

William Peter Stephens

The Theology of Heinrich Bullinger



Reformed Historical Theology

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William Peter Stephens

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Edited by Jim West and Joe Mock

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Abbreviations¹

English title	Original title	HBBibl no
1 Corinthians	Commentarius in priorem Pauli ad Corinthios epistolam	53
1 John	Expositio in epistolam Ioannis	37
1 Peter	Commentarius in Petri epistolam utramque	52
2 Thessalonians (1526)		Staedtke 285
2 Thessalonians	Commentarii in Pauli ad Thessalonicenses, Timotheum, Titum et Philemonem epistolas	81
A Discourse on Scripture	De scripturae sanctae dignitate	565
A Friendly Exhortation to Righteousness	Freundliche Ermahnung zur Gerechtigkeit	2
A Letter to Albrecht Margrave of Brandenburg	An den durchlüchtigen hochgebornen fürsten herrn/Herrn Albrecht	1532
A Refutation of the Papal Bull	Refutatio Bullae papisticae contra Angliae Reginam Elizabetham	562
Acts	Commentarius in Acta apostolorum	43
Against Anabaptists	Der Wiedertäufer Ursprung	394–401
Against Idolatrous Bread	Wider das Götzenbrot	HBTS 2
An Accusation of Almighty God	Anklag und ernstliches Ermahnen Gottes	3
Anabaptist Teaching	Vom dem unverschämten Frevel der Widertäufer	28–32
Baptism (1525)	Vom dem Touff	HBTS 2
Comparison of Ancient and Contemporary Heresies	Vergleichung der uralten und unser zyten kätzeren	1
Council of Trent	Concilium Tridentium non institutum esse	230
Descent into Hell	De articulo fidei «Descendit ad inferna»	HBTS 2
Diary	Heinrich Bullingers Diarium (Annales vitae) der Jahre 1504–1574	764
Ephesians (1526)		Staedtke 285

1 Professor Stephens used his own system of abbreviations and they do not sometimes match the standard abbreviations. Further, many of the works he cites have never been translated into English. As a result, the editors thought it wise to provide a table of Stephens' idiosyncratic system.

(Continued)

English title	Original title	HBBibl no
Ephesians	Commentarii in epistolas Pauli ad Galatas, Ephesios, Philippenses et Colossenes	72
Epitome	Epitome temporum et rerum ab orbe condito	430
Evangelical and Papal Teaching	Antithesis et compendium evangelicae et papisticae doctrinae	239
Firm Foundation	Fundamentum firmum	425
Hebrews	In piam et eruditam Pauli ad Hebraeos	38
Introduction to Study	Ratio Studiorum	712
Instruction for the sick	Bericht der Kranken	73
Isaiah	Isaias excellentissimus dei propheta	558
John	In evangelium secundum Ioannem commentarius	153
Matthew	In evangelium secundum Matthaenum commentarius	144
Mark	In sacrosanctum evangelium Domini nostri Iesu Christi secundum Marcum	170
On Scripture	De scripturae negotio	HBTS 2
Perfection	Perfectio christianorum	249
Persecution	Von der schweren Verfolgung der Christlichen Kirchen	575
Providence and Predestination	De Providentia et praedestinatione	721
Questions of Religion	Bericht, wie die Verfolgen antworten sollen	386–393
Reply to Burchard	Antwort an Burchard	HBTS 2
Reply to Faber	Antwort auf Johan Fabers Trostbüchlein	35
Reply to Taheron		
Romans (1525)	Vorlesung über den Römerbrief	HBTS 1
Romans	Commentarius in epistolam ad Romanos	42
Second Response to Cochleus	Brevis antibole sive responsio secunda ad Ioannem Cochleum	160
Sermons on the Apocalypse	In Apocalypsim conciones centum	327–356
Seven Canonical Epistles	In epistolas apostolorum canonicas septem commentarii	91
The Argument and the Summary	Dispositio et perioche historiae evangelicae	271
The Authority of Scripture	De scripturae sanctae autoritate deque Episcoporum institutione et functione	HBTS 4
The Bread of the Eucharist	De pane eucharistiae declamationes	HBTS 2
The Catechism	Catechesis pro adultioribus	377
The Christian Religion	Summa christenlicher Religion	283–314
The Decades	Sermonum Decades quinque de potissimus Christianae religionibus capitibus	179–227
The Evangelical Churches	Ecclesias evangelicas orthodoxas et catholicas esse Apodixis	258
The Grace of God	De gratia dei iustificante	276
The Highest Good	Das höchste Gut	768

