. 6.
- 46 According to his convictions it is ungodly to cut one's beard (Lev. 19:2), and princes should be hung not beheaded (Num. 25:4), (Brandt, op. cit., p. 28).
- 47 Ibid., p. 28.
- 48 Wilhelm Wiswedel, "The Inner and the Outer Word, a Study in the Anabaptist Doctrine of Scripture," MQR XXVI (1952), pp. 171-91.
- 49 Böhmer and Kirn, op. cit., p. 150.
- 50 Hinrichs, Luther und Muentzer, p. 12.
- 51 Ibid., p. 18.
- 52 Williams, op. cit., p. 68.
- 53 Hinrichs, op. cit., p. 25.
- 54 Ibid., p. 28.
- 55 Ibid., p. 46-7.
- 56 Ibid., p. 111.
- 57 Ibid., p. 62.
- 58 Ibid., pp. 59, 64, 68, 118.
- 59 Holl, op. cit., p. 452.

CHAPTER IV

HANS HUT AND HANS DENCK

In the last chapter it has been pointed out that though there are many similarities between Hut and Muentzer they are found primarily in areas of little consequence, whereas in the crucial matters of Church and State there is very little similarity between the two. In comparing the life and writings of Hut and Denck¹ the opposite seems true. In the crucial questions of Church and State there is significant agreement between the two, whereas in many other areas they represent two different approaches to Christian life and thought.

A. Contacts in Life.

There were three major contacts between Hut and Denck. The first in Nurnberg in the fall of 1524, before either was an Anabaptist; the second at the time Denck baptized Hut in Augsburg, May 1526; and the third during the Martyr Synod in Augsburg, August 1527.

Very little is known about the details of the first meeting in Nurnberg. It took place after Hut's encounter with the three craftsmen,² which had resulted in his rejection of infant baptism and his expulsion from Bibra because of his refusal to baptize his child. It was probably in July 1524, that Hut had Muentzer's commentary on the first chapter of Luke published in Nurnberg.³ It was between Muentzer's visit to him and Denck's expulsion from Nurnberg in January 1526, that Hut visited Denck a number of times in Nurnberg. Hut says that he was Denck's guest while he bound books in Nurnberg but that he also stayed at other homes and practiced other trades.⁴

It was during the summer and fall of 1524 that Denck was influenced most strongly in his opposition to Luther by the humanists of Nurnberg. Two dialogues of Hans Sachs were published at this time, asserting that no Christianity was possible without an imitation of Christ and that no reformation could be achieved by merely changing external forms. Complete resignation to the will of God was necessary. These themes are also central in Denck's thought and probably exerted considerable influence on him in these months.⁵ The opposition to Luther in Nurnberg was stimulated from the outside by a visit of Muentzer in September, 1524. There is, however, no significant influence of Muentzer on Denck, neither in his January 1525, Confession nor in his later writings. The allusions to Muentzer's writings that Fellmann has found in Denck are of little consequence.⁶ They might indicate at most that Denck and others in Nurnberg read the published works of Muentzer, possibly in the fall of 1525. Neither Muentzer's reliance on inner revelations through dreams, visions, and ecstasies, nor his radical chiliastic teaching, nor his insistence on realizing the Kingdom by force, are reflected anywhere in Denck.

A follower of Carlstadt, Martin Reinhard, appeared in Nurnberg in November 1524, and stirred up the discussion of the bread and wine in the Supper. Along with these disturbances the sermons of Tauler were being studied and also the German Theology.⁷ These troubles culminated in the case of the three godless painters in which Denck became involved. After a number of trials, for which Denck wrote a confession⁸ concerning the Scriptures, sin, righteousness of God, law, Gospel, baptism, and the Lord's Supper, Denck was finally expelled on January 1, 1525.

It was this atmosphere into which Hut entered when he visited Denck in Nurnberg in the fall of 1524. Apparently he and Denck became warm friends and found certain common areas in their disagreement with Luther.

The next meeting between Hut and Denck was in May, 1526 in Augsburg. Denck spent some time in Muhlhausen after his expulsion from Nurnberg in January 1525, but apparently did not meet Hut who was active with Muentzer at Muhlhausen and Frankenhausen. By June 1525, Denck was already in St. Gall, where he contacted some of the Swiss Anabaptists. From the fall of 1525 to November 1526, Denck was occupied as a teacher in Augsburg. It was toward the end of April 1526, that Balthasar Hubmaier passed through Augsburg on his way to Moravia. After having convinced Denck of the importance of believers' baptism, he baptized him.⁹ Hubmaier and Denck had probably met in Regensburg in the fall of 1522, and it is possible that Hubmaier won him for the cause of the Reformation at that time.¹⁰ In this way Denck became the first Anabaptist of South East Germany.

After visiting Denck in the fall of 1524, Hut had come under the influence of Muentzer and in the spring of 1525 was present at the battle of Frankenhausen. Immediately after the battle he took up the cause of revolution in his home town Bibra. There is no trace of Hut in the sources from this time until he turned up in Augsburg toward the end of May, 1526. This visit to Augsburg only lasted about three to four days and while there he stayed at the home Denck near the gate of the holy cross. After a series of discussions Denck baptized Hut on May 26, 1526; the first and the last time that Denck baptized anyone. Hut had never encountered anyone previous to this who had been rebaptized and he said that he had no intention of receiving baptism. Denck's own experience

and the testimony of a visitor, Caspar Ferber, about the godly lives of those who had been rebaptized, finally convinced him.¹¹ The change to a more moderate tone that is noticeable from Hut's sermon at Bibra, May 1525, to the one in Königsberg¹² in the fall of 1526, is without doubt due to his baptism and identification with the Anabaptist movement. A few days after his baptism Hut left on a journey, now as an Anabaptist missionary baptizing and founding congregations wherever he went. After working in Franconia and Thuringia he returned to Augsburg in February 1527, but he did not meet Denck until August 1527, after he had visited Moravia and travelled through Austria.

According to Fellmann, Denck only wrote one tract before he was baptized.¹³ Hut does not refer to any of Denck's tracts but it is possible that Denck had written another one or two and that Hut was able to see them at the time of his baptism. The only direct dependence of Hut on Denck is in the 39 Scriptural contradictions which Denck published in this year¹⁴ and which appear in Hut's tract on the Scriptures.¹⁵ There seems to be no textual way of determining which series was written first but in all likelihood Hut borrowed from Denck. The fact that only eight of the contradictions appear in Landperger's edition¹⁶ of Hut's tract might be an indication that Denck's list was added later. The similarities in point of view between Denck and Hut are many and will be traced in the following section.

The last meeting between Hut and Denck took place in Augsburg, August, 1527. Denck left Augsburg in November 1526 and spent two months in Strassburg. From February to June 1527, he was in Worms where he translated the prophets together with Hätzer, and wrote his tract Von der Wahren Liebe. In July he was in Basel and in August he passed through Zürich, arriving in Augsburg in time for the Martyr Synod.

Hut had been active from May 1526 to August 1527 as an Anabaptist apostle in Franconia, Moravia, and Austria. The Martyr Synod was a fitting climax and culmination of his work as an Anabaptist leader. Many of the men who gathered at the synod were won to the Anabaptist cause by Hut, and his vision of the apostolate was responsible for the fact that men were commissioned and sent out to spread Anabaptist teachings in all the adjoining areas.

According to Hut the so-called Synod was made up of two or three major meetings. The purpose of the gathering was to review the field of work and commission Anabaptist apostles. It is now recognized that Hut was the dominant figure at the Synod and that the one letter¹⁷ we have from his hand was probably written at this time. The letter was to be sent along with the commissioned apostles and is a striking example of Hut's concern for the unity of the Church. The men who wrote and worked after the Synod are the best testimony to the final effect Hut's life and thought had on the South German Anabaptist movement, but this is the story of the last chapter. The concern of this chapter is to trace the relationship between the co-founders of the South German Anabaptist movement.

The difference in the personalities of these two men is significant. Denck struggled with the religious problem in a philosophical and theological way; Hut was an activist who struggled with the religious problem in practical and radical terms. Denck's final position was a logical development from the foundation of his first confession; Hut shifted radically from one extreme to the other. Denck only baptized one man and never founded any Anabaptist congregations; Hut baptized hundreds of men and founded new congregations wherever he went. Toward

the end of his life Denck became somewhat disillusioned with his relationship to the Anabaptist movement;¹⁸ Hut threw his whole weight into the spread of the Anabaptist movement and gave his life for the faith of the brotherhood. These differences should be kept in mind as their writings are compared and contrasted.

Although they both came to the Anabaptist movement by different routes and served it in different ways, they both did receive believers' baptism and served as joint founders of the movement in South Germany. Different as they were, they did accept one another and worked together successfully. In his confession of September 16, 1527, Hut says that they taught together; the subject of their teaching being "The crucified Christ, the Lord's Supper, and that men should be converted in these last days."¹⁹ It is quite possible that Denck was influential in changing Hut's convictions about eschatology. Their cooperation is a testimony to the fact that the dedication to the spread of the Kingdom of God on earth can be greater than differences in personalities and teachings.

B. Church.

1. Baptism and the Covenant.

Both Denck and Hut identified themselves with the Anabaptist movement from May 1526, to the Martyr Synod. Denck never became quite as involved as Hut in the practical life of the Church but he wrote and worked within the context of a voluntary brotherhood of believing rebaptized adults. He refers to those who live in the fear of God and lead a life of discipleship as the elect of God, among whom the Anabaptists were included.²⁰

In the matter of baptism Denck maintained that anything unclean by nature is not helped by washing; it is like attempting to wash the blackness from coal.²¹ In like manner a man whose body and soul are by nature unclean is not helped if he is washed outwardly, he must be won and helped beginning from the inside. The Word of God²² is alone able to do this, to penetrate into the unclean recesses of man. Man, however, resists, and before his nature surrenders he is brought to despair. This despair lasts as long as he remains in the body but it is at the same time the way in which Christ's work takes effect. This work is climaxed by baptism and possession of the Spirit. Baptism in the Spirit, i.e., "water of despair," is salvation, the covenant of a good conscience with God. Baptism as a covenant is death with Christ. As Christ died men must die to the Adam in them and as He arose they must rise to newness of life. Where this covenant has been made the Holy Spirit enters in and fills a life with the love that culminates the work of Christ. When water baptism is performed in the light of this covenant it is genuine, when not, it is useless.²³ Denck repeatedly emphasized the fact that the Christian who is keeping the law of love is fulfilling all ceremonies.²⁴ Seen from this standpoint he maintains that the outward sign of baptism is not as important as the inner reality, i.e., he agrees with Paul when he said, "I am not sent to baptize, but to preach the Gospel."²⁵

Denck says in his Widerruf (Recantation) that adult baptism signifies entrance into the congregation of believers.²⁶ He just says this once and it does not sound like he is limiting the congregation of believers to the Anabaptist brotherhood, but it is significant that he says it for it separates him significantly from the Spiritualists and

marginal Anabaptists who rejected water baptism and the visible church. In one instance he refers to baptism as the sign of the covenant (Bundeszeichen) and to those who accept it as covenant companions (Bundesgenossen).²⁷ Denck says plainly that if someone is baptized without having been taught and challenged to discipleship, it is an abomination before the eyes of God.²⁸

After having denied the efficacy of outward ceremonies Denck justified the two ordinances of the new covenant, baptism and the Lord's Supper, by saying that they are primarily a testimony and reminder to the children of God of their calling. Christians have been called out of this world to God, that they might live their whole lives in holiness and righteousness. To live in holiness means to separate oneself from the evil of the world and to serve God alone; this is the significance of water baptism. To live in righteousness means to give everyman his due. Since men owe everything to God, they should be willing to give and risk soul and body, property and honor for one another and for His name's sake. "Even as He (Christ) gave everything to take on human flesh, so we should be willing to become bread for one another and be broken even as He was broken for us. Of these things we should remind and admonish ourselves when breaking bread."²⁹ It is clear from this distinction that the new covenant in holiness (baptism) takes place only once, but the working out of the covenant in righteousness (the Lord's Supper) must take place continually.

