IT would be well for us to take up Hamlet's purpose to "go back to school in Wittenberg", and set aside the "truant disposition" of his fellow-student Horatio who left Wittenberg behind him. For to think of Luther without his city is a not infrequent fallacy. He who talks about the Reformation must begin with Wittenberg since it was there that Luther began and maintained the Reformation. All subtleties of definition on what we mean by the Reformation, on the historical importance of the earlier beginnings and later deviations of other men besides Luther who were inspired by the need for reform in the Church, cannot set aside that fact. The Protestant Reformation, which began and developed in Germany, showed the closest interrelation of religious movement and urban environment: for that matter the origins of Protestantism were everywhere urban. The first victories of Luther's theology up to 1525 were achieved as a popular movement within towns, especially in the free cities of the Empire. The successful rise of early Protestantism took place, for example, in Bugenhagen's Hamburg and Lübeck, Spengler's Nürnberg, Oecolampadius' Basel, Zwingli's Zürich, Bucer's Strasbourg—and, later, Calvin's Geneva. Anabaptism, which was regarded by the Reformers as a fanatical attempt to overthrow the barely established reformed Churches by a parasitical invasion of their cities, in one of its forms won and shattered the city of Münster. But the implications of the fact of the essentially urban environment of the Reformation seem to have attracted too little attention from historians. It is significant that Koenigsberger and Mosse in their book Europe in the Sixteenth Century in a bibliography attached to the chapter on towns and cities write: "Unlike the medieval town, on the one hand, and the modern industrial town, on the other, the Renaissance and Baroque town has never been systematically

1 This article is the substance of two lectures delivered in the John Rylands Library on Wednesday, the 10th of December 1969 and Wednesday, the 9th of December 1970.
studied as an historical phenomenon. At best, we have studies of the economic or of the social and constitutional history of some of the towns of the Empire."¹ From their bibliography there are two omissions which may be intentional, for the two studies are well-known. The first omission of note is that of the two articles contributed in 1937 by Hans Baron to the *English Historical Review*, entitled "Religion and politics in the German Imperial Cities during the Reformation". The other omission is that of the excellent study by Bernd Moeller, *Reichstadt und Reformation*, published in 1962. The omission of those two studies is strange. The value of Baron's articles, which have been widely cited, can be seen in the fact that A. G. Dickens relied almost exclusively on them for the brief account of the Reformation cities in his *Reformation and Society* (1966),² and Moeller's book deserves Gordon Rupp's justifiable reference to it as a brilliant essay in his *Patterns of Reformation*.³ I offer this attempt of mine in order to call attention once again to the neglect of an important subject, and to suggest that neither Baron nor Moeller though admirable is entirely satisfactory. Baron gives a useful discussion of the political activities of city magistrates in relation to Catholic Habsburg power and to the Protestant princes, but he gives less attention to the individual character of the various cities and to the intimate relation of the versions of Protestant theology which they adopted to the social and political concerns of the cities. Moeller shows the rôle of the cities as that of a homogeneous and passive reception of the Reformers' teachings, whereas many of them were actively and diversely engaged in political revolution seen in the overthrow of conservative patrician groups and they were aided therein to a greater or less degree by the Reformers' teachings on men's duties in society, and on the nature of "Obrigkeit" or government. One reason for these omissions by Baron and Moeller is that they attempt to cover a great deal of ground in too small a space—a fault which this article will inevitably display because of the need for brevity.

² Pp. 76-79.
There is another difficulty derived from the assumptions we have grown up with from our schooldays on the way we should study the past, so that we tend to make the economic and political history of the sixteenth century separately identifiable from the thought forms of the men who experienced that economic and political life. But in the sixteenth century religion was essential to the ways in which men expressed political ideas, social judgements, and economic practices: to separate the political, social and economic from the religious in that age is difficult and when attempted can be misleading. The religious and the secular were not divisible. Some sixteenth-century European men may have disliked the Church of Rome or the Churches of the Reformation or hated the clergy of either, but they were not therefore secular-minded or irreligious, and they clothed their political, economic and moral views in religious terms, not because they had no other language for them but because they wanted to do so. It is misleading to describe the religious views of Luther on "Obrigkeit" in modern political terms to accommodate a Harold Laski; or to describe Calvin's religious view of banking practice at Geneva in terms appropriate to the sociological or economic viewpoints of a Max Weber or an R. H. Tawney. This can lead to entanglements from which such writers seek to extricate themselves by distorting, if not weakening, the careful balance of judgement which Luther or Calvin had maintained. This should not allow us, however, to take the easier road of writing on the theologies, the liturgies, the Church structures of Luther and the Lutherans, Bucer, Zwingli and Calvin, as though these were ends in themselves, without reference to the changing environment of the cities where revolutions took place which made possible the expression of those themes and which helped to mould their differing patterns. We should give more attention than is usual to examining how the theologians of the cities of the Reformation experienced limitation in the conditions of the environment of their cities as well as a fruitful stimulus for new developments; how they sought religious sanctions for political change; and how they made the cities into propagandist strongpoints for counter-attack on resistant Catholicism.
The very close interplay of these factors is clear from the large correspondence of all these men: it springs out vividly from their pages. Yet their correspondence is frequently neglected by those who write on the Reformers, for writers find it easier to discuss a Reformer's theological treatise uncluttered by political, social or economic limitations than to analyse the historical contingencies in his letters. It was environmental pressures which helped to divide Luther from Zwingli, as well as differences in temperament and in theology. When Luther faced Zwingli in debate at Marburg in 1529 the current of hostility could leap between them even from their differences in speech: Luther, the royalist High German of the Empire, found Zwingli's Swiss German to be speech appropriate to what he regarded as the religious fanaticism and the dubious republicanism of the Swiss Confederates. For Luther afterwards Zwingli was not just "schweizerisch" but "schwetzerisch".\footnote{D. Martin Luthers Werke, Weimarer Ausgabe, Tischreden, vol. iv (1916), No. 5005.} This is no excuse, of course, for falling into the trap of making religious themes the product of environmental determinism. I myself strongly maintain the independence and vitality of the thought of the Reformers, and I do not intend to modify it in accordance with preconceived views on the social and economic structures of the period. Whatever hesitations you may have about the possibility, or the usefulness, of the study I propose, you will agree that regardless of the environment, in the last resort those powerful theologians of the great Reformation cities vigorously asserted the truth as they saw it, in spite of what princes, bishops or city magistrates might propose. Nevertheless, they did not live all their lives at the extreme stage of "in the last resort", but in the ongoing life of their cities, which pressed their theologies into new moulds; and it is in that context that I wish to discuss them.

Let us then "go back to school in Wittenberg", which was the backdrop of the Lutheran drama, and not only to "Lutherstadt Wittenberg", but also let us go to Lübeck, representative of the Northern cities and of the dying political power of the Hanseatic League: to the golden city of Augsburg, centre of
the Fuggers, where it was said a Scottish king could wish to have been housed as nobly as one of its patricians: to Nürnberg, where Dürer's eye saw life with a new religious realism yet a city cautious, conservative and always loyal to the Emperor: to Strasbourg, tolerant of many varieties of religious belief, home of the politically and religiously radical guilds, especially the stormy guild of gardeners of which even Bucer was a guildsman: to Basel the university city of the humanist Reformer Oecolampadius and the chosen home of Erasmus, who died there protesting against its Protestantism: to Zürich, where Zwingli, a prophet in arms, made a civic community into a Church and died for his city as a good Confederate should: to Geneva, the Savoyard city, where dice-playing swordsmen made a revolution and captured to serve them a young and reluctant Frenchman, Calvin, who made them the not always willing servants of his "civitas Dei". And also we should go to school to Ulm, Regensburg, Hamburg, Constance and Memmingen, and to the city of the blood-stained saints, Münster. If we did so we should glimpse a great variety of constitutions and of city councils, political associations, economic and social life, in a bewildering range of patterns, in which it is dangerous to generalize from one group to another. Each city had its particular characteristics and the contrasts between them are sometimes extreme. There was nothing in common between, for example, the political, cultural and economic life of Wittenberg and of Geneva. We must distinguish between the conservative Northern imperial cities, the more intellectually and socially lively Southern imperial cities, and the cities of the Swiss Confederation which had only a shadowy relation to the Empire. Geneva was not even Swiss but Savoyard and therefore associated with the Empire. Strasbourg had no tradition comparable to the fierce Swiss independence of Zürich, and it had no large cantonal region from which it could draw a ferocious and ready manpower like Zürich and Berne, from whose villages, as from those of other cantons, came the mercenaries who fought in most major European conflicts on either side in the period up to the battle of Marignano in 1524. But Strasbourg, because of increasingly weak episcopal control in the fifteenth century, had won not only
independence, but also through its able statesmen, a most liberal and balanced constitution which was much admired by Erasmus and other humanists. Basel more than any of the other cities, not excluding Augsburg and Nürnberg famed for the arts, was the spiritual home of many Northern humanists. It was the city where Erasmus chose to return to end his days, in spite of its Protestantism, in doing so rejecting Oxford, Cambridge, Louvain, and Paris, where he could have triumphed: but they lacked free air, they were not free cities. However, the Northern imperial free cities had no universities, no humanists, no Swiss republicanism, and they settled for a conservative Lutheranism and did not deviate from it. The Northern cities differed for the worse from the Southern in their degree of intellectual liveliness. The South German imperial cities, on the other hand, through their political needs as well as developing intellectual trends were influenced by Zwingli’s Zürich.