(Continued)

English title	Original title	HBBibl no
The Institution of the Eucharist	De insitutione eucharistiae	HBTS 2
The Last Judgment	Das Jüngste Gericht	281
The Old Faith	Der alte Glaube	99–110
The Origin of Error	De origine erroris	10–26
The Prophet	De prophetae officio	33
The Reformation	Reformationsgeschichte	751
The Sacrifice of the Mass	De sacrificio missae	HBTS 2
The Salvation of Believers	Vom Heil der Gläubigen	279
The Testament	De testamento seu foedere Dei unico et eterno	54–61
The Two Natures of Christ	Utriusque in Christo naturae tam divinae quam humanae	62
The Turk	Die Türke	557
The Zurich Agreement	Consensus Tigurinus	
The Zurich Confession		HBBW 4:420–430
The Zurich Statement	Zürich Gutachten	
True Confession	Wahrhaftes Bekenntnis der Diener der Kirchen zu Zürich	161–169
Two Sermons	Predigten über den 130. Und 133. Psalm	582

- BRK *Bekenntnisschriften der Reformierten Kirche*
CO *Ioannis Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia*
FT French translation
HBBibl *Heinrich Bullinger Bibliography*
HBBW *Heinrich Bullinger Briefwechsel*
HBD *Heinrich Bullinger Diarium*
HBRG *Heinrich Bullingers Reformationsgeschichte*
HBSR *Heinrich Bullinger Studiorum Ratio*
HBTS *Heinrich Bullinger Theologische Schriften*
LW *Luther's Works*
RB *Reformierte Bekenntnisschriften*
RC *Reformed Confessions of the 16th Century*
RRR *Reformation and Renaissance Review*
WADB *D. Martin Luthers Werke Kritische Gesamtausgabe Die Deutsche Bibel*
Z *Huldreich Zwinglis Sämtliche Werke*
ZWA *Zwingliana*

Introduction

Many who write on the Swiss Reformation use the term “Zwinglianism” imprecisely. In most cases what they are referring to is the theology and practice of Zurich. Heinrich Bullinger (1504–1575), Ulrich Zwingli’s (1484–1531) Nachfolger as Antistes or chief minister of the Grossmünster in Zurich, was instrumental in developing the theology and practice of the church in Zurich. This book by W. Peter Stephens is a welcome addition to the steadily growing number of works on Bullinger in English which began in earnest with *Architect of Reformation: An Introduction to Heinrich Bullinger, 1504–1575*, a volume of essays edited by Bruce Gordon and Emidio Campi.

Emidio Campi, the immediate past professor of Church History at the University of Zurich considers Stephens to be one of the most distinguished scholars of the Swiss Reformation. He notes that, “with his death we lose yet another link that took us back to the now long departed scholarly world of men such as Gottfried W. Locher, Rudolf Pfister, Fritz Blanke, George Richard Potter, Jacques V. Pollet, and more recently Markus Jenny, Fritz Büsser, Alfred Schindler, Peter Blickle.”¹

Stephens’ tome: *The Theology of Huldrych Zwingli* is the standard work in English concerning the theological contribution of Zwingli. It was meticulously researched as is evident by the detailed footnotes. These allow readers to read Zwingli themselves and, therefore, consider and evaluate Stephens’ conclusions. The great strength of this work on Zwingli is the detailed attention given chronologically to Zwingli’s works that express his thoughts on particular aspects of theology such as the doctrine of Scripture. In this present work Stephens has employed the same *modus operandi*.