There are some parallels between this view of baptism and that of Hut's. Hut also related baptism to the death of the Adam in us, and resurrection to newness of life. Baptism is thereby intimately related to the new birth and to the beginning of a life of holiness.³⁰

More obvious than this is Hut's parallel use of baptism as a covenant. Denck related the covenant more to the individual and his good conscience with God,³¹ whereas Hut related it to the congregation and their acceptance of a man into the covenant relationship and covenant community. Both relate the covenant commitment to the willingness to lead a life of discipleship and suffering.³²

2. Suffering-Discipleship.

Although the concept of conversion is strong in Denck it is not very helpful to suggest, as Kiwiet does, that conversion is the crux of Denck's teaching.³³ The transformation that takes place in a man's heart when he is changed from a son of man to a Son of God is central, in some sense, to the teaching of the Reformers, the Spiritualists, and the Anabaptists. It is important, however, that Denck relates this transformation to discipleship and suffering, and not just to faith and love. Faith and love are the goals of the Christian life in the Church, but the means thereto are discipleship and suffering. In order to pass from the world into the Church, from bondage to created things³⁴ to fellowship in the Gospel, there is no other way than through Christ, "whom no one truly knows except he is willing to follow Him with his life."³⁵ It is not the rejection of outward things, nor the acceptance of them, that is of significance, but a relationship to God. "But if someone thinks he belongs to Christ, he must walk in the way in which Christ walked. Only then will he reach the eternal habitation of God. Whoever does not walk in this way must stray eternally."³⁶

When Denck was asked whether Christ's redemption fulfilled and accomplished enough for men, he replied that Christ did enough for the whole world and was a forerunner in the way that men must walk if they

would attain unto life.³⁷ Christ did not fulfill the law to put us at a disadvantage but rather to be an example for us that we might follow after Him. Denck never taught that Christ's substitutionary death leaves the believer without obligation. Justification is still left in the hands of God, and it only becomes operative through faith, but whoever would respond to the call of Jesus must come and die, and do so for the rest of life. This is never thought of legalistically, for immediately following this Denck says that "the true followers of Christ have been freed from all ceremonies."³⁸ In fulfilling the law of love all other things fall into place.

Denck saw the answer to the problem of exercising power and authority over men, and the problem of taking life in wartime, within the context of the disciplined following of Christ. "He who truly could have done these things (exercise power, rule, and take life) chose to neglect them as an example for us. How much more should we avoid these things and follow after Him who alone will bring us to the Father."³⁹ According to Denck men will never arrive at knowledge of God if they do not follow after Christ in all these things.

Denck related faith and the Word of God by saying that to have faith means to obey the Word of God unconditionally, whether it brings life or death.⁴⁰ At the same time, a Christian can have the sure hope that things will turn out for his good. There is a real element of paradox here. We are to obey unconditionally even though we know we cannot. Though it means death, man is to hope against hope. "It is not possible for one who does this (obeys the Word of God unconditionally) to stray, even if he is astray; he is fulfilling the law of God to the uttermost, even if he is breaking it."⁴¹

Denck not only equates faith in God with obedience to the Word of God, but he says that whoever knows Christ and obeys Him from the heart, is free from sin even though he is still tempted and under attack. The pace at which a man runs in the path of God will depend on his knowledge of the truth, the extent of his obedience, and the reality of his freedom.⁴²

Denck was not quiet on the subject of suffering. In his first confession he led up to his concept of covenant and baptism by a discussion of despair and suffering⁴³ and he also introduced the Lord's Supper with the theme of suffering.⁴⁴ In describing the role of suffering he used the image of the body. As relates to the truth all men are sick and feverish in body and soul. The only way to reduce the fever and alleviate the malady is to refuse to accept any false comfort and to accept suffering quietly according to the advice of the doctor. "This is the work of Christ in annihilating the old Adam in me. Although this is not completed as long as I live in the body, it is nevertheless begun in the body and suffered partly on account of the covenant made with God in baptism, when I placed my will into God's through Christ the mediator."⁴⁵

When Denck was asked about predestination as a necessary source of comfort for the elect he replied that it cannot be given to anyone nor can it be taken away, unless a man submits to the punishment of the Father and tastes the "sweetness" of the "bitter cross."⁴⁶ This "bitter" cross plays a significant role in the thinking of Denck.

His clearest statement on the efficacy of suffering appears in his tract Ordnung Gottes.⁴⁷ Here he states that the Word of God comes to the godless man under condemnation and preaches to him and tells him that he is at fault, that he should not try to pass his guilt to someone

else, but suffer willingly. As soon as this man becomes aware of the Word he is partially free and can choose to continue in evil or offer himself up in suffering. The more he resists suffering, the more condemnation he is bringing upon himself--the end result being death. The more he submits to suffering and humbles himself under the mighty hand of God, the sooner God accomplishes his work in him. Denck justified this suffering by explaining that God had suffered in man through His Word from the beginning. In order for sinful man to become one with God he must likewise suffer.⁴⁸ The lamb that suffered in Christ, suffered from the beginning of the world and will suffer unto the end of the world. The lamb is the eternal Word that suffers in men for his condemnation as long as he seeks only himself and rejects Christ.⁴⁹ The scribes proclaim a false peace; "the peace of God can be expected only in affliction and fear."⁵⁰

Because Denck was not as practically involved in the life and spread of the Anabaptist brotherhood as Hut, it is understandable that he has but little to say in his writings about problems of Church order, leadership, and the sharing of goods. Most of the light we have from Hut on these subjects comes from his court confessions, but Denck was never put on trial as an Anabaptist and none of his tracts were directed at the practical problems of a congregation.⁵¹

3. Discipline.

It is interesting in the light of this dearth of practical insights and in spite of a clear identification with the expansion of the Anabaptist movement, that Denck did treat the matter of discipline and the ban.⁵² Denck said that to love somebody, but not according to the truth and love of God, is to hate him. If you hate someone because of

the love of God, you cannot continue in this state unless you are ready to admonish and to apply serious discipline. If your brother will not respond, you must avoid him with a sorrowful heart, for this is true love. This is the basis for the separation of the children of God from the children of the world and the foundation of the ban--the excommunication of false brethren. The ban must be exercised in true love if the original covenant of holiness and separation from world-society is to be maintained.⁵³

The similarities between the views of Hut and Denck are many. Concerning the covenant, baptism, the Lord's Supper, discipleship, suffering, and discipline, there seem to be parallels. It is quite difficult, however, to trace much direct dependence. Since many of the basic concepts that Hut and Denck shared were included in Denck's first confession, written long before Hut ever became an Anabaptist, it is probably justifiable to suggest that more concepts and ideas flowed from Denck to Hut than vice versa. This does not deny the mutual effect they had on one another in their association and work together before and after they became active members of the Anabaptist movement.

Even as there was some common ground between Hut and Muentzer, there is some among all three men. The emphasis on suffering, conversion, fear of God, and a radical faith, are in some sense common to all three. When Hut and Denck related all these concepts to the gathered church rather than to direct revelations, visions, dreams, and a revolutionary eschatology, a gulf was fixed that was unbridgeable.⁵⁴ It is not very likely that Hut and Denck would have cooperated as well with Thomas Muentzer, had he been at the Martyr Synod, as they did with one another.

C. The State.

1. Separation from the World.

In his discussion of admonition, discipline, and the ban, Denck indicated that the covenant with God made in baptism and the practice of avoiding those who would not respond to punishment, form the basis for the position that there should be a basic separation between the children of this world and the children of God,⁵⁵ between the state and the church. Baptism and the Supper also serve as a testimony and reminder to the members of the Body of Christ that they have been called out of the world to serve God in holiness and righteousness.⁵⁶

Denck thought of this separation in a threefold way; from those who refuse to hear even though they do not manifest the mind of Christ; from those who have a false faith but insist on trying to force men to accept it; and from those who make separation necessary because of intimidation, persecution, and violence.⁵⁷ As far as it is possible, Denck did not want to have fellowship with error and unrighteousness even though he was forced to live among men who were sinning and mistaken.⁵⁸ This position would not be very much different from that of the Reformers and Spiritualists, except for the covenant of believers' baptism and the ban.

The significance of the separation of church and state in the thought of Denck is further illuminated in his discussion of the oath, participation in government, and nonresistance.

2. The Oath.

Denck got at the problem of the oath⁵⁹ by suggesting that a vow was a dangerous thing. If a man promised something that he could easily keep then there was no point in making a vow. If he promised

something beyond himself it was either a matter of presumption, because of ignorance, or hypocrisy despite better knowledge. If men knew anything as certainly as God does they would be able to swear oaths and rule over men without exercising revenge and selfishness, even as God does. If anyone wants to testify to something that took place in the past it should be done in all simplicity realizing that anything above yes or no is accountable to God. It is possible to call upon God as a witness to a testimony but His name should not be used in vain for this is forbidden in the Law and in the New Testament.

In his Widerruf, Denck developed this last point still further by saying that swearing an oath was not wrong in itself but should be used discreetly so as not to encourage sinful men who were already constantly misusing the oath.⁶⁰ A man with the Spirit of God should not promise or swear things unless he felt in his conscience that he could fulfil them. Christians should be able to swear not to do the things that Christ clearly taught them not to do, such as stealing, killing, and committing adultery. "God may be called as a witness to the truth we speak, for whether this is called swearing or not it is clearly not forbidden by Christ."⁶¹ This was probably quite similar to Hut's conviction that it was quite permissible to swear in community, state, and civil matters, but in things that were contrary to God, swearing was not permissible.

3. Participation in Government.

In the problem of the Christian's role in government, Denck stated clearly, that "to use power and to rule with force is not at all possible for a Christian who wants to bring glory to his Lord."⁶² Because the Kingdom of God is not characterized by force and power does not mean

that the evil world should not use them. Denck distinguished between the role of the authorities as servants of God in His wrath, and the role of the Church as the servant of God in His mercy and redemption.⁶³ Both have a right to exist before God, and both are channels through which God operates; one for the conservation of law and order and the other for the redemption of men from the Kingdom of this world into the Kingdom of God. One is the arm of His wrath and one is the arm of His love. A father should manage his household, his wife and children, servants and maids, the way God deals with him, the head of the house. In as far as it is possible for the civil authorities to operate in this way, they are Christian in their office. But because the world cannot bear this, a friend of God ought to gravitate out of the government rather than into it, if he really wants to have Christ as His Lord and master.⁶⁴

4. Nonresistance.

Denck believed that resistance to evil, violence, and killing are contrary to the example of Christ and the principles of the Kingdom of God. If anyone wants to follow after Christ he should recognize His example in avoiding the exercise of force and the taking of human life. In the Kingdom of God there is to be only teaching and the exercise of the power of the Spirit. Concerning evildoers, God commanded men to teach and admonish them for their improvement. If they refuse to hear and desire to remain pagan they should be avoided, for they are outside the Body of Christ if they refuse to hear His teaching.⁶⁵

Denck's position was like that of the Swiss Anabaptists in that he supported the separation of church and state. Although Denck was opposed to the Christian's participation in government and the swearing

of oaths, he did not state his position quite as categorically as the Swiss Brethren. An oath was possible if the truth was to be testified to, and those who participate in government are not automatically non-Christian. The conclusions reached by the Swiss Brethren and Denck were quite similar but the approach of Denck was that of a theologian and the Swiss Brethren that of laymen.

