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LUTHER AND ZWINGLI.

A PARALLEL AND A CONTRAST.

1.

Dr. Kattenbusch thinks that a comparison of Luther and Zwingli will in every sincere Protestant induce the wish that nature might have made these two men into one.¹⁾ Each, he thinks, possesses that which is the principal lack of the other. They seemed destined to supplement each other, at least, to so shape their labors as to make them serve their joint interests. Reciprocal kindness and mutual helpfulness should have characterized their coexistence in an era that was big with promise for the good of the Church and of humanity in general. As a matter of fact, their meeting in the arena of historical events presents a most melancholy spectacle. It is the most fatal accident that could happen to the cause of the Reformation. With a discretion that is more wise than just Dr. Kattenbusch holds that it will not do to determine the amount of guilt that must be charged against either the one or the other of these two remarkable men, who brought on the saddest of the many internal conflicts in which Protestantism during the last four hundred years has had to engage. In this conflict, it is said, each of the original combatants appears limited by the peculiarities of his character. The

1) PRE 3 16, 156.

special occasion on which the conflict arose—the different conception which Luther and Zwingli had of the Lord's Supper—could become an affair of great consequence only for the reason that Luther was unable to interpret correctly that "other spirit" which he had discovered in Zwingli and his followers. Zwingli, we are told, was not a "Schwaermer," as Luther suspected him to be. With his peculiar teaching regarding the Lord's Supper he did not, at least, not to any great extent, make propaganda in the Church. Nor did he establish a separate confessional party on the basis of his eucharistic teaching. In this respect Zwingli has been greatly outdone by Calvin. Whatever differences of doctrine regarding the Lord's Supper, and, in general, regarding the means of grace, there exist between the leading representatives of the Reformed Church on the one hand and Luther and Zwingli on the other, they must be charged to Calvin as originator. In other words, we are asked to believe that the soteriological differences which were bound to divide the Lutheran and the Reformed brotherhood came not yet in the age of Luther and Zwingli, but a decade or so later. Ever since Hundeshagen wrote his *Beitraege zur Kirchengeschichte und Kirchenpolitik, insbesondere des Protestantismus*,²⁾ the difference between Luther and Zwingli is explained thus: Zwingli was a statesman, Luther was not. Luther used to speak of Zwingli as "der Triumphator und Imperator"; Zwingli, on the other hand, understood Luther's "regnum Christi" to be an exclusively internal affair of the heart. These opinions which the Reformers held of each other, it is admitted, were in the main correct, but when Luther and Zwingli met face to face, they failed to see the principal matter, *viz.*, that they were agreed in fundamentals. Each emphasized a particular side, a partial view, of truth which both held in common.

There are some things in this comparative estimate of

2) See especially No. 2 in Vol. I (1864) of this work: "Das Reformationswerk Ulrich Zwinglis und die Theokratie in Zuerich."

the dominant figures in the German and the Swiss Reformation of the sixteenth century which independent investigation of the facts may lead one to endorse. However, we shall have to differ with Dr. Kattenbusch as regards his main contention, *viz.*, that Luther and Zwingli disagreed because they failed to comprehend each other, owing to their temperamental idiosyncrasies. Their opposition would then seem to be a sort of physiological necessity, like the contact between fire and water. If this view were correct, what an easy task should we have to-day in reaching an understanding with the German Reformed! Four centuries of Protestant activity in all parts of the world and under the most diverse circumstances, surely, must have had a clarifying and sobering effect on the views which Lutherans and Reformed have of each other. Prejudices which, humanly speaking, were unavoidable in the original spokesmen on either side, we imagine, must have been buried by this time by the events in succeeding generations. Though seemingly divergent at first, the views of the Reformers must have ultimately converged, if each held essentially the same truths and aimed at exactly the same results as the other. But the attempt of Frederick William III of Prussia, in 1817, to unite the Lutherans and the Reformed in his country brought on a controversy which laid bare differences between the two Churches that have little to do with the characteristic temperaments of Luther and Zwingli.