Wim Janse wisely noted that: “The existence of the theology of Calvin is just such a fiction. In spite of this, textbooks seem to manage two-line summaries of ‘Calvin’s Doctrine of the Lord’s Supper.’ What is more, they base these on the *summa theologiae* that the ‘man of a single book’ published five years before the

1 In a Facebook post the day that Stephens’ death became public.

end of his life, the 1559 Institutes, which they use as their one and only source or as a kind of guide for reading the opera omnia. Alternatively, they use as their basis the consensus that Calvinus oecumenicus, almost forty years old concluded with the Zurich preachers, as being arguably an adequate expression of his sacramentology: the *Mutua Consensio* or *Consensus Tigurinus* (1549).²

What is very helpful for the student of Bullinger is that, in this magnum opus of Stephens, he not only chronologically considers relevant works of Bullinger but he often refers to works of Bullinger that are hardly referred to in the literature as very few have been translated into English. A table is appended which lists the English titles used by Stephens of the works of Bullinger together with their original titles and reference number in *Heinrich Bullinger Bibliographie*, where applicable. The sheer number of works cited indicates the vast depth and breadth of this study into the thought of Bullinger. With the digital platform of *e-rara.ch*, the works of Bullinger are now more readily accessible. Stephens gives priority to the study and analysis of Bullinger's original works in line with the principle *ad fontes*.

Stephens' intimate knowledge of the secondary literature is evident from the extensive footnotes. He kept abreast of the more recent secondary literature and had met some of the scholars at a conference in Zurich in February 2019. After completing the final draft of the text of the book, his plan was to revamp the footnotes to indicate his interaction with the recent literature on Bullinger. His untimely demise means that he did not update the footnotes to reflect his evaluation of recent literature. Since the work is more akin to a handbook, the editors decided to publish it with the footnotes numbered for each respective chapter as per the manuscripts of the original chapters.

The chapters are listed in the order that was planned by Stephens. Because we do not have the draft of the chapter on the Lord's Supper we have, in its place, inserted his "The Sacraments in the Confessions of 1536, 1549, and 1566 – Bullinger's Understanding in the Light of Zwingli's" (*Zwingliana*, vol. 33 (2006), 51–76) for which we are grateful for the permission given by the editor of *Zwingliana*. Even without Stephens' draft for the chapter on the Lord's Supper, significant discussion of Bullinger and the Lord's Supper may be found in Chapter 5 (The Holy Spirit – especially the section "The Holy Spirit and the Sacraments") and in Chapter 13 (The Word and the Sacraments). Reference to Bullinger and the Lord's Supper is also to be found in footnotes 97 and 98 of Chapter 4 (Christ); footnotes 113, 114 and 116 of Chapter 5 (The Holy Spirit) and footnote 21 of Chapter 7 (The Covenant).

2 Wim Janse, "Calvin's Eucharistic Theology: Three Dogma-Historical Observations" in Herman J. Selderhuis (ed.), *Calvinus sacrarum literarum interpres* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008) 37.

Enter the two editors of the present work. Several years ago, while corresponding about various things Bullinger with Dr Joe Mock and Dr Jim West, Prof. Stephens asked the two of us to assist him with the preservation and preparation for publication of the present work, should illness or death prevent him from seeing to it himself. Sadly, Prof. Stephens died on the First of April, 2019, after having written the vast bulk of the book presently in your hands.

Joe and Jim, along with the series editor in which this volume appears, Herman Selderhuis, agreed together that it would be both proper and appropriate to publish what Prof. Stephens himself had written rather than filling in the small gaps in but one chapter which he had left unwritten. Happily, Prof. Stephens had completed, for all intents and purposes, the entire manuscript (in first draft form) except the chapter on The Supper. We decided that readers would be better served to have what Prof. Stephens provided rather than supplementing it with our own work, which may lead readers to a certain uncertainty as to where Stephens' work ended and ours commenced; what belonged to him and what belonged to us.

As Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics* was incomplete upon his death, William Peter Stephens' wonderful book on Bullinger too is as complete as he left it, with but the Supper unfinished. This is, to us, strangely fitting, given the fact that the Supper itself points forward to the Heavenly Banquet where all God's people are gathered together to finish the meal that Jesus commenced at the Last Supper.

We dedicate this work to the memory of our friend, William Peter Stephens. May it serve to inform, educate, and enlighten all of its readers concerning the theology of one of the most important 16th century theologians, Heinrich Bullinger, and may it stand as a monument to the incredible learning and insight of a 20th and 21st century theologian whose life touched ours and many others in profound ways both academic and personal. Finally, Joe and Jim would like to acknowledge the wonderful guidance and assistance of the staff of Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht and especially the wonderfully talented Katrin Reineke who helped us achieve the very best volume this one could become.