5. Eschatology.

Although Denck has usually been thought of as having nothing to say about eschatology there are some statements and biblical references that indicate it was not completely foreign to his theology. He did speak about the end of the world,⁶⁶ the great judgment,⁶⁷ and echoed Hut in saying that God was stronger than His enemies⁶⁸ and would put them to shame and annihilate them.⁶⁹ His position, however, culminated in a patient waiting rather than any kind of revolutionary activity. After stating his hope to be separated from the unrighteous, he said that "it is with this conscience that I await with joy and without fear the decision of Jesus Christ."⁷⁰ Although Denck quoted from Matthew 24,⁷¹ it is not reasonable to say that Hut was influenced by him in the field of eschatology.

The relationship between eschatology and ethics is very close. A sketch of this in the lives of Luther and some of the men under study in this paper can serve as an illustration. Luther⁷² believed that the Roman Church with its Pope was the Anti-Christ and that the end of the world was not far off. Because the true church was invisible it was necessary to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments to the whole territorial community. Out of this eschatology grew his theory of the two kingdoms; first the realm of God and the neighbor,

and secondly, the realm of the State and society. A Christian man must live in both, even if he has to accept the Sermon on the Mount in the one and reject it in the other.

Muentzer⁷³ believed that the church and society were incompatible. The latter, particularly through its authorities, was frustrating the work of God and consequently all those who possess the living Spirit must unite to annihilate the ungodly, that God might be able to set up His Kingdom on earth and rule over His people. This eschatology justified the use of the sword and was dependent on violence and the overthrow of established authority.

Denck believed that the Kingdom of God was represented on earth in the Anabaptist movement and that the church must be holy and separate as it lives in the world and witnesses. Christ was already Lord of all but this would be fully realized when He returned and the fulfillment was accomplished. This eschatology implied that the Christian must keep the distinction between church and world clear by following Christ in the path of nonresistant, suffering love. This way was initiated by the Word of God, must be responded to by men in the covenant of baptism, and is sustained in the disciplined fellowship of believers.

Hut⁷⁴ believed at one point in his life that Muentzer's radical revolutionary position was right, but he changed his position when he identified himself with the Anabaptist movement. He believed then that the Kingdom of God was represented on earth by the Anabaptist movement and that it did not have to be ushered in by force. Hut was still convinced that Christ would return shortly but the date was unknown and the Kingdom he would raise up would be spiritual. This implied a radical

subjection of every area of life to the church-brotherhood and a willingness to go the way of suffering, for the church in the world is under the sign of the Cross.

Hut was not always clear what the consequences would be when he called for a voluntary church separated from the world, but he was willing to take the risk. What it involved can be seen more clearly in the lives and writings of his disciples and associates in the South German Anabaptist movement.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER IV

HANS HUT AND HANS DENCK

¹ The writings of Hans Denck have recently been published in an excellent edition by Walter Fellmann, ed., Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer, Vol. VI, Part II, Hans Denck Schriften (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1956), Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte XXIV. Part I is a bibliography of Denck's writings prepared by Georg Baring. The most recent study of Denck was made by Jan J. Kiwiet, "The Life of Hans Denck," MQR XXXI (1957), pp. 227-59; and idem, "The Theology of Hans Denck," MQR XXXII (1958), pp. 3-27. A study has been done by the British scholar Alfred Coutts, Hans Denck (1495-1527): Humanist and Heretic (Edinburgh: Macniven and Wallace, 1927). The classic study on Denck is that of Ludwig Keller, Ein Apostel der Wiedertäufer (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1882). A very useful sketch of his life with a comprehensive bibliography by Christian Neff and Walter Fellmann appears in Mennonite Encyclopedia, ed. Harold S. Bender, Vol. II (1956).

² Confessions, p. 223.

³ Brandt, op. cit., p. 243.

⁴ Confessions, pp. 224, 229, 230.

⁵ Kiwiet, Denck, p. 237. Cf. Friedrich Roth, Augsburgs Reformationsgeschichte (München: Theodor Ackermann, 1881), pp. 185-88.

⁶ Fellmann, op. cit., pp. 6, 20 f.

⁷ Kiwiet, Denck, p. 239.

⁸ Fellmann, op. cit., pp. 20-26.

⁹ Kiwiet, Denck, p. 245.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 233.

¹¹ Confessions, p. 224.

¹² Ibid., p. 241.

¹³ Fellmann, op. cit., pp. 27, 48.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 68-73.

¹⁵ Glaubenszeugnisse I, pp. 29-31.

¹⁶ Mittheilungen aus dem Antiquariate von S. Calvary and Co. I (Berlin: 1869), pp. 156-66.

¹⁷ See Appendix I.

18 The reasons that Kiwiet gives (Denck, pp. 257-9) for challenging one paragraph in the recantation are not very satisfying. There are other places in which Denck makes similar allusions (Fellmann, op. cit., p. 105). These statements do not negate his positive contribution to the South German Anabaptist movement.

19 Confessions, p. 227.

20 Fellmann, op. cit., pp. 42, 93, 108.

21 Ibid., p. 23.

22 In the writings of Denck the Word of God means more than just the Scriptures, cf. ibid., p. 106.

23 Ibid., p. 24.

24 Ibid., p. 54.

25 I Cor. 1:17 (RSV), cf. Fellmann, op. cit., p. 24.

26 Ibid., p. 109.

27 Ibid., pp. 80-1.

28 Ibid., p. 83.

29 Ibid., pp. 81-2.

30 Glaubenszeugnisse I, pp. 24-5.

31 Fellmann, op. cit., p. 24.

32 Ibid., pp. 80-1, and Bayern I, p. 43.

33 Kiwiet, Denck, p. 12.

34 Fellmann, op. cit., p. 35.

35 Ibid., p. 45.

36 Ibid., pp. 50-1.

37 Ibid., p. 53.

38 Ibid., p. 54.

39 Ibid., p. 84.

40 Ibid., p. 97.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid., p. 107.

43 Ibid., p. 24.

44 Ibid., p. 25.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid., p. 42.

47 Ibid., p. 92.

48 Ibid., p. 94.

49 Ibid., p. 95.

50 Ibid., p. 50.

51 The last section of his tract Von der wahren Liebe (Ibid., pp. 83-6) might be considered an exception to this general rule.

52 Ibid., p. 82-3.

53 Ibid., p. 83.

54 If a contemporary illustration (not parallel) were permitted, the quoting that a socialist might do from the writings of Marx could serve the purpose. There certainly are some parallels between the two but to say that this relates or equates them in any significant way is to overlook the basic differences.

55 Fellmann, op. cit., pp. 82-3.

56 Ibid., p. 81.

57 Ibid., p. 108.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid., pp. 83-4.

60 Ibid., p. 110.

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid., p. 84.

63 Ibid., p. 85.

64 Ibid.

65 Ibid., p. 84-5.

66 Ibid., p. 26.

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid., p. 100.

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid., p. 108.

71 Ibid., p. 100.

72 See George W. Forell, Faith Active in Love; An Investigation of the Principles Underlying Luther's Social Ethics (New York: The American Press, 1954). Cf. a review by William Klassen, MQR XXIX (1955), pp. 244-47.

73 See above, Chapter III, C.

74 See above, Chapter II, B.

CHAPTER V

THE INFLUENCE OF HANS HUT ON THE SOUTH GERMAN ANABAPTIST MOVEMENT

In his tract Ein christlicher Unterricht, Hut said that there are three ways in which a man can come to knowledge of God: first, through the might and power (allmechtigkait und kraft) of God expressed in created things; secondly, through the severity and righteousness (ernst und gerechtigkeit) of Jesus Christ; and thirdly, through the goodness and mercy (güete und barmherzigkait) of the Holy Spirit.¹ Regarding the first, he said that it was through created things that man became a slave to this world. Creation tempts and entices man away from his true purpose, which is fellowship with God. Concerning the second, he said that it was through the severity and righteousness of Christ that the bonds of servitude to created things are broken. Christ is the only way out of the Kingdom of this world and the only means into the Kingdom of God. Concerning the third, he said that the church was the realm where the Holy Spirit was active and it represented the goal for the Christian individual and the realization of God's purpose for man. This was the covenant brotherhood where the Holy Spirit was active in works of love, justice, sharing, and brotherly discipline.² In his tract, Hut related these three categories to the three parts of the Apostolic Creed: the Father,³ the Son,⁴ and the Holy Spirit.⁵

Much of Hut's thought and that of his followers and friends of the South German Anabaptist movement fits into this three-fold scheme. Leonhard Schiemer's tract Von dreierlei Gnad,⁶ follows the three-fold pattern, and his commentary on the Apostolic Creed is probably one of

the finest examples among Anabaptist writings of this interpretation.⁷ Peter Ridemann's Confession of Faith written at Gmunden between 1529 and 1532, is also organized around the three central assertions of the Apostolic Creed.⁸ These are the obvious examples that help to focus the Anabaptist point of view but beyond these there are many more parallels as the following will illustrate.

Jesus' command to His disciples, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation; he who believes and is baptized will be saved,"⁹ was understood by Hut and his followers to tie in with the three-fold scheme. The preaching was to be done in the world to those enslaved by created things. If they believed the preaching, came to faith in God, and committed themselves to the way of the cross and suffering, they were ready to be baptized into the church, the covenant community of the Holy Spirit. This progression through preaching and believing, to baptism, appeared often in South German Anabaptist tracts and confessions.¹⁰

In Hut's tract the created things represented the world, and the realm of the Holy Spirit represented the church. The crucial area, however, was that which lay between. It was crucial because Hut and most other Anabaptists, felt that this was the area that was being neglected by the Reformers. It was important, furthermore, because it represented the only possible means to move from the world into the church.¹¹

It will be necessary to look first at the central area, concerning the severity and righteousness of Christ. This involved Hut's teaching about suffering discipleship and the work of Christ. The logical step from here is to a study of the church, the realm of the Holy Spirit. This includes primarily a discussion of baptism and the covenant with a

brief look at economic sharing. Lastly, comes the first division, the world. This will be looked at in the light of the church's relation to the world and more specifically to the state. This will lead to a study of eschatology and the Anabaptist view of God's hand in history.

Though there is a progression for the individual from (1) attachment to the world, through (2) identification with Christ, to (3) the church-brotherhood, it is also important to realize in using the three-fold scheme that there is a real sense in which the church and the Christian live in all three at the same time and all the time. This is the reason for the fact that the People of God stand under the Cross and must suffer. The Christian lives in the world while he is living in the church and it is because of this that he must go the way of suffering and misunderstanding. Christ alone could reconcile church and world and when He did so it meant suffering, the cross, and death. The fact that Christ was the God-man and went this way, not only provides for man's redemption and salvation but Christ calls each Christian to go the same way that He went. As soon as a man is willing to go this way he finds that he is not alone--there is a community under the cross. This is the church.

A. Church.

1. Suffering Discipleship.

a) Spurious Faith.

