

# The Swiss Reformation

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## The Swiss Reformation.

This year marks the four hundredth anniversary of the Reformation in Zurich, Berne, Bale, and other Swiss towns. The father of the movement was Ulrich Zwingli, a native of the Canton of St. Gall, where he was born at Wildhaus, in the Toggenburg, on the First of January 1484, the son of a substantial farmer. Destined for the Church, Zwingli studied at Bale and Berne, passing afterwards to Vienna to prosecute the study of philosophy. On returning to Bale he went through his theological course under Thomas Wytenbach, and was ordained priest in 1506. His first curacy was in the town of Glarus, and while in that post he took up the then unusual study of Hebrew and Greek. He thus made a first-hand acquaintance of the Scriptures in the original tongues and also of the works of the early Fathers. His reading at this time may have led him to form the idea, as he did quite early in his ministerial career, that the Catholic Church was not in as healthy a condition as could be desired. He compared its practice and teaching with those of the earliest days and he found them wanting in many particulars. His correspondence shows that he formulated his criticisms as to government and discipline in letters to learned men of his acquaintance. He seems to have been greatly beloved by his people wherever he went, and his sermons were always of a most impressive character. He based his admonitions on the Holy Scriptures, inculcating Gospel ideas, but avoiding the current teaching about the intercession of saints, the use of images and relics, and the superstitious practice of fasts and pilgrimages.

In his day the Swiss Government were accustomed to hire out mercenary soldiers to fight in the constant European wars, and Zwingli accompanied two foreign expeditions as chaplain, and on his return home protested vigorously against the practice, but without much success. In 1516, he was moved to Einsiedeln to act as preacher to the monastery there. He could no longer avoid touching upon the superstitions of the time, since the place was a centre of pilgrimage to the shrine of a certain Black Virgin, and the abuses he protested against were going on all around him. He now began to speak more openly and to appeal to his hearers to concentrate their attention and devotion on Christ and the Scriptures rather than on the apparatus of votive offerings, indulgences, devotional practices, etc. He did not wait for authority to reprimand him but himself reprimanded authority. He had conferences with officials, cardinals, bishops, etc., and desired them to take the necessary work of Reformation into their own hands. Knowledge, he pointed out, was spreading, and before long the people would rise, even without leadership from their bishops and clergy, against the evils that had bred in the Church.

Meanwhile Luther was preaching at Wittenberg, but Zwingli had heard nothing of his activities. In 1518 Bernardin Samson began to sell indulgences in some of the Swiss cantons. Zwingli opposed his mission, and was instrumental in preventing him from selling his wares in the diocese. The Reforming priest was at this time invited by the Chapter of the Collegiate Church of Zurich to be their preacher. He accepted the appointment on condition that he would not be expected to preach anything but the Word of God as it was in the Scriptures. When Samson, with his indulgences, presently arrived in Zurich he was disgusted to find his old antagonist on the ground before him. He was, by Zwingli's influence, refused admission, and soon after went home to Milan with, it is said, some 800,000 crowns in his bag. Zwingli now carried his criticism further, and entered into correspondence with other leading men of Reforming views. Conferences took place in which the conservatives were worsted, and Zwingli published certain theses upon the basis of which eventually a Reform Settlement was adopted at Zurich and elsewhere. In January, 1525, the Mass was abolished at Zurich, and an arrangement was subsequently made for the future use of the funds at the disposal of the Collegiate Church. There was no spoliation, and a decent regard was had for vested interests and other property rights, much of the ugly side of the Reformation being successfully avoided.

The Swiss States were henceforth divided into Protestant and Romanist cantons, and in the end war resulted, in which Zwingli was killed in battle at forty-seven years of age, on the 11th of October, 1531.

The crucial year of the Swiss Reformation was 1529. In that year Zwingli had a conference with Luther and Melanchthon at Marburg. They agreed upon certain principal points of discussion and signed together fourteen Articles, containing the essentials of their common belief. On the question of sacramental doctrine in relation to the Holy Communion they did not agree, and the German and Swiss Reformations went different ways in the re-statement of beliefs. Zwingli began as a rather conservative reformer, but ended by being too radical. He reduced the Holy Communion to a mere memorial feast, and scrapped the idea of the Catholic Church. His extreme

final positions were the result of a gradually developed conviction that what could not be reformed must be replaced. His governmental settlement had in it the elements of permanency and remains to the present day, but his doctrinal basis has not been so secure. In any case he was no dogmatist, and formulated creedal statements under force of circumstances rather than from any desire to do so. He was a really great man, in some ways as great as Calvin or Luther. He was more charitable than the one and more learned than the other, and at least as sincere and pious as either.—Reprinted from the "Belfast Evening Telegraph."

### ONE OF OUR GREAT.

"Johann Heinrich Füssli, Dichter und Maler." 1741-1825, von Arnold Federmann. 4to. 180 pp., illus. + plates 74 + 6. Sewn (Zurich and Leipzig: Orell Füssli Verlag.) Frances, Swiss, 22.

Scholar, poet, painter, and draughtsman, Fuseli, as he named himself in Italy and as he was known in England, was also the friend of distinguished people, of whom Lavater, who was at school with him, was the foremost. Born of German and Swiss parents at Zurich in 1741, he came to England at the age of twenty-four, having taken orders in his native town. He set up in London as a writer; but Sir Joshua Reynolds, his senior by eighteen years, having seen his drawings, counselled him to take up art. Fuseli thereupon went to Italy and formed a ready taste for the classical style. In 1779 he returned to London and soon found work to do. The period was one of illustration and of vivid imaginative statement. Fuseli soon made his mark with his work for Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery. Greatly successful he married his model and became a Royal Academician, and in turn professor and keeper. He essayed to follow up Shakespeare with Milton to the extent of nearly fifty pictures, but success was not repeated. Meanwhile, he continued to write both art criticism and biography; translating, too, Lavater's celebrated work on "Physiognomy" and producing a good deal of original poetry which is reprinted in the handsome volume under review, which contains also a number of Fuseli's letters. A great deal of material lies to the hand of any biography of Fuseli, for he was a well-known figure and had many friends in England and abroad. A good deal of it is in English, but there are authoritative sources elsewhere, and Arnold Federmann has successfully tapped them and produced an authoritative as well as a readable volume. The shortest, but in some respects the most important, chapter is that on Fuseli's friendship with William Blake, who said, "When Flaxman was taken to Italy, Fuseli was given to me"; who also said, "The only man I ever knew, who did not almost make me spue, is Fuseli." The two were much to each other in life; they were something to each other in their work. Blake was the greater, for he was a missionary, a seer; Fuseli was the greater artist. Blake was sixteen years the junior of Fuseli; Fuseli's paintings were the rage of London for years, and Blake did only two after Fuseli. There are drawings in this finely illustrated volume that irresistibly suggest Blake; but there are many which are suggestive of no one, and most accomplished at that, and the one used as frontispiece is exquisite. Fuseli made 800 drawings and 200 paintings; the latter are by no means negligible; the former are very fine indeed. With all his pictorialisms, his illustrative fancy and his exaggerations, Fuseli was a considerable artist of whom England and Switzerland are equally proud.

(Reprinted from "Apollo.")

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