All these major centres are sufficiently different to make generalizations dangerous, but, allowing for the different economic and political settings, all these cities wanted greater expansion and social change and in all of them religious reform was an initiating or contributing factor in that expansion and change. Nevertheless, these centres of social experiment and intellectual vitality were doomed to lose their initiative and much of their freedom by the middle of the sixteenth century. They lost their leadership and the drive behind the renewal they sought, through the increasing pressure of Charles V (relying no longer as at first on the appeal to imperial unity, but on his Spanish and Flemish resources in men and money), and through the princes of the Empire, who saw in the cities an undesirable independence of mind and political life. One by one, with the exception of the Confederate cities of Basel and Zürich, though these were also constricted, they lost their effective freedom of initiative and were assimilated to the neighbouring power-structure of an Elector, prince or duke. Because of its distance from these forces in the Empire only Geneva survived in independence along with her allies the Swiss.

1 Useful material on the cities can be found in *Deutches Städtebuch*, vols. i-v, and in *Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin*, vols. vi-vii, *La Ville*.
The upsurge and decline in the dynamic energies of the cities came in the period 1450-1550. This is equally the period of the upsurge of the Northern humanist and Reformation movements and of their later loss of dynamism. By 1550 had come the full development of the national power structures of Spain, France, and, of the lesser nations, England and the rest, whereby the medieval concept of the democratic and free city as an independent political unit was lost. Even Zürich and Geneva had by that time come to resemble on their small scale the nation-state ideal of the politics of the period in which political freedom and social experiment were considerably limited. But in 1450 only the most astute of statesmen in the Empire would have grasped how great a change in the status of the free cities was to come. To understand that upsurge of energy in the cities after 1450 already mentioned we should remember the origins of the sense of corporate identity in the city. The free cities of the mid-fifteenth century had grown from the medieval city. The medieval city had grown because "Stadtluft macht frei": men did not build their city walls to shut in serfs. Men moved into the medieval town to win a measure of freedom, and to find variety in place of the monotony of labour in the fields, for in the town they found taverns, the continually moving spectacle of street life, and the great churches with their popular preachers. In the towns men found community; not least, if they could acquire the skills, they could enter the community of brotherhood in the guilds. If a man was ambitious, or young and hopeful, he came to the towns for opportunity—though only a very few of the immigrants could become Dick Whittingtons, yet still they came. (It has been calculated that nearly 50 per cent. of the population of the Netherlands in the sixteenth century were town-dwellers.) Like Gray's frustrated peasants, the majority of citizens were poor, and "chill Penury repressed their noble rage". Bread riots were endemic, but this at least added stimulus to town politics.

Special opportunities had come to the towns in the early thirteenth century when many towns became almost independent states. From this period grow two kinds of towns in Germany (and the distinction is important), towns of the Empire,
“Reichstädt”, which could develop into free cities, and territorial towns, “Landstädt”, which were subjected to a lay or ecclesiastical prince: it was the “Reichstädt” which became free cities which are important. By the fifteenth century the free cities of the Empire were struggling against interference from neighbouring princes, or against the resident bishop. This was because until then they had been comparatively free from interference; since until about 1350 the energies of the German princes and knights had been taken up by opposing or fighting for the Emperor, in either case to establish or extend their own territories.

In their struggles for freedom the imperial cities became the most efficient and planned political structures in the German Empire. The cities kept chronicles, records of their transactions and council decisions—this literacy meant a stimulus to education in which laymen could share, for within the city walls it had become no longer the exclusive monopoly of Churchmen. This literacy meant the historical awareness of precedent, and of the means of constitutional change, and of political expertise. The economy of the cities was a planned economy, subject to control, in which merchants had to proceed according to statute. But capital could and did accumulate, a fact dangerous for the survival of the democracy of the guilds in the fifteenth century, which was to be supplanted in so many cities by the oligarchy of patrician merchants. Cities developed their own laws and from the fourteenth century onwards were bringing in jurists familiar with Roman civil law, which in most cities came to be combined with the local or territorial law. This brought a greater sophistication in the administration of the law in the cities compared with the more cumbersome procedures of the countryside and of the princely courts; and again provided a field for the educated layman. Further, the cities, through their trade, developed an international awareness; when merchants corresponded with foreign cities on the state of trade their horizons in more ways than one were enlarged. This internationalism brought with it diplomatic skills, and also, another sign of increasing political sophistication, espionage, in the watch kept on strangers at the inns. Police organization, night watchmen,
and other ways of social control were characteristic of the cities in notable contrast to the lawlessness and brutality of the countryside. Doctors and midwives were appointed and salaried by City councils. Cities had their regulations on extravagance in dress, licentious behaviour, gambling, prostitution, the punishment of insults to religion, including work on Sundays. Even the attitude to begging, regarded as an opportunity for Christian good works, changed in the cities, since townsmen thought hard work a sign of the good life. For example, Strasbourg in the later fifteenth century clamped down on its hordes of beggars, and insisted that those wholly incapable of work should be registered and made to wear a distinctive badge. More efficient taxation systems were evolved to pay for and to manage all this. Military service was demanded for the protection of the city and grew to something much more significant than a mob of armed citizens. The patrician lords of Nürnberg, for example, took knightly arms for their shields and banners, raised their troops, and gave money for cannon foundries which provided the famous artillery of that city.

Cities expanded their territories, ensured that the villages in their orbit gave them food and soldiers, and provided them with protection in return; however, this expansion was restricted by the jealousy and vigour of neighbouring princes, one reason why the pattern of the Italian city-state did not develop in Germany. Another area of expansion in the life of the cities was found in that most enduring and self-governing medieval institution, the Church, which was brought in several ways under the authority of city councils. Because of the influence of the clergy on political and social matters, city magistrates intervened in ecclesiastical affairs: here they followed the example of the princes in concerning themselves with the appointment of abbots and, where cathedral chapters contained canons belonging to prominent patrician families, sought to influence episcopal elections. They even nominated priests for benefices. They controlled ecclesiastical building: the soaring spire of Strasbourg cathedral was begun under the care of the citizens whose magistrates controlled the fabric. The secularization of Church property in closing religious houses where this was thought to be
desirable was well under way a century before the Reformation, which in this respect no more than completed a process already begun, by wholly rejecting the religious life. Moreover, in the fifteenth century anti-clericalism was marked in all imperial cities, as it was in the towns in general. The struggle for power between citizens and bishops of all episcopal towns had been a constant factor of medieval life, and in the fifteenth century many bishops temporarily or permanently left to reside outside of the city walls to avoid the frequent disturbances. By the early sixteenth century only the Archbishop of Cologne succeeded in holding to his status within his city. As part of the background to these attitudes to the Church we should remember that the Church owned, it has been suggested, nearly one third of all the land in Germany.

One aspect of this city life is particularly important for our purpose, and that was the sense of a corporate identity among citizens. You belonged to your town not only visibly by residence but invisibly in a mystical sense of identity with it. When you took your vow of citizenship at moments of peril in the city, it was as serious as baptismal vows and with a similar sense of mystical identification. The German imperial city held its citizens as the Jews of old had been held by Zion. Sin or blasphemy by individuals was not only against the glory of God but could destroy a city like the invasion of disease could destroy an organism. How significant this idea could be for developments in the Reformation period should need no emphasis, especially at Zürich and Geneva, which survived the loss, or great curtailment, of political independence experienced by the German imperial cities.

The development of a city council, it is also obvious, was of fundamental importance for the self-government and sense of independence of the citizens. Where a council began to develop, it meant that there was a conscious aim of the citizens to win political control for themselves, for example, at Geneva from the prince-bishop; and the composition of a city-council reflected the power pressures of different social groups. Many cities had a patrician class whose families were alone capable of electing members of the council, which became a self-perpetuating
oligarchy. But other cities either cast out the patrician group, as, for example, at Basel, won control for the guilds, or made a compromise which was effected by the admission of new members to the patrician class, at the same time appointing guildsmen to one or more of an increased number of councils. There was tension here between the pressing forward by the craft guilds and the resistance of the patrician merchants who tried to close the ring against them. This tension was further stimulated by the renewed growth of population in the fifteenth century, which in turn raised new pressures through the increased development of industry and commerce.