Peter Stephens, Penzance, England, April 1, 2019

Joe Mock, Sydney, Australia, August 15, 2019

Jim West, Petros TN, USA, August 15, 2019

Chapter 1: Bullinger's Life and Ministry

Heinrich Bullinger was born on 18 July 1504 in Bremgarten, a place of some eight hundred inhabitants, about ten miles west of Zurich. His father, also Heinrich, was a priest in the town, and later dean. His mother Anna was the daughter of Heinrich Wiederkehr, a prosperous miller, who was a Bremgarten councilor. As Bullinger's father was a priest, he was not and could not canonically be married to Anna, but as happened widely with priests at the time, he lived respectably with her and their children. The young Bullinger grew up in a household given to hospitality and one in which people of some importance, visiting or passing through, were frequent visitors. These experiences may well have influenced Bullinger's later ministry, for he practised hospitality and was at ease in his relations with those in leadership in Zurich.

When only three, Bullinger could recite perfectly in German both the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed, and – a sign of things to come – often did so in the pulpit. Even his relatively long life may have been foreshadowed by his being able to survive twice as a child when he was close to death, once from the plague and once from an accident.

Before his fourth birthday Bullinger went to the Latin school in Emmerich.¹ St Martin's appears to have been strongly influenced by the movement known as Modern Devotion. This may have contributed to or influenced some of the emphases in Bullinger's understanding of Christian faith and life, with its emphasis on the living of the Christian life and on the practical study of the bible. The strong emphasis in the school on religion, or what he would later regard as superstition, led Bullinger to think of joining the Carthusians. He recalled that the discipline was strict and that the studies included Christian antiquity (the letter of Jerome) and classical antiquity (Vergil and Horace, Pliny and Cicero, as well as some Greek and logic). Perhaps as important as these was his experience of

1 HBD 1.8–2.17. For details of Bullinger's *Diarium* (abbreviated as HBD) see *Heinrich Bullinger Werke I Bibliographie* edited by Joachim Staedtke (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1972) Vol. 1 no. 764 (abbreviated HBBibl 1).

having to beg in order to eat. This happened not because his father could not afford to pay for his meals as well as for his education and accommodation, but so that he would know what it was like to have to beg and might therefore be more friendly to those whose lot it was to beg.²

University of Cologne 1519–1522

In the summer of 1519, Bullinger moved to the University of Cologne and to what was to prove the most formative period of his life. It was there that between 1520 and 1522 he came to a Reformation understanding of the Christian faith. In 1519 the Leipzig Disputation took place and in 1520 Luther was excommunicated, although there is no evidence that Bullinger knew of these at the time. Then in November 1520 there was a burning of heretical books in Cologne.

In the account in his *Diary*, Bullinger records that it was in 1520 that he faced the question whether the teaching of Luther or the pope was right.³ A person familiar with papal teaching pointed him to Peter Lombard's *Sentences*. He read this and Gratian's *Decretals*, the canon law of the Roman Church, and found that they appealed to the fathers of the church. After that with the help of Georg Diener, a fellow countryman, he gained access to the library of the Dominican monastery. There he read the homilies of Chrysostom on Matthew and finding the fathers very different from Lombard and Gratian in dealing with scripture, he began to read Ambrose (Ambrosiaster), Origen, and Augustine. He also read some of Luther's most formative works, mentioning specifically *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, *The Freedom of the Christian*, *The Assertion of the Articles*, and *The Sermon on Good Works*. These dealt with such fundamental matters as justification by faith, the good works which come from faith, the sacrifice of the mass, transubstantiation, and the practice of confession. Bullinger's reading convinced him that Luther's teaching was closer than that of the schoolmen to the theology of the fathers. Yet, as he read the fathers, he discovered that the fathers relied on the authority of scripture and this led him to buy a copy of the New Testament. He began by reading Matthew's gospel, which he did with the help of Jerome, and then read the rest of the New Testament.⁴

Bullinger writes both of beginning at this time to turn away from papal teaching and of abandoning his intention of becoming a Carthusian. He came

2 HBD 2.18–3.15.

3 There is no complete account of this turning point in Bullinger's life, although he refers to it on various occasions, in his *Diary* and *Life* and in some of his letters. There are a number of presentations of this; see Pestalozzi (*Heinrich Bullinger* 13–20), Blanke (*Der junge Bullinger* 45–53), and Büsser (*Heinrich Bullinger* Vol. 1 21–26).