In his writing Vom geheimnus der tauff, Hut criticized those who taught nothing other than "faith, faith"¹² but did not indicate the means by which one comes to it. The whole tract is centered around the idea that preaching must come first, then faith, and after both, baptism.

In the closing paragraph of his other tract, Ein christlicher unterricht, Hut said again that some talked about the goal and purpose of God for His people but they did not reveal how one progresses toward that goal. They received men as if they had attained salvation through the suffering Christ, not realizing that these men desired nothing but an easy faith. This always produces an impudent, lazy people, with no reformation of life.¹³

In his commentary on the Apostolic Creed, Schiemer said that men in his day spoke a great deal about faith but when they were asked just what it was and how one came to possess it, they had no answer.¹⁴ They heard songs about faith and heard it spoken about, but had come to believe that the physical hearing of the word was sufficient. This kind of person refused to stand by Christ when He was before Pilate and to suffer with Him when He was on the cross.¹⁵ Christ has suffered for mankind but not so that men would not have to suffer. An easy faith that tries to avoid suffering will last only until it is persecuted. This always shows it up for what it really is.¹⁶ Schlaffer said the carnal preachers were saying that Christ had done everything, all man could do was believe.¹⁷

The criticism of sola fide theology is common among South German Anabaptists. In contrast to an easy faith that does not accept the consequences and implications in life, Hut and the South German Anabaptists emphasized the idea of the imitation of Christ and the New Testament teaching that discipleship brings with it suffering, affliction, the cross, and persecution.

b) Imitation of Christ.

Concerning the imitation of Christ, Hut stated very unequivocally that "No one is able to arrive at the truth unless he follows in the

steps of Christ and His chosen ones in the school of affliction."¹⁸ An image that was common to Hut and his followers was that of the Christian suffering with Christ in His life, death, and resurrection.

Ambrosius Spittelmayer said that members of the Body of Christ must live, suffer, and die as the Head died for them.¹⁹ This does not minimize the significance of the atonement of Christ. "Christ, true God and man, the head of all His members, has erased with His suffering the eternal wrath of God that was directed against us. He has reconciled us and restored us to peace with God, and as our personal mediator His suffering and death have opened for us the Kingdom from which we had fallen because of Adam."²⁰ From this Spittelmayer did not conclude that this must merely be believed, but rather that men must believe it and be willing to go the same way. He also made use of the image of Christ as the Word that is spiritually conceived, born, circumcised, baptized, and preached in His disciples.²¹ Schiemer²² and Schlaffer²³ use this concept in a similar manner. In his 1531 Confession, Marpeck referred to sins and lusts being nailed to the cross with Christ and being buried in His death.²⁴ The anonymous tract Von der Genugthuung Christi, was written from a similar standpoint.²⁵ Ridemann said that Christ lived His life as an example that men might follow in His steps.²⁶

The imitation of Christ was also carried over to Christ's descent into hell. Hut said that the Christian must descend into hell and be led out in his struggle from unbelief to faith.²⁷ In his discussion of the Apostolic Creed, Schiemer related all eleven sections concerning Christ, to the life of the Christian. In the section on Christ's descent into hell he referred to the experience of Jonah and Job and to Christ's cry of despair from the cross. When a Christian had experienced

this descent into hell and realized that he had been forsaken by God for a moment he came to know what it means to love God for His own sake.²⁸ Schiemer compared despair and suffering with Christ to wine in a wound, and the comfort and mercy of the Holy Spirit, to oil.²⁹ Schlaffer said that every man who wanted to experience salvation in Christ must also experience the depths of Christ in the cross, in desertion, and in hell. "For whoever is not condemned by the world and cast into hell with Christ will be cast into hell later with the damned. Whoever descends into hell with Christ, i.e., in Christ, will be led out again by God for He will not allow His members to remain in hell."³⁰ Marpeck believed that water was a sign of the new birth in the Scriptures and referred to affliction, dread, need, and suffering. This was the sign of Jonah. All flesh must receive the death sentence and pass through the gates of hell before it can enter the narrow path that leads to life.³¹ Denck related Christ's descent into hell to despair and suffering in the Christian life.³²

c) The Cross.

Related to the Christian's identification with Christ is his acceptance of the cross. The cross played an important role in the life and thought of the Anabaptists of South Germany. The challenge of Jesus to His disciples to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him is echoed in most South German Anabaptist tracts and confessions. Schiemer saw the cross as the test that revealed whether faith was genuine or not.³³ The Spirit of Christ will not enter a man unless he submits under the cross and discipline of God. "Without the cross it is impossible for God to save me, despite His power."³⁴ Men who ask for righteousness are praying for the cross and if they submit under it

they will enter the fellowship of the saints.³⁵ Marpeck referred to the mystery of the cross in the context of affliction, fear, distress, and suffering.³⁶

d) Suffering.

When the consequences of discipleship and the imitation of Christ were made more explicit there was a strong emphasis on suffering, affliction, and persecution. This has been illustrated in the writings of Hut, where even the righteousness of Christ expressed itself through suffering, affliction, and persecution.³⁷ Schiemer said that the calling of the Christian means a call to suffer. Men who believe in Christ must suffer because of Him.³⁸ A statement of Peter's was very popular among the Anabaptists, "Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same thought, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin."³⁹

Schlaffer said in his tract, A Short Instruction at the Beginning of a True Christian Life, that the whole Bible speaks about the suffering of the elect from Abel down to the apostles.⁴⁰ In this same context the Revelation of St. John refers to Christ as the lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world.⁴¹ Baptism of fire is the fervent love to God and the neighbor that makes a man willing to suffer all things.⁴²

In relationship to the discussion of the Lord's Supper and the eating and drinking of the body and blood of Christ, the theme of suffering was frequently introduced.⁴³ Schiemer used the image of the crushed grapes: "A draught from this flask is nothing other than a beaten, pulverized, crushed, and grieving heart, beaten with the mortar of the cross, for the grapes in God's vineyard must all submit to the

winepress and be trodden by affliction, if wine is to result."⁴⁴

Ridemann also used this parable, as well as that of the crushed grains of wheat.⁴⁵ The Supper was not only conducted in memory of the sufferings of Christ by the Anabaptists but as a reminder to the church of the suffering it must endure.

The theme of suffering also played an important role in Marpeck's Confession. Members of the church are considered to be companions in suffering for they have been baptized into the afflictions of Christ.⁴⁶ No man will enter the Kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit, i.e., of affliction and comfort, of Christ and the Holy Spirit.⁴⁷ Marpeck interpreted water as a symbol of suffering and distress.

After stating with Paul that the Christian makes up in his body the sufferings that began in Christ, Ridemann emphasized the fact that this did not identify suffering and salvation.⁴⁸ Life in the branch was a result of its attachment to the vine, and where this union existed fruit was to be expected. Members of the Body of Christ who share the joys of salvation must also share Christ's suffering.

Beginning with Hut, a patterned use was made of St. John's list of three witnesses to the Christian life, the Spirit, the water, and the blood.⁴⁹ The Spirit was related to the covenant that God makes with man when man commits himself to live by His Word. Water was always related to the outward sign of baptism whereby a believer was acknowledged to be a living member of the Body of Christ on earth. The blood was related to suffering and persecution, both as individual disciples and as a church. It is important to remember that all main line Anabaptists thought of suffering as not only an individual experience that led to true faith-membership in the Body of Christ, but also as a corporate

reality that characterized the continuing life of the church. If one member suffered the whole Body suffered for the whole brotherhood was under the cross.

e) Creaturen.

One of the characteristic aspects of Hut's teaching that relates to his understanding of Scripture and the nature of the Christian proclamation and experience, was his concept of created things (Creaturen).

These created things play a two-fold role; negatively, they tempt man to live as if the things that are seen are the most important part of life, and positively, man can experience the might and power of God through them. Created things can serve as allegories or parables of what God is trying to teach and achieve in His children.⁵⁰ Reference has already been made to the parable of the tree⁵¹ that must have its branches cut off before it can be used in the construction of a house, and to animals that must suffer and die before they can be consumed by men.⁵² In both instances they illustrate the necessity of suffering in the Christian life.

f) Righteousness.

Lastly it will be helpful to look at the relationship of suffering discipleship to righteousness and justification before God. It has already been indicated that suffering and the imitation of Christ are not set forth by the authors under study, as a substitute for the righteousness that comes by faith. This righteousness, however, is never thought of as a mere change of attitude in the heart of God, in legal or forensic terms. Hut believed that when God declared a man righteous He also made him righteous. "In order to be used of God, God must justify us and cleanse us from inside and out. Internally

from inordinate desires and lusts and externally from wrong paths and misuse of created things."⁵³ To be declared righteous (Gerechtfertigt) and to be made righteous (Gerechtmachung) go hand in hand in the thought of the South German Anabaptists. "The righteousness that is acceptable with God does not derive from an untried faith. But the whole world fears righteousness like the devil, and would gladly pay for it with a spurious faith, but this will not achieve righteousness. This righteousness is not taught or proclaimed by its preachers for they themselves are enemies of the cross of Christ and of righteousness."⁵⁴ The central assertion of Hut's tracts is that man experiences the righteousness of God through identification with Christ.⁵⁵ This is basic to the Anabaptist position in South Germany.

The experience of the righteousness of God does not make men perfect or sinless, but as long as they are hungering and thirsting after righteousness God does not forsake them when they sin.⁵⁶ The Anabaptists were convinced that reformation of the life of the disciple was a vital part of the reformation of the church.

One of the more comprehensive discussions of righteousness by an Anabaptist author is contained in Schiemer's tract Von der Dreierlei Gnad.⁵⁷ In a masterly way he related righteousness to imitation of Christ, suffering, self-denial, the cross, sharing, admonition, and church discipline. Somewhat similar discussions are found in Schlaffer⁵⁸ and Ridemann.⁵⁹ The latter is the only one in the early South German area who used the term "Gerechtmachung." Faith not only justifies men before God but makes them pious (fromm) and righteous. Ridemann taught that those who follow in Christ's footsteps and go the way of discipleship and suffering will find that Christ's yoke is easy and His burden light.⁶⁰

2. Baptism and Covenant (Holy Spirit).

After the severity and righteousness of Christ have been experienced the goodness and mercy of the Holy Spirit provide consolation and comfort for the disciple in the church. Although suffering discipleship and related concepts played a crucial role in the thought of the Anabaptists, it was in the area of the nature of the church that they made their major contribution and ran into conflict with the Reformers.

It has already been pointed out that Hut's identification with the Anabaptist Church was a crucial point in his experience and consequently a central fact in his thought. "When there are a number of Christians who have gone the way of the cross, suffering, and sorrow, and are covenanted together, they become one congregation and one Body in Christ--a visible church."⁶¹ Since most of the men whose writings are under study in this chapter were either baptized by Hut or one of his followers, it is understandable that they shared his view of the church. In breaking down the general view of the nature of the church into the role of the covenant, believers' baptism, discipline, economic sharing, and the Lord's Supper, it will be possible to trace the influence of Hut on the South German Anabaptist movement more carefully.

a) Covenant.