Behind this local political tension lay the problem of the relation of the cities to the government of the complex and unwieldy Empire. Jurists seemed to be unable to solve the question, Was the Empire a monarchy, an aristocracy, or a mixed state? The word "Obrigkeit", which had first appeared in the thirteenth century, began to come into general use and new significance in the second half of the fifteenth century. It was a term denoting the institution and function of ruling. It became related to the explosive question of autonomy for the cities: could an imperial city exercise rule over its citizens similar to the authority of the emperor in the Empire, and independently of him? This question was brought into the foreground in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries by the changes in the relation of the cities to the Empire, as well as because of movements for political reform in the Empire itself. In 1495, at a Diet at Worms under Maximilian I, two new developments of great importance occurred: a Public and Eternal Peace was decreed to be maintained to check the lawlessness and feuding which greatly disturbed trade, and the Imperial Chamber Tribunal was established as the chief legal body of the Empire. To assist this Tribunal, or Court, six Circles ("Reichskreise") of the Empire were created. This development helped to undermine the power of the princes, and incidentally weakened the autonomy of the cities. With the election of Charles V as Emperor in 1519, his frequent and prolonged absences from the Empire while he resided in Spain were to be covered by a "Reichsregiment" or Imperial Governing Council. Through these developments
the cities were losing ground at the imperial Diets. They were increasingly ignored by the princes, who even tried to prevent them being represented at the Diets. The Imperial Chamber Tribunal, the Circles of the Empire, and the newer Imperial Governing Council, all involved greatly increased funds, and that meant increased taxation. The princes tried to push the main burden of this taxation on to the cities on the ground that their trade greatly benefited from the Public and Eternal Peace. Also a general customs duty on wool and cloth had been imposed at the frontiers, which the cities rightly claimed could put them out of the market through foreign competition. Hans Baron noted how the cities won surprisingly in 1524 from Charles V freedom from the frontier customs duties, and attained from him recognition of their constitutional claims in the Diets. Baron then most ably showed how this victory dominated the minds of the political leaders of the cities who hoped after the Reformation had entered their cities to by-pass the princes, and the provisions of the Edict of Worms against Protestantism, by direct dealings with the Emperor.¹ The collapse of this policy after 1529, at the Diet of Speyer, was to have far-reaching consequences which will be shown later.

Again it should be noted that the Swiss cities were hostile to the new political arrangements in the Empire. They flatly refused to take part in this reorganization of the Empire, and, though still in theory and tradition a part of it, they refused to pay any of the taxes imposed to carry out these reforms. The North German cities, wealthy and oligarchic, concentrated even more on their own affairs, the South German cities tended to be restlessly alert to new political possibilities if these should arise. Here, then, we have the situation of the free imperial cities around 1500. There was tension between the guilds and the patrician groups struggling to win political power. With the desire for greater autonomy there was a marked growth of anti-clericalism. Political and economic frustration had increased within the Empire. Over two-thirds of the cities' populations were unrepresented politically, ignored and held in contempt by those with power, and were increasingly restless with these frustrations.

¹ The English Historical Review, lii (1937), 416.
Into this situation Martin Luther burst forth with challenge after challenge, between 1517 and 1521, to the structure of the Church, to the traditions of dogma and worship, to the accepted notions of the nature of society and of men's relations to each other in it, and leaving men bewildered as to where he would break out next. All this came not from a new Savonarola, a prophet of righteousness, nor from a Taborite preacher of fanaticism and war, but from a highly professional professor of biblical studies in the recently founded university of Wittenberg, a position which he held throughout his life. Not the least part of the extraordinary quality of Luther's reformation was that it should have come from remote and shabby Wittenberg and not from a great and well-known city like Nürnberg, Lübeck or Strasbourg. Wittenberg was not a free city of the Empire, and it did not even have a German name, for it had originated with Flemish immigrants in a region which was not even ethnically German but Wendish.1 It is true that it was the residence of the Elector of Saxony, Frederick the Wise, who, ashamed of its appearance, had undertaken a great building programme between 1490 and 1509 to improve its appearance and amenities. In that period he completely rebuilt the castle, the castle church, the town-hall or "Rathaus", in Renaissance style, and in 1502 founded the university, and rebuilt the Augustinian house in which Luther came to live as a friar. But contemporaries were not impressed. Cochlaeus, Luther's able Catholic opponent, described Wittenberg in the twenties as "a miserable poor dirty village in comparison with Prague". But then he was not comparing like with like. Even Luther's friend Myconius (though he was not a native son) could describe it as more like an old village than a town. But the peak of exasperation with remote and shabby Wittenberg was achieved by Duke George of rival Ernestine and Catholic Saxony when he said: "that a single monk out of such a hole should undertake a reformation is not to be tolerated."2 Wittenberg was a town far removed from the possibility of comparison with Strasbourg with its soaring cathedral tower, from the patrician splendour of Augsburg or Nürnberg, from the pomp and dignity of the Hanse

1 E. G. Schwiebert, Luther and his Times (St. Louis, Missouri, 1950), pp. 200 ff.
2 Ibid. 206.
cities, from the humanist culture of Basel, and from the vital energies of the guildsmen of Zürich.

The great creative ideas were being tested first within the house of the Augustinian Eremites and within the walls of the university, but when they moved out into the pulpit of the castle church, and in the form of the Ninety-five Theses on Indulgences in German translation published in the streets, the ordinary man was roused and pressed forward to hear more about this freedom of grace which cut through a tangled undergrowth of prohibitions, superstitions, and financial exactions for priestly services. When he also learned that there was no distinction between a priest and a layman and that all baptized Christians were priests of God, then he held a new political weapon in his hand. For the last forty years most writing, by Catholics as well as by Protestants, has been directed to the theological development of the young Luther. That this intensive study has been most fruitful and indeed has transformed not only Luther studies but also studies of the intellectual origins of the Reformation cannot be doubted. But it has not been accompanied by an equally thorough study of the social and political energies of the early Reformation years, which saw such vigorous activity stirred up by Luther’s message.

Luther was like someone who dynamites an old house to clear the way to build a new one, without thinking of the effects on adjoining properties, and is then astonished to see how many more houses come tumbling down—for Luther’s teaching was immensely explosive, to his own surprise, at just that period of time and in that country. Luther had never intended what occurred during his enforced absence in the Wartburg after the Diet of Worms in 1521, the sharp radical trend of Karlstadt’s innovations at Wittenberg, where Melanchthon trembled before the prophets of judgement from nearby Taborite-influenced Zwickau who were stirring the citizens to new heights of excitement. It was the Elector who called a halt to this millenarian trend, and Luther himself had to return to restore order, realizing slowly that he must adjust the balance disturbed by his own earlier teaching on the freedom of a Christian man. For it had
proved to be heady teaching to ordinary townsmen to learn that there was no distinction between a priest and a layman and that all baptized Christians were priests of God. What had been lacking for many a frustrated Savonarola or Hans the Drummer, from the fifteenth century up to Luther's time, was now, it seemed, available: here at last was a theological justification for change in political structures which were so intimately linked with ecclesiastical structures. Protestant historiography, especially where it has been associated with the traditions of Lutheranism in church life and practice, has drawn the picture of a cautious conservatism in the Lutheran preachers and their princes who brought a gradual change from one ecclesiastical structure into another and more effective one, and then drawn a further picture which showed that social radicalism was the work of the Zwinglians and the Calvinists. According to this view, Lutheranism was essentially concerned with scripture and grace, and it was the Swiss who added a more radical social programme to their theological purposes. This is, of course, true, but it leaves out too much, and therefore it blurs the actual situation. First, the troubles at Wittenberg in the winter of 1521-2 were a paradigm of what could happen elsewhere, and secondly, the concentration of attention on Luther's theology of grace is too exclusive. Luther not only "coram Deo" through biblical study, "Anfechtungen" or trials of faith, and his great skill in the techniques of that Scholastic theology available to him, rediscovered the Pauline doctrine of grace but also, without his originally intending it, let loose powerful forces opposing the structures of the visible Church of his time. Luther had wanted to talk about justifying grace at Leipzig and Worms in 1519 and 1521 but John Eck, and other opponents, forced him on to ground from which he had to challenge papal authority and the totalitarian authoritarianism of curia and hierarchy, who used councils and canons in support of that authoritarianism. Luther's new theology, in the eyes of both intellectuals and of ordinary men, was not only splendidly setting forth "sola scriptura" and "sola gratia", it was also consequently seeking new ways of organizing men's lives, in giving a new and simpler pattern to ecclesiastical structures and in making their society more
amenable to their own control. Therefore, "sola gratia" and "sola scriptura" were instruments by which men who sincerely believed in them found release from the sense of restriction under complicated controls which seemed antiquated and frustrating. The Reformation ran across the Holy Roman Empire, across the German Reich, from city to city like a sweeping flood, in this great territory lacking centralized royal power. When it faced much better organized and centralized monarchical states like France, Spain and England, or the Catholic nationalism of highly sophisticated societies like those of Northern Italy, it slowed down: its only hope was that the prince could accept it or tolerate it, or alternatively its leaders could prepare for a martyr's struggle. We hardly appreciate enough how intense for so many ordinary townsfolk was their anti-clericalism, their powerful dislike of the ecclesiastical system which touched their lives at so many points and, they felt, too often with ill-effects. Townsmen felt that they must have greater freedom of social and political action to obtain improvements in economic affairs and in the administration of justice.