To understand the cause, or causes, for the division of the Protestants which had already occurred before the Diets of Spires and Augsburg, where the Lutheran party wrested from the Imperial and Papal party the right to exist, is not only a laudable desire, but an imperative duty, especially to American Lutherans. The close contact into which confessional Lutheranism in our country has been brought with the followers of the Reformed Confessions of Zurich, Bern, and Heidelberg, and the constant efforts that are being made to minimize the confessional differences between these two bodies, compels an investigation of the origins of these differences.

2.

Aside from divine grace which shapes our destinies and overrules even our evil acts for ultimate good, there are natural forces in the environment under which a person grows up that have a determining influence on the settled views and the aspirations of a person's later life. To the historian who must work with the given data of human existence in tracing manifest effects to true causes these natural forces are of immense interest.

Luther's parentage and the conditions under which his boyhood days and his student years were spent are entirely different from those of Zwingli. Luther was a poor man's son. He grew up amidst pinching poverty. The battle for existence was fought before his eyes from day to day by his father and mother, and he soon was made to do his share of the fighting. Humble and rude were the social connections of the family. The incentive to noble ambition and high resolve which are injected into a boy's thought by intercourse with cultured and learned men was lacking in his young life. His schooling was of the poorest sort, both as regards quantity and quality. What stimulus to intellectual effort can be derived from a Latin almanac and legends of saints, what impulse to true virtue from Cato's moralizings? Between the drudgery at home and the misery at school young Martin's life up to the time that he knelt in dumb awe at the altar-railing for his first communion was a dreary pilgrimage, that started in obscurity and might lead God knows where. The Church, which should have come into this boy's life as a generous benefactress, nursing neglected faculties into healthy display, and healing the bruises of his young soul with the kindness which only she can dispense, not only missed her calling utterly in the case of this Thuringian peasant's son, but by her rigid rules and autocratic attitude was apt to stupefy the genius in him, and render it difficult for better influences to be exerted later to reach his mind. For the Church—let it not be forgotten!—was a mightier power in the Germany of Luther's

time than almost anywhere else on earth. In Italy the pope and his holy rabble was the song of the taverns and the object of scorn and sneer of the better class. France had been in open rebellion to the Curia, and had contrived to conduct a papacy of its own at Avignon. Gallican rights were ever a disturbing element in the political program of the Holy Father. Bohemia had openly defied Emperor, Pope, and Council. In England the Wyclifite leaven was working with amazing energy. Spain, hardly freed from the Moors, had not yet reached that awful pinnacle of its ecclesiastical might and prowess which made it, a generation later, the leading Catholic power. But Germany had been humbled at Canossa as no other nation had, and in Germany deference to Rome was the accepted order among high and low, and the spiritual and temporal authority of the Pope was less questioned here than elsewhere. The "Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation," the beautiful dream of many a royal German youth, by its very title exhibited the incubus that was choking one of the finest races of the earth, and made Germany a pliant tool in the hands of the diplomats of the Vatican and a goldmine for the ever yawning purses of gaming cardinals and popes. German reverence for the Church and the established order placed a check also upon the disintegrating forces that were entering Germany in Luther's time from Italy—the renaissance, humanism, liberalism. Apostasy and license, that followed in the wake of the new thought in Italy, later in France, were almost unknown in Germany. There was little, then, in the social, religious, political, literary atmosphere in which Hans Luther's eldest son grew up to prepare him for his remarkable career. The happiest and most lasting impressions that can be traced to his youthful days came out of nature. The rambles in the Thuringian forest with his brothers and sisters, as whose guide and mentor Martin acted, brought him closer to God than home and church and school had done.