Hut's concept of the covenant was larger than his concept of baptism. The covenant was the commitment to live by the Word of God, under obedience to Christ, suffering whatever God ordained for His disciple.⁶² It was also considered a commitment before a Christian congregation that had the right to bind and to loose.⁶³ When this was true it became a covenant of rebirth and renewal in the Holy Spirit.⁶⁴ Spittelmayer substantiated this view when he said, "God makes His covenant

with His own when He receives them as children. This covenant is realized in the Spirit, in baptism, and in the drinking of the cup-- which Christ has called the drinking of blood."⁶⁵

Schlauffer said that a man who accepted the Gospel, received repentance and forgiveness of sins, and gave himself totally in faith to God, had entered the covenant that God makes with man and man makes with God.⁶⁶ Marpeck sharpened this definition of covenant by introducing the distinction between sign and testimony.⁶⁷ Circumcision was a covenant sign that God made with all men. Because it was not a testimony on the part of man it could include infants. The new covenant was the testimony of a man's good conscience with God and because of this it implied faith. Only those should be baptized who had made a covenant with God in faith as the testimony to a good conscience. It was Marpeck's contribution to insist that the form of the covenant and its essence, outward baptism and inner baptism, the visible church and the invisible church, cannot be separated.⁶⁸ If Hut would have been forced to face the opposition and criticism of Spiritualists it is possible that he would have developed the logic of the Anabaptist position into the same channels.

In his 1529-32 Confession, Ridemann referred to the covenant in baptism as the testimony of a good conscience with God.⁶⁹ In accepting the covenant, an individual recognized that he had a gracious Father who had forgiven his sins and had received him into the congregation of the saints. It was on this basis that man bound himself to keep God's statutes and walk in His ways. This was what the covenant of baptism meant--something impossible for a child that could not yet distinguish between good and evil.

The Anabaptist insistence on imitation of Christ and suffering was not foreign to mediaeval Christianity and would not have been offensive to either Roman or Reformation Churches had it not been related to voluntary church membership through believers' baptism. This was a direct challenge to a thousand year social and religious tradition and could not be tolerated.⁷⁰

b) Baptism.

The stage was set for the introduction of believers' baptism in South Germany by the multitude of grievances against the Roman Church and the churches of the Reformers. The grievances in the thought of Hans Hut, Thomas Muentzer, and Hans Denck have been briefly traced. To these grievances was added the deepening insight that though baptism was biblical and necessary, infant baptism was not. The gathering storm finally broke loose in South Germany when Balthasar Hubmaier,⁷¹ coming from Switzerland, proclaimed the message that baptism should be by confession of faith and church membership by voluntary choice. The view of baptism need not be traced here since it was common to the whole South German movement beginning with Denck and Hut.

c) Discipline.

Baptism and covenant were closely related to injunction into the church-brotherhood in South German Anabaptist thought. After stating that the covenant in baptism involved a willingness to live in obedience to God and all Christians, Hut said that those who transgressed and sinned against God and brotherly love should be disciplined.⁷² In one instance Hut described this practice with the word "ban."⁷³ Spittelmayer followed Hut in his description of brotherly admonition and discipline.⁷⁴ Within the church-brotherhood members should be subject to one another in humble obedience.

In his discussion of "forgiveness of sins" in the Apostolic Creed, Schiemer quoted Christ's words from Matthew 18, "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. But if he does not listen, take one or two others with you. . . . If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church, and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven."⁷⁵ He also quoted the incident from the Gospel of John in which Christ came to the disciples through locked doors and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."⁷⁶ One of the important responsibilities of being covenanted to a Christian congregation was that of brotherly discipline. It was understood that whatever was bound or loosed by the covenant community was bound or loosed in heaven.⁷⁷ The importance of admonition and discipline is very obvious in the Discipline of Believers, used at Rattenberg and attributed to Schiemer.⁷⁸

Schlauffer said that water baptism served as a sign whereby Christians could recognize one another, show brotherly love to one another, and help each other with teaching, admonition, discipline, excommunication, binding, and loosing.⁷⁹ After having described the steps that led to membership in the Kingdom of God, Marpeck, said that children of God have the right to bind and loose. This he called the ban and said that it was controlled by the Holy Spirit. Those who live in direct opposition to love should be excluded from the Lord's Supper, which he described as a love feast.⁸⁰ The Anabaptist feeling concerning the nature of the church was expressed very warmly in one

of Marpeck's prayers, "That we might live together in faithfulness and truth, teaching, warning, admonishing, and disciplining one another so that we might be able to hear, understand, and live in obedience to the Word by faith. To this end I have committed myself to God, to all true believers, and to all men, with all that I am and have, in order to give myself in service through Jesus Christ."⁸¹

d) Love Sharing.

Common to all the Anabaptists of South Germany, beginning with Hut, was the conviction that voluntary sharing of goods should be a part of the life of the covenant community. In describing the Christian congregation Hut said, "There all goodness, mercy, praise, glory, and honor appear in the Holy Spirit, there all things are common, nothing private."⁸² Hut also characterized the covenant commitment to Christ and all brothers and sisters as involving body, life, property, and honor regardless of what the world might say.⁸³

One of the finest expressions of this ideal of voluntary, love sharing is found in a written confession of Ambrosius Spittelmayer:

Nobody can inherit the Kingdom unless he is poor with Christ, for a Christian has nothing of his own; no place where he can lay his head. A real Christian should not even have enough property on earth to be able to stand on it with one foot. This does not mean that he should go and lie down in the woods and not have a trade, or that he should not have fields and meadows or that he should not work, but alone that he might not think they are for his own use and be tempted to say: this house is mine, this field is mine, this dollar is mine. Rather he should say it is ours, even as we pray: Our Father. In summary, a Christian should not have anything of his own but should have all things in common with his brother, i.e., not allow him to suffer need. In other words, I will not work that my house be filled, that my larder be supplied with meat, but rather I will see that my brother has enough, for a Christian looks more to his neighbor than to himself. Whoever desires to be rich in this world, who is concerned that he miss nothing when it comes to his person and property, who is honored by men and feared by them, who refuses to prostrate himself at the feet of his Lord. . . will be humbled.⁸⁴

There is an element of paradox in Spittelmayr's attitude to property that is noticeable in Paul's social ethic, "Let. . .those who buy (live) as though they had no goods, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it."⁸⁵ Spittelmayr was convinced in theory that if all men became Christians at once, and if they were at unity in faith and Spirit, they would hold all goods equal and in common.

When the authorities tried to apply what Hut and Spittelmayr said about the church to society at large they became alarmed. If nobody should possess anything, who would till the soil and work? Men would become irresponsible and there would be nobody to maintain peace and order. As soon as something was accumulated it would have to be given away to some lazy drunkard who refused to work. Spittelmayr explained that he was thinking only of the church and in the church there should be no lazy drunkards. True Christians would not be idle and lazy, nor would they rely on their brothers for sustenance. If all men were Christians they would still work to capacity and earn their bread by the sweat of their brows. Any fears in the hearts of the authorities about law and order should have been assuaged by Spittelmayr's confession "If there should be one hundred (Anabaptists) in this or any other town and there were only ten not of their faith, they would not molest them nor take away their land and property. All they would do is pray to God for them that they might also be enlightened by the divine Word."⁸⁶

This view of sharing within the brotherhood is well represented in Schiemer's tracts⁸⁷ and in the Discipline of Believers that has been ascribed to him.⁸⁸ In Schlaffer,⁸⁹ Marpeck,⁹⁰ and Ridemann,⁹¹

sharing is alluded to in the context of the Lordship of Christ over every area of a covenant brother's life. Brandhuber's letter to the church at Rattenberg works out the implications of the free sharing of goods⁹² in greater detail than any other pre-Hutterite statement.

e) The Lord's Supper.

All the Anabaptists of South Germany agreed in rejecting the Roman interpretation of the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper. Hut stated this very briefly in one of his confessions.⁹³ Spittelmayr went somewhat further and decried the wooden interpretation of the Scriptures that supported the view of the Roman priests. He showed how eating the flesh of Christ meant the imitation of the life of Christ, and drinking the blood of Christ meant the willingness to suffer all that God ordained.⁹⁴ The actual participation in the Supper was advocated by Schiemer, Schlaffer and the other leaders in South Germany as a memorial to the death of Christ.⁹⁵ The first comprehensive treatment of the Lord's Supper by a South German Anabaptist appeared in Ridemann's Confession written at Gmunden.⁹⁶

There is very little said about church order in the tracts of the South German Anabaptists. The Discipline of Believers adopted at Rattenberg affords a clearer insight into church order than all the other writings combined. Hut's dynamic view of the missionary task of the church and of the apostolate characterized the South German Anabaptist movement until it was persecuted out of existence in the early 1530's.

B. The State.

The last section of Hut's three-fold scheme is concerned about God and what He is doing in the world, in the State, and in history. If this is God's world, if the State is ordained by God, and if God is going to bring history to an end, then what is the relationship of God's people, the church to these other realms in which God is active?

1. God's World and the Church.

The Anabaptists of South Germany had no clearly defined doctrine of the world. They made no effort to relate their view of God, man, and the world, to culture and civilization. Their one consuming interest was the church and in their eyes everything that was not church was world. The principles of voluntary membership, charismatic leadership, economic sharing, and the subjection of every area of life to the task of spreading the Kingdom of God did bring them into sharp conflict with the economic system and the social and religious norms of the sixteenth century.

Hut's concept of the covenant brotherhood implied a radical distinction between the Kingdom of this world and the Kingdom of God. In the eyes of Spittelmayer as well, the borders of society and the borders of the church were not coterminous. In the covenant-brotherhood there was to be love, justice, sharing, and brotherly admonition. These things have never been characteristic of the world.

Schlemer said that there was more to the Christian life than just a submission to God under the cross of Christ. A Christian must be ready to separate himself from all those who will not submit to Christ and on the other hand he must be willing to practice love and community

with all those who do.⁹⁷ This separation was also intrinsic to Schlaffer's view of the nature of church and world.⁹⁸

In Marpeck's Confession there is a strong sense of the Lordship of Christ over all principalities, dominions, and powers; although Christ rules over the world, He is alone recognized as Head of His Body, the church.⁹⁹ It was only the church that was submitting willingly to His Kingship and rule. It was because of this difference that the world and its governments should play no role in the functioning of the church. A Christian's citizenship was in heaven first and then among men. Ridemann also called for separation of the People of God from the contamination of the world.¹⁰⁰

Separation from the world was expressed in eschatological terms in the tract Von der Genugthuung Christi. The church must go out from Babylon and not believe its scribes, for they have based their salvation on works. Those under the discipline of Christ hear the voice of God calling them to be separate from the sin and uncleanness of Babylon.¹⁰¹

2. God's State and the Church.

a) Separation of Church and State.

The separation of church and state was a doctrine common to main line South German Anabaptism. This meant primarily that the state should not be permitted to exert any influence or authority over the church in its faith and life. Spittelmayer said that the authorities should not have any power to coerce the souls and consciences of men.¹⁰² Marpeck pointed out very clearly that the state had its place as long as it did not interfere in the work of the church. The Holy Spirit was blasphemed when secular authorities were allowed to rule in the

Kingdom of Christ.¹⁰³ The church was made up only of those who submitted willingly and obediently to the rule of Christ.

b) Obedience to the Authorities.

Just what separation of church and state implied for the church was a question that constantly faced the Anabaptists. Beginning with Hut there was agreement among South German Anabaptists that in community, state, and civil matters there should be total obedience to the government.¹⁰⁴ Christ taught that one must give them the obedience that was due them. Schiemer stated the principle in this manner, "But Christians are obedient to the prince of this world in matters pertaining to body and property; but to the prince of heaven, our Lord Jesus Christ, they are obedient with souls and all things that pertain to the faith."¹⁰⁵ Schlaffer was sure that if the authorities knew of the healthy attitude of the Anabaptists they would desire that all their citizens were Christians.¹⁰⁶ Marpeck said, "Secular rulers are servants of God in temporal matters and not in the Kingdom of Christ. They deserve to receive all human honor, fear, obedience, taxation, and tribute, according to the words of Paul."¹⁰⁷ This willingness to be obedient is a clear testimony of the non-revolutionary position of the South German Anabaptists.

c) Participation in Government.