Sometimes their anti-clericalism was more vigorous than coherent: the following incident must have been reproduced in many places. In a letter of April 1522 from the parish priest Lucas Leder in the town of Oschatz, in the territory of Duke George of Saxony (who was vigorously Catholic), we read of an angry group of townsmen hammering on the priest's door and window-shutters. Their purpose was incoherently expressed, but it was plain they wished to be rid of him. Fr. Leder wrote that he obtained no help from the Mayor or from the town council the following day, and in fear he is writing to his ordinary the Bishop of Meissen for advice and, better still, positive aid. These townsfolk were expressing a frustrated desire for change. But another example will show men who found coherence through the assistance of a capable lawyer to express their views in writing, and who found their aims through adopting the ideas of Luther on the freedom of a Christian man through the pattern of a Christian "Gemeinde" or congregation. Here the citizens of

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1 Hans Eberhardt and Horst Schlecht, Die Reformation in Dokumenten (Weimar, 1967), No. 15, p. 40.
the South German town of Wendelstein address a new parish priest sent by their prince, Casimir, c. 1525-6:

Honourable, dear brother! . . . According to the testimony of Holy Scripture, it is the duty of a Christian congregation to ask God, the Lord, to send workers into his harvest; [a Christian congregation] also has the power unanimously to seek an honourable man with good reputation from within [the congregation] who would [preach] the Word of God according to the true understanding . . . A Christian congregation also has the authority to dismiss [this man] again and to appoint someone else in his stead . . . Now, in these final days, this aforementioned custom has been taken from the Christian congregation through the Anti-Christ. . . .

This document reflects the early teaching of Luther on these themes, but it is even more revolutionary than Luther had been in 1523, for it appears to be the "Gemeinde" that decides on whether its pastor is to be dismissed or not. Since it comes from a South German town it also shows elsewhere in the document the influence of the Zwinglian view of the eucharist.

Strauss, who has provided an excellent study of Nürnberg in the sixteenth century, points out that there were nearly 3,000 cities and towns in Germany and they were a uniquely German phenomenon in their attitudes and social patterns: they were not like towns elsewhere in Europe. This is especially true of the imperial cities or Reichstädte—"They were the glory of Germany and the admiration of foreign visitors." Most of these 3,000 towns were of small size and with not more than 2,000 or 3,000 inhabitants and the significant ones amounted to no more than about fifty, and of these again only about eight or nine represented the full splendour of the German city. Machiavelli could write that the power of Germany certainly resided more in her cities than in her princes. Here his political shrewdness had seen the implications of the fact that the great and influential cities were immediately subjects of the Empire itself, and not of a neighbouring prince or of the Emperor. But all to a greater or less degree were ecclesiastically subordinate to a bishop. In some cases, as with Cologne, the largest German city, he was a ruling prince.

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In the period 1521-35 it was these cities which made the running in the spread of reformation, from Lübeck on the Baltic down through the centre and West to the South German cities, Augsburg, Nürnberg and Strasbourg, and across to those cities which had only a shadowy relation to the Empire since they belonged to, or became clients of, the militarily powerful and *de facto* independent Swiss Confederation, Basle, Zürich, Berne and then Berne's subordinate towns of Lausanne, Neuchâtel, and alongside of these her protegée Geneva. Wherever reformation came some degree at least of social change took place; it increased the desire for freedom of action in the cities or small towns it touched, and it caused either radical or conservative revolutions, or produced in turn a counter-revolution if change had been too violent or produced too many difficulties. When the Lutheran movement rolled forward across the Reich there sprang up as it were from the ground, no one knowing precisely whence they came, groups of radical extremists frustrated and dormant for decades, lacking leaders, favourable opportunities, and an ideology. These were the heirs of the Spiritual Franciscans, the Waldensian groups, the Taborites, the author of *Reformatio Sigismundi*, the apocalyptic writings of Joachim of Fiore and his disciples, the descendants of the Brethren of the Free Spirit, the Winckler and other groups who represented "the poor in the land".¹ These saw in the Lutheran movement the dawn of a long-awaited day, the realization of an eschatological hope, when a new world-age would begin. They bitterly hated the old ecclesiastical forms in worship, church organization, sacraments and doctrine, and they rejected any compromise between traditional structures, for example the conception of the parish, with secular government. These men sprang up behind the Lutheran movement, as at Wittenberg in the first days of the Reformation, and bedevilled its attempt to create an orderly transition from stable Catholicism to stable Lutheranism—in one case causing a completely successful radical extremist revolution at Münster. These groups went under the general name of Anabaptists, too general a name, since it covered a great

¹ Gordon Leff, *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages* (Manchester, 1967), describes the various groups.
number of people whose views were by no means capable of reconciliation one with another and as misleading in its application by historians as that other term to describe groups equally hard to define under one head, Puritanism. These Anabaptist groups refused any compromise between the churches of the saints and a corrupt social order; certainly in any way that would resemble the church and state relations of Catholics or Lutherans. They thought of infant baptism as imprisoning people in that political ecclesiastical structure and it became for them the symbol of what was wrong with church and society—therefore like Voltaire they could have said "écrasez l'infâme". In South Germany Lutheranism met another check to its successful development not only from Anabaptist groups as, for example, at Augsburg, but from Zwinglianism, a less conservative and more popularly assimilable creed than Lutheranism since it greatly simplified worship, the administration of the sacraments, and identified community structures and church structures more closely. This alternative creed was not confined to Zwingli's Zürich but spread rapidly to other Swiss towns and cantons like Berne, and also as far North as Augsburg where the Zwinglian view of the eucharist prevailed over that of Luther. It also strongly affected Strasbourg, Basel, and nearby Ulm. That this advance was more deliberate and purposeful than Luther's original activity as a reformer (who could say "Philip and Amsdorf and I sat drinking our Wittenberg beer and the Word did the work")¹ can be seen in Zwingli's letter of April 1527 to the city of Ulm, in which he justified his intervention there:

There are many points on which your lords and mine of Zürich are in accord because of an aristocracy, that is, a government chosen from among the best men in the town and region . . . that is why I am seriously concerned to watch for all the good that shall be undertaken among you by God, and by the example of your wisdom could also be admitted amongst us and our example made available for you.²

Zwingli said explicitly elsewhere that magistrate and prophet collaborate to form a true Christian town, for example, Strasbourg as well as Zürich: that was the drawing power of his appeal to the South German cities. Luther was more doubtful whether

all citizens of a given area could obviously form a church; he tended to think more of truly pious groups within the large framework of a parish and to concentrate his hopes on those. Here, then, were cities of the Reich, and the Swiss Confederation still vestigially part of that Reich, open to the impact of Lutheran, Anabaptist and Zwinglian influences.

Let us turn to consider these changes in certain cities which can be seen as representing the varying influences already described, beginning where all this began, at Wittenberg. The period 1519-25 was that of the years of innocence of the Reformation when men could move freely into a new world of grace without thought of the consequences. Although Wittenberg, during Luther's absence in the winter of 1521-2, was gripped by those disturbances referred to above, created by the Zwickau prophets, it had calmed down on his effective reappearance, and it is significant of the still comparatively conservative situation which was maintained there that not until his death-bed did Frederick the Wise receive communion under the new form. But in 1525 came the change from innocence to near anarchy: the Peasants rose in war against the Princes encouraged by the parish priest of Allstedt, Thomas Müntzer (originally influenced by Luther), who taught that God guided them to use the sword against the ungodly. How Luther opposed this popular tumult is well-known: he had to show that though every man was a priest this did not mean the abolition or total transformation of ecclesiastical and social order. Luther had been profoundly disturbed by the fanaticism in religion and social order of Müntzer and to a less degree of his own former colleague, Karlstadt, and a slowly developing conservative reaction began through which much of the popular interest in Protestant reform died down. It became the activity of the governing classes, of the men who exercised "Obrigkeit", who used it for solving social and political tensions within their boundaries or for political manoeuvre against the Emperor or Catholic princes. After 1530 Luther accepted the view of the Saxon jurists that one might defend the faith against attack by war—a remarkable and little noticed change of emphasis to

1 Rupp, op. cit. part iii.
which Baron rightly draws attention. Wittenberg had provided a paradigm for the development of the Reformation, especially for the cities of the Empire, allowing for differences of emphasis owing to different geographical situation and political organization and for the fact that Wittenberg was not a free imperial city. First to be considered should be the North German cities, of which Lübeck, which was rich and powerful and the leading city of the Hanseatic League, was the greatest, perhaps the only German trading city which could be mentioned in the same sentence as Venice. Here, as was universal in the North when Protestantism entered, it came in with Lutheran preachers, who attracted the populace. When the patricians tried to suppress this preaching they were challenged by the merchants, who were not patricians, and who saw here a lever to power not available in their struggle with the patricians before this. The patrician council reluctantly allowed the Lutheran preachers to continue, and the religious revolution proceeded rapidly until by 1531 Lübeck had become Lutheran, and also had found a social and political leader in the non-patrician Wullenwever, who had become burgomaster on the back of the Lutheran movement. However, to this temporary success for social change came the challenge of a patrician counter-offensive through the failure of Wullenwever's foreign policy for Lübeck and a naval defeat. Thereafter Lübeck returned to the political and religious conservatism of strict Lutheranism, and became no longer the city she had been before the religious revolution. What had begun as a great upsurge to transform Lübeck politically as well as religiously had failed. A similar pattern emerged in several of the North German cities. Münster is the interesting exception since it showed the Lutheran Reformation being overrun by radical extremists supported by a large-scale immigration there of Frisian revolutionaries.