4 HBD 5. 14–6.12.

across Melancthon's *Common Places (Loci communes)* which he 'wonderfully enjoyed'. He adds in his diary that finally he dedicated himself chiefly to 'the reading of the holy scriptures' and was 'engaged day and night' in this in 1521 and 1522. When he moved to his parents' home in Bremgarten in 1522 he refers to reading the works both of the fathers (Athanasius, Cyprian, and Lactantius) and of Luther, revealing in that two fundamental influences on his theology.⁵

Elsewhere Bullinger states of this period that he learned from the fathers and his reading of scripture that 'salvation comes from God through Christ' and that papal teaching was superstitious and ungodly. In 1522 he abandoned mass and papal assemblies. He read books by Lactantius and Augustine, including *On Christian Teaching*, *On the Spirit and the Letter*, and *Tractates on John*. These confirmed him in 'true religion'.⁶ In a letter on 12 March 1545, Bullinger refers to the reading of illuminating books by Augustine and Erasmus as leading him to the study of sound theology, and cites the reading of Augustine as having freed him from the mass.⁷

Fritz Büsler follows Pestalozzi in drawing attention to references in two letters of Bullinger. In writing to Rudolf Asper on 30 November 1523, Bullinger speaks of the fathers as pointing him to the gospel, because they appealed to scripture and were concerned with its meaning and proper exposition. He cites Augustine, Cyprian, Jerome, and Hilary as, besides others, the most important witnesses. By itself, scripture contains everything necessary for salvation. It is the criterion for the church's teaching, and attempts to supplement it by oral tradition or by the teaching of the fathers or the schoolmen are to be rejected.⁸ A letter to Jud on 17 April 1525 is evidence of the crisis in Bullinger's life at that time, when he states that he 'often despaired of life'. God, however, quieted his conscience so that even the fiercest storms could not tear him from his anchor.⁹

Cologne was important for Bullinger's theological development in other ways, although his evangelical conversion was the most fundamental. He received a sound Thomist education, for his teachers included Konrad Kollin, a distinguished Thomist. Bullinger records his scholastic reading, but also more importantly his humanist reading. His teachers included Johannes Matthias Frissemius and Arnoldus von Halderen. There were lectures on Erasmus' *On the*

5 HBD 6.12–17, 7.14–18.

6 HBD 126.1–4.

7 HBBW 15. 160. 41–161.46.

8 HBTS 2.21–31. See, for example, HBTS 2. 23.24–24.14, 25. 7–13, 31–26.1, 27. 13–16. Fritz Büsler *Heinrich Bullinger I* 24–25 Busser notes the absence of reference to Luther and his probable use of Luther in what Bullinger writes.

9 HBBW 1.73.12–74.1. These words seem in conflict with Busser's judgment (*Heinrich Bullinger I* 26) that Bullinger was a humanist who became a reformer simply in a decisive turning to the sources of the Christian faith, that is the fathers and the bible. There is a personal struggle as well as an intellectual pilgrimage.

Arsenal of Words (De copia verborum) and Agricola's *De inventione dialectica* and on Vergil, Cicero, Horace, and Aristotle, as well as Romans, and an introduction to Greek.¹⁰ Bullinger was permanently indebted to the impact of humanist studies in his development, but he was a humanist of whom it was more important to say that he was a reformer. His humanist studies did not turn him into a reformer, although they may have helped, but rather equipped him as a reformer. This is seen, for example, in the way the use of rhetoric equipped him as a commentator on the New Testament. As a commentator he was indebted to Erasmus, some of whose works he read in Cologne, but the influence of Erasmus on him is on him when he was already a reformer or incipient reformer. It was through the fathers and Luther that he came to the New Testament and to a Reformation faith. It is after this that he refers to Erasmus's New Testament, his *Paraphrases* and *Annotations*, his editions of the fathers, and works such as *Paraclesis* and *Ratio seu Methodus*.¹¹ When in Kappel his courses included these works of Erasmus and classical writers as well as the New Testament and the fathers.¹²