In acknowledging obedience to the authorities the Anabaptists recognized that government was ordained of God¹⁰⁸ and that it was responsible to protect the good and punish the evil. If civil authority was ordained of God, could a Christian participate in a government office? Hut was quiet on this matter and Spittelmayer was not explicit. The latter said, "Those who are attached to the government because of

human fear, and submit in the area of the soul and conscience, cannot be saved unless they do the command of Christ when He said: forsake what you have and follow after me."¹⁰⁹ Schiemer, Schlaffer, Brandhuber, and Ridemann were also noncommittal in this area. Marpeck did say that if an office holder in the government was a Christian or became one, he was not permitted to exercise his human power, authority, and rule in the Kingdom of Christ.¹¹⁰ Marpeck was a civil engineer who was employed by the civil authorities in Strassburg and Augsburg even while he served the Anabaptist brotherhood. This position had more affinity to Denck's view, who said that a Christian in government should be gravitating out of his office,¹¹¹ than it does to the simple clarity with which the Schleithem confession¹¹² prohibited participation in government.

d) Nonresistance to Evil.

If the South German Anabaptists did not give a simple clear answer regarding participation in governmental offices, what did this imply regarding the use of the sword and nonresistance to evil? They obviously saw a distinction between the two for most of them were nonresistant as has already been shown. According to Weischenfelder and Nadler, Hut taught nonparticipation in warfare and love for one's enemies.¹¹³ Spittelmayr,¹¹⁴ Schiemer,¹¹⁵ and Schlaffer¹¹⁶ followed Hut here. Ridemann made a strong plea in his confession for love of one's enemies and for returning good for evil.¹¹⁷ Nothing is said in Marpeck's early confession; probably because this was not an issue between Bucer and himself at the time. In his later writings he stated a view consistent with the Evangelical Anabaptist position.¹¹⁸

e) The Oath.

In the matter of the oath Hut, Denck, and Jürg Probst Rothenfelder¹¹⁹ shared a somewhat similar position. The views of Hut and Denck have

already been examined. It could be said in general that the South German Anabaptist movement did not apply the injunction of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount concerning the oath as literally and simply as did the Swiss Anabaptists¹²⁰ and the Dutch Mennonites.¹²¹ The South German Anabaptists maintained that an oath could be sworn in community, state, and civil matters; only those things that opposed God should be avoided.

3. Eschatology and the Church.

In analyzing eschatology in South German Anabaptist thought it is well to remember that eschatology in the Christian religion is not something intrinsically evil. Apart from the books of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation there is in the teaching of Jesus and Paul a healthy emphasis on the hope of the Christian that Christ will return and bring the world to an end and His Kingdom to its consummation. A concern about the end of the world, the resurrection of the dead, the last judgment, and the final goal of all men, need not imply anything not found in Roman and Protestant thought. This was largely true of the eschatology of Spittelmayer,¹²² Schiemer,¹²³ and Schlaffer.¹²⁴

The fact that the Geschicht-buch and the Kunstbuch contain no tracts with an eschatological orientation is perhaps due to the abuse of eschatology by Thomas Muentzer and the Münsterites. This might be one of the reasons for the exclusion of tracts like Die Aufdeckung der Babylonische Huren,¹²⁵ and Von der Genugthuung Christi from South German Anabaptist codices.

Schiemer included more eschatological references in his tracts than all the other main line South German Anabaptists together, but none of them are radical or revolutionary. Schiemer referred to Daniel's

three and one-half years,¹²⁶ to the fact that Christian's will judge the world,¹²⁷ to two resurrections,¹²⁸ and to other terminology from Daniel and Revelation.¹²⁹ If Spittelmayr's version of Hut's Seven Articles¹³⁰ was influenced by Hut then they are a further witness to an eschatology that has had the revolutionary barbs removed.

There is no simple and consistent answer to Hut's position on the dating of the return of Christ at three and one-half years after the Peasants' Revolt, or concerning the invasion of the Turks and the annihilation of the authorities. Hut admitted that he taught these things before he was baptized, and it is possible in the light of the available sources that some of this crept into his ministry in Franconia; but there are no signs of it during his activities in Austria or after the Martyr Synod. The fact does stand that Hut was not responsible for transmitting these radical and revolutionary ideas to the South German Anabaptist movement.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY

The South German Anabaptist movement received its initial impulse from the Swiss Brethren through Balthasar Hubmaier. The decision to break with the traditional church pattern and to begin gathering a voluntary church based on believers' baptism was first made in Zürich. Historically the evidence is strongly in favor of relating the Anabaptist movement that mushroomed forth in many parts of Europe to the Zürich origins.

It would be quite unhistorical, however, to interpret South German Anabaptism as a simple continuation of main line Swiss Anabaptism. First, Balthasar Hubmaier is not a typical representative of Swiss Anabaptist dissent. He did not accept the implications of the basic plea for the separation of church and state and its concomitants: non-resistance, nonparticipation in government offices that use force, and the nonswearing of oaths. Secondly, the only dependence of Denck on Hubmaier is in the question of adult baptism, and possibly concerning the Lord's Supper and church discipline. Without underestimating the crucial character of believers' baptism as the symbolic starting-point for the Anabaptist dissent, it would still not be realistic to say that much of the spirit of Swiss Anabaptism was transmitted from Denck to Hut during the three or four days that Hut was in Augsburg at the time of his baptism. This is substantiated by the fact that the Swiss Brethren are not referred to anywhere in the writings and confessions of Hut and Denck.¹³¹

This means that though Swiss Anabaptism was a year and a half old when Hut was baptized, he benefited very little from their experience besides the basic initiative in calling for a believers'

church, i.e., a Free Church. In the eight months that Hut spent in Franconia immediately after his baptism, he worked out, in the heat of his evangelistic efforts, the implications of this one basic insight received from the Swiss. It is no wonder that traces of an excited, though basically peaceful, chiliasm were able to creep into fiery preaching. It was not until he returned to Augsburg in February, 1527, but particularly during his stay at Nikolsburg in April and his attendance at the Martyr Synod in August, 1527, that Hut was able to test his position and theology in an encounter with other leaders of the Left Wing of the Reformation. It was at Nikolsburg and Augsburg that Hut first met some Swiss Anabaptists in Jakob Gross, Gregor Maler, and Jakob Widemann.¹³²

Hut received his basic motivation and incentive to baptize from Hubmaier through Denck; also the view of the Supper as a memorial and the necessity of discipline in the church. This was enough to make Hut's life and thought a critique of the corpus christianum and a dissent against the state-church pattern. Hut saw clearly the implications of voluntary religious association and the need for a brotherhood type of church with sharing, but his early preoccupation with eschatology seems to have prevented him, during his brief pilgrimage as an Anabaptist apostle, from seeing clearly all the implications of the separation of church and state. His own life was consistent with the basic tenets of the Anabaptists as they were later crystallized in the writings of Pilgram Marpeck, Peter Ridemann, and Menno Simons, but his confession in prison, though not outrightly antagonistic, demonstrates some confusion and inconsistency.

Hut's basic acceptance of the Free Church principle was responsible (1) for his transformation of Muentzer's morbid view of suffering to a positive concept of the imitation of Christ in a life of discipleship; (2) for a change of Muentzer's individualistic view of the Spirit, new revelations and dreams, to a view of the Spirit as a gift to the church; and (3) for the modification of Muentzer's revolutionary eschatology to a peaceful, though urgent, expectation of the return of Christ.

It is impossible to separate the contribution of Hut's life and activity as an Anabaptist from his thought and theology. He was a dynamic leader and a creative thinker. Besides his opposition to sola fide theology, his emphasis on Nachfolge Christentum, and martyr-theology, he is responsible for injecting some new seminal ideas into the Anabaptist movement that bore fruit after his death. An important contribution he made, which was at the same time an example of the close relationship of his life to his thought, was his view of the apostolate. Although missionaries had gone forth in the Swiss dispersion it was not until Hut that it was so carefully worked out and given so central a place in the Anabaptist movement. His witness and work in Austria and at the Martyr Synod are a testimony to this. The Hutterites, more than any other branch of the Anabaptists, picked this up and became the greatest missionary church of the sixteenth century. Hut's emphasis on community and sharing also played, in a special way, into the hands of the Moravian Hutterite Anabaptists.

Hut's stress on the covenantal character of baptism and the church was another insight that bore fruit among Anabaptists, this time

among the South German Brotherhood of which Pilgram Marpeck was the most outstanding leader. Hut's concern for the unity of the church as expressed in his open letter is also reflected more directly in Marpeck and the South German Anabaptists than in any other branch of the movement. Hut's two tracts were written anonymously and represent the earliest selections in a rich tradition of brotherhood theology (Gemeindetheologie) that is just beginning to be probed by scholars and of which the Kunstbuch and the other writings of Marpeck, Scharnschlager, and Maler are prominent examples.

It was through his influence on these two groups, the Hutterian Brethren and the Marpeck brotherhood, that Hut has made his contribution to the Anabaptist movement and to the great Free Church tradition of Western Christendom.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER V

THE INFLUENCE OF HANS HUT ON THE SOUTH GERMAN ANABAPTIST MOVEMENT

- 1 Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 28.
- 2 Ibid., p. 29.
- 3 Ibid., p. 32.
- 4 Ibid., p. 33.
- 5 Ibid., p. 35.
- 6 Ibid., pp. 58-71; cf. Kunstbuch, pp. 99-121.
- 7 Ibid., pp. 44-58; cf. Kunstbuch, pp. 122-37.
- 8 Glaubenszeugnisse II, number 8 (MSS).
- 9 Mark 16:16 (RSV).
- 10 Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 15.
- 11 Ibid., p. 36.
- 12 Ibid., p. 13; cf. Kunstbuch, pp. 42-3.
- 13 Ibid., p. 37.
- 14 Ibid., p. 48.
- 15 Ibid., p. 53.
- 16 Ibid., p. 73.
- 17 Ibid., p. 95.
- 18 Ibid., p. 14.
- 19 Bayern I, p. 51. See Herbert C. Klassen, "Ambrosius Spittelmayer: His Life and Teachings," MQR XXXII (July, 1958).
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Bayern I, pp. 52-3.
- 22 Glaubenszeugnisse I, pp. 53, 66.
- 23 Ibid., pp. 89, 95.
- 24 J. C. Wenger, ed., "Pilgram Marpeck's Confession of Faith Composed at Strassburg, December, 1531-January, 1532," MQR XXII (1938), pp. 189:15, 200:20. Hereafter, Marpeck, Confession.