In the South German cities, once again, there appeared Lutheran preaching rousing, for example, the populace in Augsburg which moved soon from Lutheranism towards Zwinglianism and even Anabaptism since the tolerant council

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1 Baron, English Historical Review, lii, 423.
at first gave the religious reform movement its head. But once again a conservative patrician restoration effected a religious and political counter-offensive; this time Catholicism gained most of the city which was left with only a remnant of Lutheranism. Here the weakness of Protestantism was that it was in conflict with the economic needs of the city since it was the home of great banking houses like the Imhof, Fugger, and others, and the guilds which could have forced political and social change had to rely on that capital accumulation of the Fuggers and its functions to maintain their own life. The heart of the problem lay in the fact that this finance capital was supported by investment in imperial possessions far from the city, which laid Augsburg wide open to counter-attack by Charles V, who after the Diet of Speyer in 1529 was firmly against any political compromise with Protestantism for at least a decade. In the event, the protestant-minded guilds of Augsburg were defeated by Catholic patricians aided by Charles.¹

Nürnberg, though it became Lutheran, very soon quenched any advance beyond a very conservative form of Lutheranism and contrived to survive as a Protestant city, as Augsburg had not, by a skilful policy of always supporting the Empire and Emperor and refusing to join other protestant cities and princes in the Schmalkaldic League. The admirable book by Gerald Strauss on Nürnberg in the sixteenth century contains a useful chapter on "Nürnberg and the Reformation" which saves me from giving space to that changeover here. But the following points may still be made. There was no difficult conflict of interests between Church and State at Nürnberg since its relationship to its ecclesiastical lord, the Bishop of Bamberg, had gradually been loosened. The town had gained control of its ecclesiastical affairs before the Reformation began, and it kept a firm hand on the priests and religious within its walls. It has been estimated that only about two per cent. of the population were ecclesiastics and this number included servants. From the fourteenth century it successfully claimed its rights in the appointment of the priests of the two parishes. The council set up "Kirchenpfleger" for the oversight of the churches,

¹ Baron, op. cit. p. 633.
monasteries, convents and other ecclesiastical property; the priests had no direct responsibility for church finances. By 1514 the council had won the right of presentation of priests to the parishes of Nürnberg.

But in spite of the mastery of ecclesiastical life at Nürnberg by the council, there was anti-clericalism there as elsewhere judging by the writings of Hans Sachs, the guild poet romanticized by Wagner, whose satirical verses against the clergy and papal authority were well-received by the city. In 1520 the council irritably declared itself upon the frequent complaints about its inefficient and immoral clergy not only in Nürnberg but in its countryside. It also disapproved of the practice of citing its citizens to legal tribunals at Rome: this cause of complaint was continual and widespread in Germany; the citizens of Wendelstein were emphatic against this in the document quoted above. Another sore point against the papacy at Nürnberg was the revoking by Adrian VI of a decision of Leo X who, upon payment of a large amount of money, had given the city its full rights of church patronage. Adrian demanded further large sums before he would agree. Here Nürnberg was provided with an example in high places of the late medieval complaint that the priest was the man who wanted money. The reformation at Nürnberg was in part a response to this anti-clerical resentment of its citizens. But this was not a revolutionary process: there was no background of guild conflict or of lesser merchants against nobles at Nürnberg since it was effectively controlled, without hope of serious challenge, by forty-three patrician families who governed the wealthy city and its regions. But the council were not unwilling to move towards Lutheranism backed by the anti-clericalism of the people.

A number of prominent citizens had formed the "Sodalitas Staupitziana", including Albrecht Dürer and the city secretary Lazarus Spengler, who both were to become strong Lutherans. This "Sodalitas" had been founded as a discussion group in honour of Johann Staupitz, the superior of the Order of Augustinian Eremites in Germany, who was well-received on several occasions as a preacher at Nürnberg, and under whom Luther had graduated into a Reformer. It was significant that
change was coming when the council refused to allow the preaching of the Indulgence for St. Peter's at Rome. About the same time Spengler openly said that Luther's teachings must be true since they conformed to the Gospels, Paul and the Prophets. In 1521, at the Diet of Worms, the decision was taken to make Nürnberg the seat of the two great instruments of centralization and political reform of the Reich, the Imperial Governing Council and the Imperial Chamber Court: this could have severely restricted the gradual movement to Lutheranism there, but in spite of this decision the council supported by the citizens guardedly but firmly refused to accept the imperial ban on Luther. In 1523 Nürnberg again refused to act upon the Worms decree against Luther. Three years earlier Dürer had declared that Luther had delivered him from great fear. For Dürer new political and religious insights derived from Luther brought invigorating new life.\(^1\)

But from all this we cannot discover evidence for Nürnberg adopting the Reformation because of social, economic or political strains other than a restless desire to have complete and unquestioned control in all things, including ecclesiastical matters. After the Disputation of 1525, when Nürnberg adopted the conservative Lutheran type of reform (in the theological and ecclesiastical sense), its clergy became simply citizens. In this respect it was an exception among the cities: it experienced no popular outburst implying social change or radical consequences deriving from religious views, for it obtained what not even Wittenberg had achieved, a quiet change of religion: this was undoubtedly due to the tight control of the council, and the patrician spirit, over the city. Its changeover was made through the moral pressure of leading intellectuals on the council, and it was initiated by the council and not through popular pressure. The mould imposed by the environment there led to one of the most conservative forms of Lutheranism.

In sharp contrast to this quiet change was the revolution at Münster, in which popular pressure and a different political framework led to an original Lutheran reform being run away with into a political and religious radicalism which destroyed

Münster was a town of 15,000 inhabitants in which the bishop was the civil as well as the spiritual ruler, although it had gained a fair degree of self-government. Westphalia was a region of social conflict and some economic distress, and like the neighbouring towns of the Netherlands it felt these pressures badly. There had been large price increases and heavy taxes at Münster. This had led to a serious revolt in the city in 1525. There were seventeen craft and merchant guilds which were very strong there and a corporation had been formed with two representatives from each guild. These guilds were well-represented on the council: no important decision could be made without the co-operation of the guilds. At the time when Lutheranism was vigorously gaining control in other cities, the guilds of Münster had become dissatisfied with the patrician city government and were certainly hostile to the wealth of the religious orders there. Thirty-six Articles were drawn up in 1525 to meet the demands of the guilds, but the bishop was able to prevent the acceptance of these Articles. He felt it to be safer to reside outside of the city and in 1531 he left to live some miles away (he had some spiritual jurisdiction in the Netherlands as well as in Westphalia). In June 1532, a new bishop, Franz von Waldeck, was elected—who at this stage (1532) tried to enforce the imperial edicts against heresy but failed to persuade the council to act.

There were three fateful figures in the origins of the Reformation at Münster against whose influence the bishop perhaps moved too late, although the social tensions and political structure there would most probably have hindered efforts to check any Protestant influence entering the city. First, Melchior Hofmann, a furrier from South Germany, who began his Protestant career as a lay preacher of the early themes of Lutheranism in Livonia in 1523; he even received a certificate of approval from Luther at Wittenberg for the Articles he drew up in Livonia. Luther, hostile to religious fanaticism, had unknowingly backed a man who was to become one of the most dangerous of fanatics, not least because of his influence on others. Hofmann began to

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1 Die Geschichtsquellen des Bisthums Münster, vol. 2 (C. A. Cornelius, Berichte der Augenzeugen über das Münsterische Wiedertäuferreich (Münster, 1853)) provides contemporary accounts of the proceedings.
emphasize the second coming of Christ in his preaching and to spiritualize the meaning of the sacraments. He became a Lutheran pastor at Stockholm and began to be strongly influenced by the wayward theology of Luther's former professorial colleague Karlstadt. He was found unacceptable to the Swedish authorities and moved on to various towns. He preached that the City of God would come by divine intervention and, though it was not to be brought in by force, believers should be formed into a covenanted group ("Bundesgenossen") to prepare for it, and he began to baptize believers. He expected a new Elijah to bring in the City of God which was to appear at Strasbourg in 1533. On making a second visit there to await the event he was imprisoned and eventually died there.