It was a magnificently bold thought which the plodding

miner at Mansfeld conceived when he determined that his first-born should receive a college and university training. In a manner the Reformation may be said to start from this resolution of Hans Luther. But greater than the boldness of Hans was the courage of his Martin; for to him fell the task of carrying out the paternal wish with little more than the paternal advice and blessing when he left the cottage in which he had grown up. The portals of learning opened reluctantly to this poor country boy who asked to be admitted to the school of the Nullbrueder at Magdeburg. Something he did not have to do at home dire necessity forced him to do now: he had to beg his bread at the doors of people more fortunate than himself. Aside from the humiliation which this brought him, it must have been a blight to his aspirations and an obstacle to his progress. No one who has not passed through the experience himself fully realizes the numbing, deadening effect which poverty has on a mind that is full of eager striving for knowledge. It is like caging an eagle on the top of a high mountain, letting him see the blue ether all around him, scenting the fragrance of the woods and meadows below him, and making him understand that he cannot reach them. But the school of adversity is a fine school: it tests the manly fiber in a youth, it develops habits of self-reliance and thrift, it puts a wholesome check on the high flights of youthful imagination. Luther's climb to the stars was over very rugged steeps,—the most formidable he faced four years later,—but he set a stout heart against a stiff hill, and accomplished feats of self-training while increasing his meager stock of knowledge. What the Franciscans could offer him in the way of learning he eagerly appropriated. Whether he had the benefit of the instruction of the most genial teacher at the school, Andreas Proles, will perhaps remain in doubt. If he had not, as seems to be the case, he was deprived of another advantage which Zwingli enjoyed in his early training, by having such men as Gregory Buenzli at Basel and Heinrich Woelflin at Bern for his teachers.

3.

Nearly every biographer of Zwingli has noted that "the circumstances and surroundings of his early life were dissimilar from those of his contemporary Luther."³⁾ Frau Margareta, sturdy Hans Luther's young spouse, was crooning her first-born, the seven-weeks-old Martin, to sleep at Eisleben when Zwingli was born at Wildhaus on New Year's Day, 1484. Jean Grob, the popular biographer of Zwingli, is too ardent an admirer of his hero to be an unbiased reporter, but the lively description which he has given of the natural environments in which Zwingli entered this world is comprehensive and to the point, and furnishes a good basis of comparison with similar elements in the early life of Martin Luther. "Wildhaus," he says, "is a small Alpine village at the eastern end of the valley of the Toggenburg, which valley is about thirty miles in length, elevated 2,010 feet above Lake Zurich, having the Tyrolese Alps in the east, Mount Sentis on the north, Kuhfirsten [Churfirsten] with its seven peaks on the south. . . . One mile from the church, in the center of the village, to the left of the road leading over the Thur, stands in a green meadow a plainly built, cheerful-looking house, with slender walls, round window-lights, and a shingle roof, weighted down, according to the custom of the time, with stones. In this house was born the great Reformer, Dr. Ulric Zwingli, a man whom God called to become a distinguished teacher of Christianity, and the first of the fathers and founders of the Reformed Church. In this house lived, in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, a pious couple, the parish bailiff, Ulric Zwingli, and his wife Margaret, whose maiden name was Meili. His brother Bartholomew was pastor at Wildhaus, and after-

3) Rev. Elkanah Armitage, professor in Yorkshire United Independent College, Bradford, in *Encycl. Brit.* 28, 1061. See also Rev. J. P. Whitney, Principal of the Bishop's College, Lennoxville, Quebec, in the "Cambridge Modern History" series, Vol. 2: *The Reformation*, chap. 10: "The Helvetic Reformation," and the biographies of Finsler, Christoffel, Moerikofer, Stachelin, Grob, Jackson, and Simpson.

ward dean at Wesen, where, with constantly increasing reverence, he discharged the duties of his office during twenty-five years. The wife of bailiff Zwingli had a brother, John Meili, who was for thirteen years abbot of the monastery at Fischingen, Canton Thurgau, and at the same time a highly respected divine. The Zwingli generation was, throughout Switzerland, 'a highly respected, good, and honorable family.' Bailiff Zwingli was sincerely loved by the entire population. He was not ashamed of honest toil. By fidelity and industry in his calling he set the inhabitants of the Thurgau Alps a praiseworthy example. He was a shepherd. When early in May the valleys and Alps were arrayed in green, Ulric Zwingli, the parish bailiff and patriarch of Wildhausen, could no longer be detained in the vales below. Accompanied by his two sons Heini and Claus, he drove his flock toward the green, fresh Alpine heights. Rising gradually higher, from station to station, they reached by the 1st of August, according to custom, the upper pastures on the highest peaks. Then they returned slowly down the mountain. Toward the end of October the flocks had again returned to the valley, and were ready for their winter quarters. Let no one suppose, however, that these six pasture-months were without their interest. On fine summer days the song-loving schoolchildren of Wildhaus frequently formed excursion parties, ascended the Alps, visited their fathers, brothers, friends, enjoyed the delightful Alpine air, drank Alpine milk, and amid songs and the clang of Alpine horns enjoyed life and amused themselves with games, jumping, plucking Alpine roses, and then returning to their homes in the valley to prosecute their domestic labors, attend to their gardens and meadows, and prepare comfortable stables for their cattle. Through the long winter months also bailiff Zwingli well understood how to make the evenings pass pleasantly to himself, his Margaret, his sons Heini and Claus, and the other citizens of Wildhaus. In almost every house in the Swiss valleys and on the mountains at least one person knows how to play upon some musical instrument. So it was