- 25 Glaubenszeugnisse II, number 1, p. 6 (MSS).
- 26 Ibid., number 8, p. 20 (MSS).
- 27 Glaubenszeugnisse I, pp. 21, 23.
- 28 Ibid., p. 52.
- 29 Ibid., pp. 70-1.
- 30 Ibid., p. 96.
- 31 Marpeck, Confession, p. 190.
- 32 Fellmann, op. cit., pp. 23, 92, 93, 95.
- 33 Schiemer, Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 51; Schlaffer, ibid., pp. 90,
113; Von der Genugthuung Christi, Glaubenszeugnisse II, number 1,
pp. 4, 11 (MSS).
- 34 Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 66.
- 35 Ibid., p. 73.
- 36 Marpeck, Confession, p. 190.
- 37 Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 29.
- 38 Ibid., p. 51.
- 39 I Peter 4:1. Schiemer, ibid., pp. 66, 72; Schlaffer, ibid.,
pp. 89, 115; Ridemann, ibid., II, p. 113 (MSS).
- 40 Ibid., I, p. 88.
- 41 Hut, ibid., p. 22; Schlaffer, ibid., pp. 88, 109; Kunstbuch,
p. 153; Fellmann, op. cit., p. 95.
- 42 Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 92.
- 43 Hut, Bayern I, p. 44; Spittelmayer, ibid., pp. 49, 52-3;
Schiemer, Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 54; Schlaffer, Kunstbuch, pp. 109, 155;
Marpeck, Confession, p. 196; Ridemann, Glaubenszeugnisse II, number 8,
pp. 95, 99, 104, 105.
- 44 Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 72.
- 45 Ibid., II, number 8, pp. 104-5 (MSS).
- 46 Marpeck, Confession, pp. 170, 173.
- 47 Ibid., p. 189.

- 48 Glaubenszeugnisse II, pp. 102-3.
- 49 I John 5:8. See Hut, Bayern I, p. 43; Spittelmayr, ibid., pp. 53, 55; Schiemer, Glaubenszeugnisse I, pp. 52, 73, 77, 79; Schlaffer, ibid., pp. 93, 114; Marpeck, Confession, pp. 170, 190, 194, 195.
- 50 Hut, Glaubenszeugnisse I, pp. 17-19; Spittelmayr, Bayern I, p. 48; Schiemer, Glaubenszeugnisse I, pp. 49, 62; Schlaffer, ibid., pp. 85-8, 94-5, 112; Ridemann, Glaubenszeugnisse II, number 8, p. 53.
- 51 Hut, Glaubenszeugnisse I, pp. 18, 33; Schiemer, ibid., p. 67; Schlaffer, ibid., p. 86; Ridemann Glaubenszeugnisse II, number 8, p. 52.
- 52 See Mecenseffy, op. cit., pp. 255-57. She points out the similarity between Hut, Schlaffer, and an Anabaptist from Preistadt on this subject.
- 53 Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 18.
- 54 Ibid., p. 23; cf. Kunstbuch, p. 52.
- 55 See above, Chapter V, Section A.
- 56 Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 36.
- 57 Ibid., pp. 65-70.
- 58 Ibid., p. 95.
- 59 Glaubenszeugnisse II, p. 31.
- 60 Ibid., number 8, pp. 31-2 (MSS).
- 61 Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 36.
- 62 Ibid., p. 20.
- 63 Ibid.
- 64 Ibid., p. 21.
- 65 Bayern I, p. 49.
- 66 Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 90.
- 67 Marpeck, Confession, pp. 170, 192.
- 68 This has been clearly demonstrated by Bergsten, op. cit., p. 33 f.
- 69 Glaubenszeugnisse II, number 8, p. 39 (MSS).
- 70 See Albert H. Newman, A History of Antipedobaptism (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1897). This work is somewhat dated but it is still very useful.

- 71 See Johann Loserth, "Balthasar Hubmaier," ME II, Harold S. Bender, ed. (1956), pp. 826-34.
- 72 Bayern I, p. 43.
- 73 Ibid.
- 74 Ibid., p. 48.
- 75 Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 57 (Matthew 18:15-18).
- 76 John 20:22-3 (RSV).
- 77 Ibid., p. 68.
- 78 Robert Friedmann, ed., "The Oldest Church Discipline of the Anabaptists," MQR XXIX (1955), p. 164. Hereafter, Discipline of Believers.
- 79 Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 93.
- 80 Marpeck, Confession pp. 170-1.
- 81 Ibid., p. 197.
- 82 Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 36.
- 83 Ibid., p. 20.
- 84 Bayern I, p. 49.
- 85 I Cor. 7:30-1 (RSV).
- 86 Ibid., p. 37.
- 87 Glaubenszeugnisse I, pp. 49, 56, 58, 60, 67.
- 88 Discipline of Believers, p. 164.
- 89 Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 109.
- 90 Marpeck, Confession, p. 197.
- 91 Glaubenszeugnisse II, number 8, p. 21 (MSS).
- 92 Ibid., I, p. 137.
- 93 Bayern I, pp. 43-4.
- 94 Ibid., pp. 52-3.
- 95 Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 54.
- 96 Glaubenszeugnisse II, number 8, pp. 99-105 (MSS).

- 97 Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 67.
- 98 Ibid., p. 122.
- 99 Marpeck, Confession, pp. 198-99.
- 100 Glaubenszeugnisse II, number 8, p. 116 (MSS).
- 101 Ibid., number I, p. 14 (MSS).
- 102 Bayern I, p. 38-9.
- 103 Marpeck, Confession, p. 197.
- 104 Confessions, p. 227.
- 105 Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 50.
- 106 Ibid., p. 91.
- 107 Marpeck, Confession, p. 197.
- 108 Spittelmayr, Bayern I, p. 52; Schlaffer, Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 97; Marpeck, Confession, p. 197.
- 109 Bayern I, p. 36.
- 110 Marpeck, Confession, p. 197.
- 111 Fellmann, op. cit., p. 84.
- 112 See J. C. Wenger, ed., "The Schleithem Confession of Faith," MQR XIX (1945), p. 251.
- 113 See above, Chapter II, Section B.
- 114 Bayern I, p. 48.
- 115 Glaubenszeugnisse I, pp. 64, 70.
- 116 Ibid., pp. 97, 124.
- 117 Ibid. II, number 8, pp. 26-7 (MSS).
- 118 Johann Loserth, ed., Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte der oberdeutschen Taufgesinnten im 16. Jahrhundert. Pilgram Marbecks Antwort auf Kaspar Schwenkfelds Beurteilung des Buches der Bundesbezeugung von 1542 (Wien: Carl Fromme, 1929), pp. 303-4. See Bergsten, op. cit., pp. 29-32.
- 119 Kunstbuch, p. 149.

- 120 J. C. Wenger, op. cit., pp. 251-2.
- 121 J. C. Wenger, ed., The Complete Writings of Menno Simons c. 1496-1561 (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1956), pp. 517-21, 922-27.
- 122 Bayern I, p. 50.
- 123 Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 57.
- 124 Ibid., p. 90.
- 125 Glaubenszeugnisse II, number 6 (MSS); also Hans J. Hillerbrand, "An Early Anabaptist Treatise on the Christian and the State," MQR XXXII (1958), pp. 28-47.
- 126 Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 55.
- 127 Ibid., p. 54.
- 128 Ibid., p. 57.
- 129 Ibid., p. 75.
- 130 See Appendix II.
- 131 The one reference that Hut makes to brethren in Switzerland is a criticism of legalism concerning dress of which some marginal Anabaptists of St. Gall were guilty. This is not typical of Swiss Anabaptism in general.
- 132 In comparing the best representatives of Swiss and South German Anabaptism it seems that the basic orientation of each is the same and that there is no fundamental question on which their respective positions are incompatible. The difference between the opposition that each group faced and the difference between the types of writings that are available from each group, give the impression that Kiwiet (Marpeck, p. 148) was right in suggesting that the Swiss Anabaptist testimonies tend to sound biblicistic whereas the writings of the South German Anabaptists are more theological. This difference should not be divorced from the fact that the comparison is usually made between the earliest statements of the Swiss and the later documents from South Germany.

APPENDIX

I.

"A LETTER BY HANS HUT, ONE OF THE CHIEF LEADERS OF THE ANABAPTISTS"¹

I, Hans Hut, desire for all the beloved in Christ the pure fear of godly wisdom, which is the beginning of a true Christian life.

Since the almighty God, our faithful Father, in this last and most perilous epoch, is once again rebuilding the devastated and ruined churches--His own bride that has so long been unfruitful but now is bearing children in many places into the knowledge of true love and faith through the power of the Holy Spirit--it is extremely necessary that the example and life of Christ be upheld, no matter by what means. Since I have upheld the same thing at all places to each individual with parables from creation, through Scripture, and especially through the life of Christ and have encouraged them in the way of truth and godly power (according to the need of the individual) let everyone's intellect be led captive to obedience through the commitment to God to live in unity and in true love with all Christians. I have also encouraged them not to neglect the mysteries of the will of God nor to confuse the true biblical order.

Since these latter things are not being discussed and upheld in every congregation--usually the life of Christ is presented in all simplicity without emphasis on the mysteries and judgments which are described at places throughout the Scriptures--and in order that no tension or division arise among any, I admonish all brothers in general and everyone in particular, who have any insight or understanding into these judgments and mysteries, that they bear those who know nothing about them with patience. On the other hand I ask the others not to be easily offended at things they do not understand. One is supposed to judge all things but whoever is not able to judge should refrain from trying to do so.

It is with this in mind that I have come to an agreement with all brothers, and in particular with the fellowship at Augsburg, in order that unity and true love be found among us. I am committed to tell no one these judgments and mysteries, namely about the day of judgment, the end of the world, the resurrection, the Kingdom of God, and the eternal judgment, unless they sincerely desire it.

Because many have been offended through ignorance, I pray by the will of God that all the brothers whom I have instructed, not speak insolently and carelessly about these things, so that others not having heard about them might not be offended.

¹ Glaubenszeugnisse I, p. 12; also Cornelius, op. cit., pp. 251-52.

II. "THE SEVEN DECISIONS OF AMBROSIUS SPITTELMAYR"¹

There are seven decisions (articles) in the Scriptures that reveal the will of God in full. But they are scattered throughout the Scriptures and are only summed up here as follows:

The first decision is about the divine covenant, the covenant which God has made with His own when He accepts them as children. This covenant is realized in the Spirit, in baptism, and in the drinking of the cup, which Christ has called the baptism of blood (Matt. 20:26; Luke 22; I Cor. 11). We are to covenant ourselves to God to remain with Him in one love, Spirit, faith and baptism (Eph. 2). On the other hand God covenants to be our Father, to stay with us in tribulation. This covenant concept is found throughout the Holy Scriptures.

The second decision is about the Kingdom of God, which will be given alone to those who are poor in spirit (Matt. 5; Luke 6:50). Nobody can inherit this Kingdom unless he is poor with Christ, for a Christian has nothing of his own, no place where he can lay his head. A real Christian should not even have enough property on the face of the earth to be able to stand on it with one foot. This does not mean that he should go and lie down in the woods and not have a trade, or that he should not have fields and meadows or that he should not work, but alone that he might not think they are for his own use and be tempted to say: this house is mine, this field is mine, this dollar is mine. Rather, he should say it is o u r s, even as we pray: O u r Father. In summary, a Christian should not have anything of his own but should have all things in common with his brother, i.e., not allow him to suffer need. In other words, I will not work that my house be filled, that my larder be supplied with meat, but rather I will see that my brother has enough, for a Christian looks more to his neighbor than to himself. Whoever desires to be rich in this world, who is concerned that he miss nothing when it comes to his person and property, who is honored by men and feared by them, who refuses to prostrate himself at the feet of his Lord like Magdalene or like the King of Nineveh, or King David, will be humbled (Luke 22:18; I Peter 5). The Kingdom of God is on this earth (Matt. 5) but heaven and earth will first be renewed by fire (Isaiah 66).