Hofmann was responsible for the development of what became known as Melchiorite themes in the Anabaptist movement. That is, the sharp distinction between believer and unbeliever, the identification of believers (who had covenanted together) with a limited number of elect saints who would be received with approval by the Lord at his second coming, not only to share with him in bliss but also to take revenge upon unbelievers. These Melchiorite ideas flourished among the dispossessed who felt that the future before them was without hope because of the very bad economic situation of the Dutch towns at that time. These men, who began to think of bringing in the City of God by violence, first thought of Amsterdam and next Münster after the failure of Hofmann's prophecy that Strasbourg would be the centre of this eschatological hope. His heady, chiliastic preaching left among his followers two attitudes to the future expected event: one group followed Hofmann's refusal to advocate violence, another more vigorous group was led by two of his converts in the Netherlands, Jan Matthys and Jan of Leiden, who decided that the saints must act to bring in the City of God. Matthys had been baptized by Hofmann in 1531 after he had heard him preaching of the approaching kingdom of bliss to be given to the elect who would form a priesthood of believers.

1 For Karlstadt see Rupp, op. cit. Part ii.
2 Cornelius Krahn, Dutch Anabaptism, 1450-1600 (The Hague, 1968) provides a useful account of the Melchiorites.
Matthys began to preach these new doctrines in the Netherlands at this time.

The second figure of fateful importance for Münster was Bernhard Rothmann who, after an education among the Brethren of the Common Life and further studies at the University of Mainz, became a priest, and was appointed as preacher at St. Mauritz in Münster. Lutheranism had already made some impact at Münster and the neighbouring region, though it had received a setback after a significant attempt by the guilds to suppress economic competition by the monastery of Niesing in the city's jurisdiction, and bring in social and religious reforms, had failed. Lutheran themes had been interpreted by the guildsmen in a social and political sense. By 1531 Rothmann's vigorous preaching attracted the citizens of Münster, and by mob violence he was given a pulpit outside of his church in which to preach without intervention by higher ecclesiastical authority. Rothmann sought support by visiting Wittenberg, Strasbourg, and other centres of Reformation, but on his return the bishop compelled him to leave in 1532. Nevertheless, Rothmann's supporters took over the church of St. Lambert and found Lutheran preachers for themselves. The new bishop of that year, von Waldeck, decided to challenge the guilds and their mob support by suppressive action. The citizens who supported Rothmann, a considerable number, formed a league and appointed a committee of thirty-six to care for the continuance of Lutheran preaching in the city. After the refusal of the Catholic clergy to hold a Disputation, the league took over the churches of the city except the cathedral. Event followed event rapidly; Rothmann returned and introduced a Zwinglian form of holy communion, for he was already moving away from strict Lutheranism and even taking up some Anabaptist ideas. By early in 1533 Rothmann and his supporters dominated the religious life of Münster, supported by the guilds and the majority of the citizens.

A crucial influence to a more radical trend had been the appearance of Sacramentarian preachers from nearby Wassenberg who gave impulse in an iconoclastic anti-Lutheran direction.¹

¹ Krahn, op. cit. pp. 119-35.
Rothmann now turned away from the council-supported Lutheran party and led what became a majority party, supported by the guilds and the townsmen, of near-Anabaptist enthusiasm. The Lutheran group on the council joined ranks with the returning Catholics and the bishop, and this produced a lull. But in the second half of 1533 numbers of strangers, including Melchiorites, followers of Hofmann, flowed into the city, and in January 1534 came two disciples of Jan Matthys, a baker from Haarlem, and later Matthys himself accompanied by Jan of Leiden (Jan Beukels or Bockelszoon), and within a short time nearly 1,500 persons had been baptized. The visionary Matthys regarded himself as the new Enoch, the fore-runner of the new age and a fanatical advocate of Hofmann's view of forming a covenanted people and preparing for the City of God. Bernard Knipperdolling, a cloth merchant and a councillor, may be taken as representative of the social radicalism which accompanied religious change at Münster: he had begun by supporting Rothmann against his fellow-councillors. It was he who led the meeting of all the guilds in July 1532 to form a covenant to protect Rothmann and his teachings. Rothmann's rapid development as a revolutionary was supported by his appeal to the rights of the ordinary citizens to make decisions binding upon the city. Knipperdolling became an impassioned advocate of this principle of the rights of the people which, when combined with his eventual fanatical devotion to the new leader Jan of Leiden, made him a formidable instrument of revolution.

The third fateful figure for Münster was this Jan of Leiden or Jan Bockelszoon who was to become the Davidic king of Münster. Handsome, and with a compelling personality, but lacking the manic fanaticism of Matthys, he had come from a varied career in the half-world of social unease in the Netherlands, as tradesman, poet and actor (he was the illegitimate son of a village woman from the Münster region). He had belonged to one of those curious institutions of that country and period, the Chambers of Rhetoric—these promoted the arts at the level of popular culture and undertook the writing and producing of plays of a religious and sometimes secular nature which by the

1 Ibid. pp. 124 ff. and 133-49.
eve of the Reformation had emphasized criticism of the conditions in the Church. By the year 1530 the Chambers had largely become centres of somewhat confused Reformation propaganda through these new-style Morality or Mystery plays. Jan of Leiden had moved on from this career to becoming a strong advocate of violent action in support of Melchior Hoffman's dream of a new City of God after being baptized by him. He and Matthys saw Münster as the centre for realizing the New Age. But it is an open question how far Jan of Leiden retained some purely political shrewdness in the events which now took place, as distinct from being swept away by apocalyptic imagery as Matthys was. Certainly there was a complicating degree of ambivalence between religious fanaticism and worldly ambition on the part of Jan of Leiden.

By December 1533 the council had become powerless before the guilds, not least the aggressive Smiths' guild, and was faced now with a new and positive ideology of revolution preached by Matthys and Jan of Leiden with Rothmann taking second place as the pamphleteer of the movement, expounding in biblical terms each new development. The Articles of Münster were prepared which attacked "pagan" authority (that is, all traditional conceptions of "Obrigkeit") and demanded obedience to the laws of God alone. Freedom of faith was next proclaimed, which meant in the circumstances control by the peculiar form of Anabaptism now proclaimed. Most of the Lutherans and Catholics left the city. Knipperdolling was made burgomaster, or chief magistrate; community of goods was introduced, and seven deacons were set up to look after the riches collected together from the churches, religious houses, and the homes of those who had left, or been expelled as "godless". Then all books found in the city were ordered to be burned, since only the Bible was regarded as the authentic book for the new Israel. The preachers, originally Rothmann's followers, who had now been baptized by Matthys, stood ready in the central square to baptize all who wished to remain in Münster and take an oath and covenant together. In this city of the new saints there could be no room for doubters: a blacksmith, Hubert Ruescher, who

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1 Ibid. pp. 66-8.
called Matthys a deceiver, was killed where he stood.\textsuperscript{1} By this time Münster was under siege conducted by troops of the bishop, von Waldeck, assisted by soldiers from the neighbouring Protestant states. Both Catholics and Protestants saw the changes at Münster as wholly intolerable to order. Matthys in obedience to a vision walked out of the city prophesying against the besiegers and was killed. This made the way clear for Jan of Leiden to take complete control of the city.

It would be possible and easy to describe the events which follow as an orgy of irrational fanaticism deprived of all sense and reality. But beneath the extravagance there lie certain patterns of direction. Once the revolutionary has destroyed the existing framework of a society he is often uncertain about how to proceed. Given the utterly unprecedented nature of the situation, and granted that baptizing ignorant and fanatical guildsmen amid ecstatic apocalyptic preaching could not bring the supernatural event of the second coming expected by these believers with such simplemindedness, Jan of Leiden showed very considerable organizing ability and created a consistent pattern of order on the basis of an attempt, however eccentric in practice, to recreate the old Jerusalem of King David at Münster—this was his substitute for the New Jerusalem of the vision of John the Divine. We should remember how Bibles of the period, Latin and vernacular, were illustrated: the woodcuts of the court of David and the city of Jerusalem and its inhabitants all resembled, almost to minor details, contemporary courts, cities and citizens. Israelite soldiers were clad in contemporary armour and with the kind of weapons men of the time themselves used: Jewish peasant women and great ladies were shown in sixteenth-century dress; houses, furniture, castles and fortifications reflected contemporary Nürnberg and Augsburg. For unsophisticated guildsmen and labourers and their wives, the court and city of King David were not buried in a remote past, they were recent in the imagination and could, therefore, given the opportunity, be recreated.