Kappel 1523–1528

Bullinger spent some months at home, after leaving Cologne, reading works of Athanasius, Cyprian, Lactantius, and Luther. Then, on 17 January 1523, not two weeks before Zwingli's First Disputation, Wolfgang Joner, the abbot of the Cistercian monastery in Kappel, invited him to come there as a schoolmaster. Significantly Bullinger made his acceptance dependent on his freedom from all monastic duties, including participation in mass and the choir offices. His teaching demands were varied. Apart from Sunday, he taught for an hour in the morning and four in the afternoon. The morning hour on the bible was attended by the monks, but was open also to the general public. In it, in 1523–1524 he expounded Erasmus' *Paraclesis* and *Ratio seu Methodus compendio perveniendi ad veram Theologiam* and Melanchthon's *Common Places (Loci communes)* and also Matthew and John, making use of Erasmus' and Melanchthon's commentaries and those of Augustine, Chrysostom, Cyril, and Jerome. In the afternoon the pupils had a liberal education, studying classical authors, such as Cato and Vergil, and grammar and dialectic using works of Donatus, Erasmus, and others. They were also taught how to write.¹³ Through his teaching Bullinger was learning

10 HBBW 15. 160. 34–41, HBD 4. 7–5.10.

11 HBD 8. 13–15.

12 HBD 10.8–19.

13 HBD 7.11–8.19.

and equipping himself as a theologian and reformer. In lecturing on the New Testament, he was studying the commentaries of the fathers, such as Origen, Ambrose, and Theophylact in expounding Romans in 1525 as well as those of Melancthon and especially Erasmus.¹⁴ Although he read them to learn from them, he did not read them uncritically, but always exercised his own critical judgment. The six years in Kappel helped to equip him for the forty six years which followed in Bremgarten and Zurich. He learned to write by writing, not to teach others, but to teach himself. He developed a clear, simple, and easy style, for he was teaching ordinary people, as well as the monks and his pupils. His impact on the community led to the reformation of the monks and the monastery and to its being handed over to Zurich.¹⁵

Contact with Zurich in this period furthered Bullinger's development as a theologian and reformer. It included a five month study visit, during which he listened to Zwingli lecture and preach and learnt Greek, and with Conrad Pellikan, Hebrew. He had met Zwingli and Jud as early as 1523 and benefitted from their writings as well as their conversations and correspondence, and in 1525 he met Oecolampadius. He was present at the Disputations with the Anabaptists in Zurich in 1525, and because of Zwingli he attended the Bern Disputation in 1528. There he met other reformers, such as Vadian, Martin Bucer, Wolfgang Capito, Berchtold Haller, and Ambrose Blarer. In 1528 he took the oath as a preacher in the first Reformed Zurich Synod, and on 21 June preached for the first time in Hausen am Albis.¹⁶

Bullinger had already embraced a Reformation understanding of Christian faith before he met Zwingli. Nevertheless his relationship with Zwingli was to be the most important influence on the rest of his ministry. It is not that he was dependent on Zwingli. Indeed, in the eucharist, the issue which divided Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin, Bullinger came to a similar, but not identical view, but did so independently of him. In this doctrine as in others, such as baptism, predestination, and salvation, there are significant differences between them. Moreover, even in the concept of the covenant, where he acknowledges his dependence on Zwingli, he develops the doctrine beyond Zwingli. Nevertheless, even where he differed from Zwingli, as in the salvation of the Gentiles and predestination, he did not draw attention to the differences, but affirmed or defended Zwingli. He consistently maintained the continuity and unity of the teaching of the Zurich church.

14 HBD 10. 8–15.

15 HBD 10.16–22, HBRG 1.93. 4–6.

16 HBD 11.8–13, 8. 23–26, 10.5–7, 9. 19–23, 12.1–4, 14–26.

Bullinger's earliest works in 1523–1526 reflect his concern with the bible and the eucharist, issues which engaged him in Cologne in embracing the gospels.¹⁷ The challenge of the Anabaptists led to his first important exposition of the testament or covenant in 1525.¹⁸ Two other works, *A Friendly Exhortation to Righteousness* (1526) and *An Accusation of Almighty God*, the latter published in 1528 but probably written in 1525 or 1526, are a defence of the Reformation and show an attitude akin to Zwingli's on the relation of the church and society.¹⁹ An engagement with the fathers and the use of history in support of the Reformation faith and practice is evident in Bullinger's *Comparison of Ancient and Contemporary Heresies* (1526) and his works on the eucharist and images in 1528 and 1529.²⁰

