

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1931)

Heft: 503

Rubrik: Prepaid subscription rates

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 09.07.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

The religious changes at Zurich were the culmination of a comprehensive reform of morals which the eloquence and personality of Zwingli had commended to the best elements in the city. His strength lay in the fact that he held a middle position between two parties. On the one side were the Catholics; on the other a radical section which regarded him as a false prophet—"the anti-Christ of the Great Minster"—and whose opposition was in the highest degree embarrassing. At the second disputation of October, 1523, this party made its appearance, led by the learned Balthasar Hubmaier, pastor of Waldshut, and two citizens of Zurich, Conrad Grebel and Felix Manz. The Anabaptists, as they called themselves, were to exercise a powerful influence upon the history of the Reformation. They contained among their number men of very different points of view, scholars and mystics, and the most extreme types of religious fanatics. But they were united in their conviction that the Reformation had failed to revive the spirit of the primitive Church, and they raised in a most inconvenient form what has always been the central problem of Christianity, how the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount is to be accommodated to life in the world. The answer which they gave undermined all the accepted conventions of society. They denied the authority of the State, refused to sanction private property, and modelling themselves upon the early Christians would accept nothing for which they could not find an explicit warrant in Scripture. They rejected altogether the conception of the visible church through which the Word was preached and the sacraments administered. For them it consisted rather of little groups of men who had renounced the world and who would have no part or lot with the unregenerate. They represent therefore what Troeltsch has called the *Sectentypus* as opposed to the *Kirchentypus* with its recognition of the claims of institutional religion. The "separatism" for which they stood was indeed no new phenomenon. It was as old as Christianity. But while the Catholic Church had made due provision for it through the religious orders, under Protestantism it was denied an outlet. If, then, the Anabaptists had had their way, Zwingli's reforming programme would have altogether miscarried. But the outcome of the Peasants' War ranged against the sectaries all the forces of law and order, and the Zurich Council, unable to convince them of their errors, drove them from its territories. But the sectarian spirit was not to be so easily exorcised. The Anabaptists spread themselves over Central Europe. At times they appear as peaceable and hardworking communities, desirous only of living their own life apart from the world; at others, as religious anarchists who conceive it to be their mission to promote by violence the second coming of the Son of God. Everywhere they were regarded as the enemies of society and were persecuted with fire and