in the days of bailiff Zwingli. As soon as the sun had disappeared behind the fir-trees, and dusky night had settled upon the Alps, when the cattle had been attended to in the barns and the day's work was done, when the dreadfully cold mountain blasts daunted the peaceful inhabitants, and all, before retiring, wished to enjoy an hour of rest, bailiff Zwingli used to take down his guitar, and delight with its music the young and the old, assembled for a joyous, social evening hour. By nearly every one was brought a musical instrument for mutual entertainment, music from which was interspersed with Alpine songs; and if the bailiff did not himself do it, some one of those present related a fragment of patriotic history of the years of public oppression and want, during which the country and people suffered for more than two hundred years from the Hapsburg governors, till finally, after many well-fought battles, they compelled them to acknowledge the Swiss as a free and independent people, and secured this freedom by the Swiss Confederation. — It is plain that such conversations increased the patriotism of the inhabitants of the mountains; that each one rejoiced anew in his Swiss, liberty-loving blood, was more closely united to his country, thought and spoke more devotedly of it, and endeavored to increase his own and others' desire for the welfare of his fatherland. The liberty of these mountain people cost too much noble blood for a Swiss ever lightly to forget the history of his fathers. The history of the past afforded them, and will always afford to reasonable persons, insight, power, and courage. It places the old dangers — alas! too often forgotten, yet by no means wholly vanished — and the remedy for them in a light at once new and well worthy of calm consideration. Therefore it well comports with the disposition of the Swiss gratefully to remember in their social circles, even on the day of patriotic rest and national peace, the fathers of Morgarten, Laupen, Nafels, Sempach, St. Jacob on the Birse, Granson, and Murten. Thus they encouraged each other in love for freedom, religion, and their native land, putting to the test thereby, exercising

and indefinitely increasing, the power of the individual and of the nation, so that in times of national confusion all the arts of the enemy might be confounded by a courageous, genuine old Swiss resistance. Neither youth nor old age was ever permitted to imagine that all troubles were past."

If our author had intended to set the stage for a national drama with a strongly political motif, he could not have succeeded better. It is well to remember the peculiar social conditions under which Zwingli spent his early life, and the peculiar inspirations with which his mind must have been filled when he was still a boy. It was a great advantage to Zwingli that he was born into a family of some social distinction and affluence, with highly respectable connections throughout Switzerland, both on his father's and mother's side. His uncle Bartholomew, in particular, was permitted to have a large influence on the boy Ulrich. Soon after his nephew's birth he must have been transferred to the rural deanery and rectorate at Wesen-on-the-Lake, on the other side of the ridge from Wildhaus. He was a liberal cleric and, as regards learning, above the average in that age of ignorant monks and priests. He seems to have discovered promising traits in his brother's child very early, and after his removal from Wildhaus he kept up an interest in the child's development. Zwingli must have been very young—perhaps eight years old—when his parents consented to let him live with his uncle. Here Zwingli was not only given every physical comfort, but he had in his uncle a most gentle and an able tutor, not remotely like the surly flogging-master in Mansfeld who has been handed down to nameless fame as the man who managed to crowd fifteen whippings into half a school-day for Martin Luther. Even a dull boy must have become proficient in his studies under such a generous and lovingly interested teacher; and Zwingli was not a dull boy by any means. His progress was so marked and rapid that his discerning uncle soon became convinced that he must place his nephew into abler hands than his own, or at least in a locality where the