Jan of Leiden did precisely this. In May 1534, the council of Münster was dissolved and twelve elders representing the

\textsuperscript{1} Cornelius, op. cit. pp. 28-30.
twelve tribes of Israel were now to govern the new Israel, with Jan of Leiden as its prophet. As in Jerusalem of old no pollution should be allowed by sin, so in this new Jerusalem all sin was to be punished—with none of the humane safe-guards left by the old Jewish legal system. The obviously acted sins such as theft and adultery were to be punished by death, but also such ill-defined sins as envy and wrath were given the death penalty. At least this implied strict discipline. Certainly Jan of Leiden achieved for the besieged a better military discipline than that of the besiegers. Special areas were set apart for making gun powder: the twelve elders and Jan met daily: armed groups made quick sallies from the gates and brought in supplies (it is very strange how ineffective the encirclement of the walls by the besiegers was for some time yet). In May an attempt to scale the walls and take the city by the encircling troops failed, and this was taken as a sign of the proof of Jan's prophecy that the city could not be taken by the godless. Messengers were more than once sent out to bring in the "saints" from across Europe to Münster, but nearly all such groups which gathered together with arms to go to the defence of the city were broken up. There were several formed haphazardly in the Netherlands. Still Jan held the besieged together by strength of will and the power of prophecy: he seemed able to go into a prophetic trance almost at will.

At this stage occurred a social change of great magnitude which caused much of the horror in which Münster's new Zion came to be held, as happened much later with the early development of Mormonism in Utah. Either through seeking to fulfil literally the accounts of polygamy in the Old Testament, or through the curious idea (which was not unknown elsewhere in other circumstances) that women could only have full access to the blessings of the new order through the bond of marriage, or quite simply because the number of women exceeded the number of men there (many had come in as refugees with men who had since died in defence of the city)—or because, as one sour eyewitness who survived suggested, Jan, already married, wished to marry Divara the beautiful widow of Matthys—whatever the reason or mixture of reasons, Jan proclaimed as the result of a
vision that polygamy was to be introduced at Münster.¹ This was too much for the hitherto compliant Rothmann and others and an embittered debate of eight days took place. But eventually Jan imposed his will, Rothmann wrote a pamphlet defending the new way of life on the first two grounds suggested above, and those few who protested, women or men, against this reversal of all hitherto accepted sound order, were instantly killed. Knipperdolling with a great two-handed sword had become the executioner of justice, and he did not hesitate to use it—there was no room for self-doubt or any other kind of doubt in the new Zion. Rothmann wrote that there were three world ages (as Joachim of Fiore, whose subtle dreams occur frequently in the radical religious circles of the period, had once taught of three world ages) from Adam to Noah, from Noah to the coming of Christ, and then from Christ to the preparation for Christ's coming again through the setting up of the kingdom of Münster.

In August 1534, Jan was declared to be the Davidic King of these new chosen people, and Divara the queen, Rothmann was to be court preacher and various other offices were filled. Court ceremonial was introduced with rich, specially designed robes; Jan could only be approached by kneeling; special banquets were held in the square before the cathedral, which was the new Temple; and elaborate dances were performed. (After all was over and Jan was examined under torture he confessed that he had not received a vision to become king, he had deceived the people because he thought the situation in Münster required these changes to help the people to endure the siege.)

An example of the biblical literalism that ruled imaginations at Münster can be seen in the action of the young woman Hille Feyken who, seeing herself as a new Judith, tried to penetrate through the besieging army to reach the bishop and destroy him, but was captured and killed. Not all of Jan's expedients could stave off famine and the horrors of a siege: the hoped-for aid from the Netherlands and elsewhere, as has been noted, failed to arrive. But it was not until June 1535 (after numbers in the city had been greatly reduced by secret flight, the expulsion of the old and children to the besieging army, which was by now

¹ Cornelius, op. cit. pp. 59-79.
greatly increased), and then only by betrayal to a large force of
the besiegers by the opening of one of the gates, that the city was
finally captured. The slaughter was thorough. Rothmann's
body was not found. Knipperdolling and Jan of Leiden were
imprisoned, examined and then horribly tortured to death with
red hot pincers in January 1536. Münster inevitably reverted
to the most strict Catholicism, and a closely restricted social and
political life.

This brief record of the City of the Saints is not unfamiliar:
the grounds for this retelling of it are to make explicit how the
idea of the "city" dominated men's minds in that period—the
city as a place of potential freedom of social experiment—and
also to show how originally Lutheran teaching in a city where
grave social and political unease existed could for lack of strong
central government become so radical in religion and social
organization as to be self-destructive. If the kingdom of Jan
of Leiden had occurred in 1525 how much more difficult would
the changes in many cities have been. Men saw it not, as we
tend to do, as eccentric religious fantasy but as political revolution
of the most dangerous kind. This experiment should remind us
once again that the Reformation was an urban movement and
that it cannot be divorced from its contemporary social and
political setting.

Two other cities can be adduced to show the variety of
patterns which occurred: these are Strasbourg and Geneva.
Strasbourg had achieved in the thirteenth century what some
citizens of Münster achieved only fleetingly in 1533-6, freedom
from the civil jurisdiction of a bishop. It became a free town
of the empire so that its only political external authority lay in
the Diets of the Empire at which it was represented. After the
expulsion of the bishop as civil lord his connections with Stras­
bourg were remote: the episcopal election of 1506 was the first
time in a century that the citizens saw their bishop or heard him
preach in the city. The political structure which operated at
Strasbourg from a new constitution in 1482, which was greatly
admired by Erasmus because of its balance between powers,

1 Krahn, op. cit. p. 163.
marked a more democratic order than that of Nürnberg. The chief Magistrate was the "Ammeister", elected each year from the ranks of the burghers, who was aided by four "Stettmeister" from the patrician families, on a rotation of one for each quarter of the year: together with these were several councils, the Thirteen for foreign affairs and defence, the Fifteen for finance and justice, these two together with the addition of four men elected for life (the other council members were subject to re-election) formed the council of Twenty-one (the name has no relation to the actual number of members). The social structure of the city lay in the patrician families, many of whom lived outside the walls on their estates; the merchants or landowners who belonged to the burgher groups; and the craftsmen who were organized in twenty guilds: each guild (or "tribe") had fifteen "Schöffen" at its head—these three hundred "Schöffen" formed on important occasions a general assembly to decide on matters gravely affecting the city. The guilds of Strasbourg in the fifteenth-century reorganization ceased to be purely craft guilds; for example, all the burghers who had no corporate membership elsewhere belonged to two guilds of their own. Whoever achieved full citizenship ("Bürgerrecht") was automatically appointed to a guild. This was the system which Erasmus praised:

I saw a monarchy without tyranny, an aristocracy without factions, a democracy without disorder, prosperity without luxury, happiness without insolence.1

This still left the labouring and more unskilled groups of inhabitants unrepresented, a fact ignored as irrelevant by Erasmus, yet it did not lead to any noticeable degree of unrest at Strasbourg; there was no climate of sullen resentment awaiting a revolutionary leadership as at Münster. The inhabitants of Strasbourg felt that the world went as well as could be expected; their patrician leaders in external affairs kept their city secure by balancing between the rival powers of Habsburg and Valois which faced each other across the Rhine; and their merchants and craftsmen by their skills made a reasonably good life available to most who lived there. Yet there was still an area of potential

change. For, unlike Nürnberg, the political control of the city, as has been seen, was not extremely close and confined to one class, and also there were various threads of religious idealism divorced from formal ecclesiastical structures there. John Geiler, preacher of moral reform, and John Tauler, the mystic, had left influences which implied the possibility of the Christian life free of some of the medieval moulds; and the memories of the Winckler movement and the teachings of Huss were not wholly forgotten.

Ecclesiastical authority in the city lay in the five chapters of the cathedral and the collegiate churches. These chapters on the eve of the Reformation were largely indifferent to the needs of the churches at Strasbourg: the canons of the cathedral were of patrician birth and were interested in little beyond accumulating rich benefices and increasing the status of their families. Strasbourg was well-provided with land-owning churches, monastic houses and nunneries: some of the last were as socially exclusive as the cathedral chapter and the chapter of St. Thomas. Many of the citizens of Strasbourg were tenants or servants of the religious houses and chapters, and there was the usual amount of exacerbation of relationships between city and church concerning clerical privileges and taxes. The position of the church was weak in that it was neither wholly acceptable in its administrative aspect to the city council nor was it acceptable to the bishops, who regarded the leading churchmen of Strasbourg as being frequently too willing to think more of their relationship to the city than of their relationship to their bishop. Throughout the fifteenth century the council had been winning increasing control of church affairs, though not to that degree to be seen at Nürnberg. Piety at Strasbourg had been aided by a movement which found its energies outside of ecclesiastical structures, Rhineland mysticism, of which one of the chief exponents had been the Strasbourg mystic John Tauler whose work Luther came to admire. John Geiler of Kaisersberg from 1480 to 1510 vigorously preached at the cathedral the need for church reform, a reform of the morals of the clergy and laity alike, and set forth the way of better piety, though still in traditional terms. Strasbourg had become an important printing centre, and produced a notable
quantity of Bibles, including a vernacular edition, and also the *De Imitatione Christi* of Thomas à Kempis, and volumes of sermons, including Geiler's, as well as other works of religious edification. Where there was good printing there were humanists: nearby Sélestat had a remarkable Latin school which trained a number of citizens of Strasbourg in the new methods of humanism. Famous names among the city's humanists were Sebastian Brandt, Jacob Wimpfeling, Beatus Rhenanus and Jacob Sturm, who was to become one of the great educationists of that century. Where there were humanists there came criticism of deadness in the life of the Church, though those of Strasbourg were conservative minded. That Erasmus admired Strasbourg and its intellectual life was a portent of challenge and change to come: where Erasmus had friends reform, though not necessarily Protestant reform, could be promoted.