It is right to say that Bullinger was a humanist, indeed a Swiss humanist, but it is also insufficient and misleading. He was a reformer, who sought to be faithful to the scriptures in proclaiming the gospel of Christ. In his study of scripture and of the past and the present he used all the resources made available by humanist scholarship. *Introduction to Study (Studiorum ratio)* is the clearest testimony to this.²¹ The first part seeks to equip a person with all the resources needed for the study of scripture. It is a compendium of humane and good letters. It offers guidance on all the studies, such as languages, literature, philosophy, history, and the sciences. All these help in the formation of character, but – and this is fundamental – they are 'highly necessary for the exposition of sacred scripture'.²² It is only with chapter 15 that Bullinger comes to the study of scripture, with such matters as the biblical languages, principles of interpretation, and the types of literature. In the midst of this there is, perhaps surprisingly a chapter on the testament. Moreover, at the end in a list of theological topics, round which a student could gather material, the first is the testament.

Another sign of Bullinger's humanist scholarship is a play about Lucretia, Tarquin, and Brutus.²³ Its theme of liberation led, apparently to its performance in 1939 in relation to Nazi Germany and later in East Germany in relation to its communist regime.²⁴ A concern for one's native land and for liberty may be characteristic of Swiss humanists, but it is also in keeping with the concern in the Old Testament with Israel as God's people. This concern is a mark of Bullinger's

17 Six of the nine works in HBTS 2.

18 HBTS 2.71–85.

19 HBBibl 1 nos. 2–3.

20 HBBibl 1 nos. 1, 10, and 11.

21 *Heinrich Bullinger Werke Sonderband Studiorum ratio – Studienanleitung* 2 vols. edited by Peter Stotz (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1987).

22 HBSR 1.58. 2–4.

23 HBBibl I nos. 39–41.

24 See Büsser, *Heinrich Bullinger* I 57–58.

writing in every period as well as when he was in Kappel. The works were no doubt influenced by Zwingli's writings with their attack on ceremonies and their concern for the whole life of the country and not just its religious life.

Bullinger's historical interest is exposed on various ways, but especially in a defence of the evangelical understanding of the Christian faith. In this he could cite the support of the fathers, for example, in their understanding of the bible and the eucharist in his earliest works, but he also shows in the later 1520s how the biblical and early understanding of images or the eucharist was gradually perverted. Two works in this period were considerably expanded in 1539, one on the eucharist in 1528 and the other on images in 1529. Another action with life long consequences was his engagement in 1528.²⁵

Bremgarten 1529–1531

It could be said that his ministry in Bremgarten completed the preparation of Bullinger to succeed Zwingli and lead the reformation in Switzerland. It seems that Zwingli had already seen Bullinger as his successor. In expounding 34:14 in his commentary on Jeremiah, Zwingli refers to Bullinger as 'receiving the torch from our hands' in his work against the Anabaptists.²⁶ Moreover, when Zwingli parted from Bullinger for the last time, it was with tears and the plea that God would protect him and that he would be 'faithful to Christ and his church'.²⁷

It was in February 1529 that Bullinger's father announced to the people his intention with the help of God to point people to 'the true and right way to salvation... in and through Christ, our only saviour' and to do so 'with God's word alone' 'out of holy scripture'. This led to a conflict between those seeking and those opposing reformation. By the end of April those seeking reformation in Bremgarten triumphed and on 16 May Bullinger himself preached. His success was instant. On the very next day altars and images were removed. Laws concerned with blasphemy and moral behaviour were passed and 18 May the council asked him to stay. Bullinger shared his ministry in Bremgarten, with Gervase Schuler, who had earlier been sent by Zwingli to replace Bullinger's father. Foreshadowing in some ways his ministry in Zurich, he preached on Sunday afternoons and on Monday to Wednesday mornings, with bible study in the afternoons.²⁸

25 HBD 11. 14–17.

26 Z XIV 621. 19–23.

27 HBRG 3. 49. 22–25.

28 HBD 17.1–19, 11; HBRG 2.59–62.