cravings of an inquiring young mind could be better satisfied than at the secluded deanery by an Alpine lake. He sent Ulrich, then ten years old, to the renowned Swiss schoolteacher Buenzli at Basel. Zwingli here showed himself a very apt pupil, and his progress was so marked that Buenzli himself is said to have directed him, in 1498, to one of the great humanists of Switzerland in that age, Lupulus (Woelflin) at Bern. Here, too, Zwingli showed himself a bright pupil and, moreover, a youth of pleasing manners, a lover of music, cheerful and spirited, so much so that he began to attract the attention of the Dominicans, who planned to draw him into their order. But of this anon.

In order to understand the character-forming influences that entered the life of Zwingli at a very early period, it is necessary to examine the political and ecclesiastical condition of Switzerland in his day and, in particular, the causes and methods that had led to its comparative independence in civil and ecclesiastical affairs. The Swiss republic of to-day is the result of vigorous protests extending through many centuries against the grasping ambition of the house of Hapsburg. When the Zaeringen line became extinct in 1218, the Hapsburgs, who were large landholders around Lake Lucerne and in the Forest Districts, prepared to seize the supreme authority in that part of Switzerland. They obtained the office of "Vogt," or protector, of the abbey of Zurich. Zurich itself, however, became a free imperial city. It seems that the scheme of the Hapsburgs was understood by the Swiss. In 1231, they lost the office of "Vogt" again, and the Canton of Uri obtained an imperial charter; in 1240, the Canton of Schwyz was granted the same privilege. In 1244, the Castle of New Hapsburg was erected on Lake Lucerne to overawe that region. It acted as a challenge to the Swiss. To this period we may assign the legend of William Tell. When, in 1245, Pope Innocent IV, at the Council of Lyons, deposed Emperor Frederick II, and the Hapsburgs sided with the Pope, the anti-Hapsburg party in Switzerland espoused the

cause of the Emperor. Schwyz, Sarnen, and Lucerne were threatened with excommunication, but they held out against the threats of Rome. When order had been restored after the Interregnum in the German Empire (1254—1273) through the election of Emperor Rudolph, and Rudolph became the lord of the Hapsburg estates in Switzerland, and, in addition, bought the duchy of Austria, the three cantons of Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden, on August 1, 1291, entered into a defensive alliance ("Everlasting League") to resist the power of the Hapsburgs. This alliance is the nucleus of the federation of Swiss commonwealths (Staatenbund), which was turned into a confederacy (Bundesstaat) in the beginning of the nineteenth century. The three original cantons became the protagonists of Swiss liberty and the exponents of ideas of free, local government. They gradually drew to themselves, by treaty, alliance, or the erection of protectorates, neighboring districts or cities, and even abbeys. Thus Zurich became an allied district in 1309, Bern entered into a treaty with the Forest Cantons in 1325, Lucerne joined in 1332, Glarus and Zug were admitted in 1352. But in the arrangement of these connections a great deal of individual discretion was exercised. Sometimes one canton would become allied with one or two who were federated with the "Urkantone," but would not itself become thus federated. There was no central governmental authority. Diets were held, to which the members of the Federation sent ambassadors; but the authority of these was strictly limited by their instructions. Jealous of their independence, these Swiss commonwealths seemed determined to resist not only any foreign power that might infringe on their political liberty, but they were also careful not to allow any one in their own midst to become too powerful. Out of jealousy there arose distrust, and this would lead to treachery. Local interest dictated the policy of each commonwealth, and led as well to the establishment of new alliances as to the rescission of old ones. A peculiar feature of the Federation, too, was the unequal standing which was given some dis-

tricts in comparison with others. While some were full confederates, others were merely associates, still others were treated as wards. But in their opposition to the Hapsburg dynasty all found a rallying-point, and the power of this dynasty was effectually broken in a struggle extending through more than a century. Swiss prowess and stubbornness scored famous victories over the Austrian usurper at Morgarten, in 1315, and at Sempach, where Arnold von Winkelried distinguished himself, in 1386. Also the encroachments of nobles and bishops were resisted by armed force. Thus Bern, in the bloody fight at Laupen, in 1339, broke forever the power of the nobles; Lucerne routed the imported "Gugler" army in the Entlebuch, in 1375; Glarus and Schwyz, with a handful of men, defeated Albert of Austria at Naefels, in 1388; the "Tithings" of Upper Valais beat back the bishops and nobles at Visp in the same year, and the Appenzellers routed their bishop at Voegelinseck, in 1403.