The third decision is about the Body of Christ. All who are one with Christ through His divine Word are members of His Body, i.e., hands, feet, or eyes (such members of the Body of Christ are, of course, spiritual not visible). Christ, a true man in the flesh, is the head of the members and it is through the head that the members are governed. This head, with its members, functions much like a visible body. In one body there are many members, each with its own function, nevertheless, each one serves the others, so that what one member has, all the others have as

¹ Bayern I, pp. 49-50.

well. Members are also humble in their relations with one another and are obedient to one another (Luke 22; I Cor. 12; Romans 14).

The fourth decision is about the end of the world. The time has come when God will purge all things through fire, earthquake, lightning and thunder. Everything built will be knocked down and destroyed even as happened in the great city of Babylon (Hab. 4:6, 7). All finery and wisdom of the world and its riches must melt, that the Kingdom of heaven might be resurrected (Ezek. 7; Jer. 30).

The fifth decision is about the future and the judgment. After all things have been dashed to the ground and all mankind has died, then Christ will come (Matt. 25; II Cor. 5) in all His glory to judge the living and the dead. Everyone will receive according to his works (Matt. 20), as we have sown here, we will reap there. No condemned man has inherited his condemnation as yet, nor has any saint received what is in store for him.

The sixth decision is about the resurrection. All mankind will be resurrected in body and soul, the godly will rise and live, for they have been dead here (Romans 6), and the godless will arise to death, for they have lived here (Ezek. 18). Some have had their Kingdom of Heaven here, for they have lived in peace enjoying the lusts of this world (Matt. 19; Luke 12:16; I Tim. 6).

The seventh and last decision is about the eternal verdict. The godless will inherit damnation and be cast into the eternal fire (Hebrews 4; Matthew. 25) which does not consume. There the biting worm will begin to gnaw at their hearts and men will begin to weep and howl and gnash their teeth, for they have laughed here and had peace all their lives (Matt. 23).

III.

THE SONGS OF HANS HUT

A. DANKSAGUNG¹

1. Wir danksagen dir, Herre Gott der Ehren,
Der du uns alle tust ernähren.
Du giebtest uns vom Himmel die Speise,
Darum wir dich, Herr, ewig preisen.
Durch Christi Sterben uns Heil erwerben,
Dass wir nicht ewiglich verderben.
2. Da ward das Weizenkörnlein gemahlen,
Das unsre Sünden tüt bezahlen.
Da ward das wahre Brot gebrochen,
Von dem auch die Propheten gesprochen.
Das Brot zum Leben ward uns gegeben,
Da Christus an dem Kreuz tüt schweben.
3. Allen Menschen hier mitzuteilen,
Die unter das Kreuz Christi tun eilen.
Nach seinem Willen hier auf Erden,
Darinnen ihm gleichförmig werden.
Mit unsern Leiden in dem Herren,
Des Vaters Reiche zu ererben.
4. Also sollt ihr die Speis vernehmen,
Der Geist Christi gibt's und tut's bekennen.
Die Menschheit Christi muss hier sterben,
Sollt er uns Heil beim Vater erwerben.
Dass er's bewaise wohl mit der Speise,
Darum er ewig wird gepreiset.
5. Das Brot gab er in der Figur,
Die Menschen leben in der Nature,
Darbei soll man sie unterweisen,
Dass in Gott sei die wahre Speise,
Den Tod des Herrn soll man erklären,
Den Leib Christi unterscheiden lehren.
6. Darum hat er das Brot gebrochen
Und hat nämlich dabei gesprochen.
So oft ihr hier das werdet essen,
Sollt ihr meines Leidens nicht vergessen.
Ihr sollt gedenken was ich euch tu schenken,
Darum ich an das Kreuz muss henken.
7. Also isset man den Leib des Herren,
Als wir vom heiligen Geist tun lehren.
Dass wir Gott wahrhaftig erkennen,
Göttliche Lieb soll in uns brennen.
Die macht uns zu Reben, der Geist gibt das Leben,
Also wird uns der Leib Christi gegeben. Amen.

¹ Hutterian Brethren, Die Lieder der Hutterischen Brüder (Winnipeg, Man.: Christian Press, 1953), pp. 38-9; also Wappler, op. cit., p. 248.

B. O ALLMÄCHTIGER HERRE GOTT¹

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|--|--|
| 1. O allmächtiger Herre Gott!
Wie gar lieblich sind dein Gebot.
Ueber alles Gold so reine,
Du wirst geehrt alleine
In deiner heiligen Gemeine. | 7. Drum hat Gott seinen Sohn gesandt,
Der uns die Wahrheit macht bekannt
Und auch den Weg zum Leben.
So wir darnach tun streben.
Sein Geist will er uns geben. |
| 2. Dein Will, der ist uns offenbar,
Darin leucht uns die Wahrheit klar
In allen Kreaturen.
Gott hat uns auserkoren,
Darzu auch neugeboren. | 8. Der zeigt uns an die heilig Schrift,
Drin Gott sein Testament gestift,
In seinem Sohn so reiche,
In aller Welt zugleiche.
Niemand drum von ihm weiche. |
| 3. Der Himmel und das Firmament
Uns zeigen die Werke seiner Händ,
Darzu sein grosse Ehre,
Im Land und auf dem Meere.
Tun wir erkennen Lehre. | 9. Den Tod er überwunden hat,
Ein rechter Mensch und wahrer Gott,
Mit Kraft hat er's beweisst,
Mit Wahrheit uns gespeiset,
Darum wird er gepreiset. |
| 4. Die Werk Gottes sind überall
Auf hohem Berg und tiefem Tal,
Darzu in ebenen Feldern.
Die Vögel in den Wäldern
Tun uns die Wahrheit melden. | 10. Drum sandt er uns den heiligen Geist,
Der aller Blöden Tröster heisst,
Ins Herz will er uns schreiben,
Dass wir in ihm bleiben,
All Sünd und Laster meiden. |
| 5. Ein jedes Werk tut preisen Gott,
Wie er's so gut erschaffen hat,
Das tut der Mensch zerbrechen,
Der Wahrheit widersprechen,
Gott wird es an ihm rächen. | 11. Der heilig Geist der ist das Pfand,
Der uns zum Erbteil ist gesandt,
Welch's Christus uns erworben,
Als er am Kreuz gestorben.
Mit der Welt nicht verdorben. |
| 6. Die Werk Gottes sind wunderbar,
In rechter Ordnung ewiglich,
Der Mensch soll sie erfahren.
Gott will's ihm offenbaren.
Er soll'sie auch bewahren. | 12. Dem Vater sei nun Lob und Ehr,
Der ewig bleibt und immerdar
Und ewig hält sein Namen.
Seines Sohns wir uns nicht schämen,
Der helf uns ewig. Amen. Amen. |

¹ Ibid., pp. 39-40. This hymn also appears in all modern editions of the Ausbund.

C. AUFF DAS FEST DER GEBURT CHRISTI¹

1. Last uns von hertzen singen all,
last loben mit frölichem schall!
Vom auffgang bysz zum nyddergang
ist christ geburt worden bekant.
2. Sey uns willkommen, o kindlein zart!
welche lieb zwang dich also hart?
Ein schöpfer aller creatur
scheint schlimmer dann ein schlechter bawer.
3. Czeych an inn unsers hertzen grundt,
das uns der heylandt werde kundt,
Das wir mit dir so new geboren
dein werck befinden unverlorn.
4. Des hymels thaw vons vatters thron
schwingt sich wol inn die junckfraw schon,
Des wirt die zarte gnaden vol
ins hertzen grundt do all zumal,
5. Eya, gots mutter, dein frucht,
die uns benympt fraw Eva sucht,
Wie gabriel vorkündigt hat
unnd johannes der Prophet sagt.
6. Frawet euch, ir engel, solcher ding,
ir hyrten unnd ir frembdeling,
Gebt gott jm höchsten preysz und sieg,
den menschen auff der erden frid.
7. Got leyt hye in dem krippeleyn,
gewunden in die tüchelein,
Gesenet so gar kümmerlich
der do hirschet jm hymelreich.
8. Des dancken wir dir, vater got,
dir son, dir geyst, ein ewiges gut,
Wilchs uns vorgötet durch seyn wort,
yetzt vormenschet durch seyn geburt.

¹ Philipp Wackernagel, Das deutsche Kirchenlied III
(Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1870), pp. 445-46.

D. DER VIIJ. PSALM DAVID¹

1. O Herre Gott in deynem reych
wie ist dein nam so wunderleich,
Er wirt gelobt in allem landt
und ist den menschen wol bekandt.
2. Vol grosser gwalt unnd mechtigkeyt
du wirst erhöhet alle zeyt,
Im hymel bistu auch bekandt
und wirst ein gwaltiger Got genant.
3. Von jungen kind wirstu gepreyst,
die noch mit milch wern gespeyst,
Von wegn der feynd, die dich lestern
und sie sich dardurch bessern.
4. Herr, ich beger zu sehen an
die Sunn, sternen und auch den Man,
Die du hast gmacht mit deiner handt,
hilff, das wir kumen in deyn landt.
5. Was ist der mensch, dass du sein gedenckst
und jm so grosse gaben schenckst
Und hast jn gmacht den Engeln gleych,
die do wonen in deynem reych,
6. Und heymgesucht des menschen kindt,
auch alle ding unter jn sind,
Damit du jn doch hast begabt,
Herr, dir sey lob und ehr gesagt.
7. Im sol auch unterworffen seyn
all thier, sie sind gross oder kleyn,
Und wie, Herr, ich die nennen sol,
darum der mensch dir dancken sol.
8. Im lufft die kleynen vögeleyn,
die müssen jm gehorsam seyn,
Und dy fisch, die im wasser seyn,
Herr, dir sey lob und ehr alleyn!

¹ Ibid., pp. 446-47.

E. DIE DANKSAGUNG GENANNT¹

1. Der wahre Fels ward da geschlagen,
Da Christus ans Kreuz ward genagelt,
Da kam lebendiges Wasser geflossen,
Das haben wir alle wohl genossen.
Er nahm den Kelch, gab ihn uns willig
Und sprach: Trinkt alle daraus fröhlich.
2. Der Kelch bedeut uns Christi Leiden,
Der heilig Geist will uns bescheiden,
Dasz wir Christo gleich möchten werden
Und das Kreuz hier tragen auf Erden,
Bis an das Ende von ihm nicht wende,
Bis er uns nimmt aus dem Elende.
3. Wollen wir Christi Reich ererben,
So müssen wir auch mit ihm sterben,
Darum hat er uns den Kelch gegeben,
Dasz wir ihm sollen folgen eben.
Uns selbst verlassen um sein'twillen lassen.
Darum hat er sein Blut vergossen.
4. So ward das Weizkörnlein gemahlen,
Davon auch Gott vor hat gesagt,
Dasz er in unser Herz woll schreiben,
Dasz es soll ewig bei uns bleiben
Und ihm erkennen, ein Vater nennen,
Die Lieb seins Geistes stets in uns brennen.
5. Laszt uns in Gottes Furchte leben,
Dasz er uns sein Erkenntnis gebe
Und wir in Gottes Gunst gefreuet,
Er durch uns werd gebenedeiet.
Hier und dort ewig sein wir elig,
Wenn wir nur Gott dienen freiwillig. Amen.

¹ Hutterian Brethren, Die Lieder der Hutterischen Brüder (Winnipeg, Man.: Christian Press, 1953), p. 40. Hut's authorship of this song is uncertain.

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