These events tended to mold the Swiss into a self-reliant race, who loved independence, personal freedom, to a fault. Strange to say, they did not always love liberty for its own sake. Especially in their efforts to extend their influence southward toward the duchy of Milan and into Italy, they subjugated regions, and bought important towns, like Bellinzona, only to lose them again in an ensuing struggle.

The Swiss had been raised to international distinction a few years prior to the birth of Zwingli by their successful war against Charles the Bold of Burgundy and his allies in Savoy. In 1474 and 1475, the Swiss armies overran the entire eastern section of the Burgundian and Savoyard country. And the year 1478 had brought them a famous victory at Giornico over the Milanese, at whose hands they had formerly suffered sore defeat several times.

Swiss soldiers were greatly desired by belligerents in those days. The leading monarchs in Europe maintained agents in the leading cantons, and sent their ambassadors to local or general diets to arrange treaties and secure Swiss

aid in their campaigns, always for a liberal payment of money. Leading Swiss citizens also permitted themselves to become "pensioners" of foreign potentates, and to represent foreign interests at their local or at the federal government. Great wealth was pouring into Switzerland, and with wealth came conceit, arrogance, pride, dissipation, corruption.

A people that had thus risen to great political prominence did not readily submit to hierarchical aggression. The Swiss seem to have understood at a very early period the political character of the papacy. When the spell which pure religious authority exercises over pious minds had been broken for them by the clearer insight which in their contact with foreign nations they had gained of the Roman Curia, they felt no scruples in taking up arms occasionally against the pope, and the popes, on their hand, were eager to conciliate and keep as their allies the sturdy Swiss. Priestly oppression, such as was practised throughout Europe when Rome was in power, was not met with to any great extent in Switzerland. On the contrary, the Swiss had succeeded in obtaining rare privileges from their religious masters, such as the election of their priests, who were for that reason called "Leutpriester," people's priests, the payment of taxes by abbeys and ecclesiastical estates, the regulation of fees for sacred acts, etc.

All these things deserve to be borne in mind by the student of Zwingli's history. In a prominent family like his, with excellent connections in the greater part of Switzerland, questions of state and public polity would often form the topic of conversation. In his early training already he was thrown into company with men of importance in the State and in the Church, such as Luther did not meet till much later in life. Habits of thought and aspirations to secular greatness may have imperceptibly formed in the boy Zwingli, which seemed quite natural to him in his mature manhood. Coolidge, in his account of the history of the Swiss Confederacy, makes Zwingli distinctly a political link between the Switzerland that had come out victorious from the Bur-

gundian War and the greater Switzerland of the sixteenth century. "We cannot," he says, "understand Zwingli's career unless we remember that he was almost more a political reformer than a religious one."⁴)

In order to facilitate our comparative study, we append here—and we shall continue to append in later sections of this article—a synchronistic table of the leading events in the lives of Luther and his contemporary. This may be of help in tracing the spiritual development of these two men.

Luther born at Eisleben, November 10.	1483	
Luther's parents move to Mansfeld (spring).	1484	January 1, Zwingli born at Wildhaus.
	1487	Zwingli's uncle Bartholomew becomes dean and rector at Wesen-on-the-Lake.
"Nullbrueder" settle at Magdeburg.	1488	
Luther begins to attend the village school at Mansfeld.		1490 (?) Zwingli goes to live with his uncle Bartholomew.
Luther's father becomes one of the "Vierherrn" of Mansfeld.	1491	
	1494	Zwingli studies under Gregory Buenzli at Basel.
Luther with his fellow-student Peter Reinicke goes to study with the "Nullbrueder" at Magdeburg.	1497	
Luther enters St. George's school at Eisenach.	1498	Zwingli studies under Lupulus (Heinrich Woelflin) at Bern.

(To be continued.)

D.