As elsewhere the Reformation came with ardent though conservative Lutheran preaching: conservative in the sense that it was confined to Luther's teaching on grace and scripture and did not extend to challenging traditional patterns of church organization at that stage. It represented the impact made on young men trained in the new studies of biblical humanism (those studies of the generation of humanists younger than the more traditionally minded Wimpfeling and Brandt) by Luther's early teaching. Nicholas Gerbel, secretary of the cathedral chapter, held Lutheran views though unwilling to go beyond the early Luther, but a vigorous Lutheran reform preaching was given by Matthew Zell, a stirring preacher of a more advanced Lutheranism, who attracted great attention which led to a council decree in 1523: "Only the holy Gospel may be preached at Strasbourg." Wolfgang Capito, provost of the chapter of St. Thomas and a Hebraist,—one of the few competent Christian Hebrew scholars of that time and its standards—was perhaps more Erasmian than Lutheran, a fact which made him open to influences alien to Lutheran orthodoxy from, for example, Zwingli's Zürich. Capito's friend, Caspar Hedio, also was Erasmian rather than Lutheran, and he was overshadowed by Capito and Bucer. Martin Bucer was a former Dominican friar who had been educated at Sélestat and whose father had burgher rights at
Strasbourg; he became a "Martinian" while resident at Heidelberg on hearing Luther dispute in the university there. After several vicissitudes, including support for that exploded star von Sickingen and then marriage, he came as a refugee Protestant to Strasbourg in 1523. By popular demand (and the voice of the people had become loud in religious choices there in that decade) he was made a parish priest, and therefore granted citizenship.

In order to understand later developments at Strasbourg we should remember its political situation at that time. It had moved out of its fifteenth-century security into taking sides in the great change of the period; and while it could still hope to balance between Habsburg and Valois, neither had chosen Protestantism and it needed powerful allies. The strong centre of Lutheranism lay far to the North, but much nearer political support lay in the Swiss Confederation with the cities of Basel, Zürich and Berne. However, they had chosen, or were to choose, a religious pattern which was more radical than that of Wittenberg and from 1530 onward Martin Bucer wanted to mediate between Lutheranism and Zwinglianism, or to form a union between them. Against the power of Charles V whose attention was long distracted elsewhere, fortunately for Strasbourg, its only hope lay in the military support of the Swiss (for it was strategically weak in wartime); this meant drawing near to Zwinglian theology and church practice. To assume that Bucer sat at his desk writing his theology without reference to this situation would be to misread his work and its purposes. Not only did he show the desire to mediate between Luther's "Real Presence" and what has been disparagingly called Zwingli's "Real Absence" in eucharistic theology, but also his theology is much concerned with the Church seen as the community wherein each man serves his neighbour, which in return reflects the social outlook of a city very self-conscious in matters of social welfare and the best arrangement of good and balanced living. Another development in Strasbourg, growing before the Reformation, and one which was to flourish in the hothouse atmosphere there in 1525-35, was that of heresy. This is difficult

1 Baron, op. cit. pp. 621 ff.
to define; inevitably it was below the surface, but Strasbourg had seen many burnings for heresy, and among ordinary folk in the city and its region were those influenced by Waldensian or Hussite ideas. When the Peasants' War reached the neighbourhood of the city in 1525 political radicalism sprang up there and the gardeners' guild demanded the distribution of the wealth of the clergy, and refused to continue to pay rent and tithe to the chapter of St. Thomas. But revolution did not develop in Strasbourg, thanks to its carefully balanced constitution, and the Peasants' War passed without further disturbance. Yet the gardeners' guild also laid the way open to religious radicalism through the preaching of a guildsman Clement Ziegler: Anabaptism came in at the back of these teachings of Ziegler about the brotherhood of all men, the need to smash the images in the churches and abolish the old sacramental ideas. Prior to the collapse of Protestantism at Strasbourg in 1548, when Charles V imposed the Interim, Anabaptist leaders of various patterns of thought and behaviour came to Strasbourg because of its comparative toleration, and Capito's willingness to listen to new views; Melchior Hofmann preached and died there in prison awaiting the "day of the Lord" when Strasbourg would become the new Jerusalem; Pilgrim Marbeck, Caspar Schwenckfeld and Sebastian Franck were more peaceful but equally as strange as Hofmann in the eyes of Bucer. But Strasbourg tolerated Catholics, Lutherans, Zwinglians, Anabaptists and supported Bucer's churchmanship and theology as long as the former groups did not seek to overthrow the latter.

In a short work with the long but significant title *Everyone should live not for himself but for others, and how men may fulfil this*, Bucer revealed a lifelong preoccupation, which though it may well have grown out of his earliest reflections on the meaning of Luther's teaching, was developed and deepened through his struggle with the problems of establishing a reformed church at Strasbourg. The basis of his conception of the church as the community which serves God through Christ and through Christ serves all men is seen in his statement: "One must make no difference between men but have the same love and desire to

\[1\] Chrisman, p. 181 ff.
procure for each all the good to which he is responsive". Church and state (and Bucer saw this intensively at Strasbourg as Church and city) have a mutual relationship for the service of the whole of society. The function of the Christian is to promote public usefulness both spiritual and secular. He struggled against the continual pressure of the varieties of Anabaptism at Strasbourg because he passionately held that one should not as a Christian withdraw from the world's need into separately organized communities of the holy. He thought of Strasbourg as the "Christian Republic" in which all aspects of life, including particularly social welfare, were part of the duty of Christian citizens. Bucer in his De Regno Christi, written after he had regretfully left Strasbourg for Cambridge as a refugee once again, could go as far as to associate a political programme of reform with fulfilling one's eternal salvation—an overstatement but one arising from his experience of Strasbourg as the centre of a well balanced political constitution and a city concerned for the well-being of its citizens. His concern for the practice of Church discipline, a recurring theme in his work which was to influence Calvin during his residence at Strasbourg, is closely related to his efforts to create an effective church life which showed the fruit of faith in good works. Strasbourg had found a man worthy to present theologically her civic pride in her cultural tradition and her sense of responsibility for her citizens.

Bucer, for all his tireless energy, was not in himself an army, and Strasbourg, strategically defenceless and too exposed for help from the Swiss, capitulated before Charles V in 1548—a symbol of the declining power of the German cities after 1530. In the Swiss imperial cities, still (though remotely) imperial, cities like Basel and in particular Zurich, the situation was different from that in North and South Germany since the major theological influence was Zwinglian and not Lutheran. There was also a difference in the scale since they were smaller: Zürich did not compare in size with, for example, Augsburg or Strasbourg.

1 Bucer, Das ym selbs nienant sonder anderen leben soll undwie der mensch dahyn kummen mög, 1523.
Also there was the powerful impact of the sense of being the "Confederates" which held the Swiss, and brought a new dimension to the corporate sense of the city. Zwingli was not only a theologian of Erasmian reforming origins; he was also a good Swiss confederate who associated the doctrine of grace with the concept of the local community which visibly identified itself with the reformed church, so that church and community were mutually energized and intimately related in a way which did not develop in the Lutheran areas of Northern Germany.\(^1\) Basel, Strasbourg, Zürich and Geneva—unlike Wittenberg—were restlessly alive with citizens aware of their powers and possibilities: Wittenberg and Saxony as elsewhere in Lutheranism formed a territorial culture of the "Land" and were not energized by a city culture.

As Moeller has shown, Luther who was not a member of an imperial city, really helped to kill the city principle in Germany since he thought of the Church fundamentally as a community enclosed among the large crowd of the lukewarm.\(^2\) However varied the description he gave of the Church from time to time, he did not think, as Zwingli could do, in terms of a people's church, the Church being the community as a whole. If Luther had done so this would have produced greater social and political change in the North. It was the city of Zürich which represented the ideal of a community Church, a "Volkskirche", and Zwingli, as Luther did not, adapted those traditional urban aspirations, referred to before, to the outward forms of the Church in its organization and community relations.

At Geneva there was an even greater contrast than Zürich showed with the imperial free cities of Germany.\(^3\) It had no social or religious problem left behind by the Peasants' War (that had been a wholly German phenomenon). It had no powerful guilds, indeed compared with elsewhere it had no effective guild organizations until the second half of the sixteenth century. It had no sophisticated merchant class as at Augsburg or Nürnberg with a taste for the arts: humanist culture could

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\(^3\) Henri Naef, *Les Origines de la Réforme à Genève*, vols. i and ii.
hardly be found there, and it had only a handful of printers confining themselves to pedestrian ecclesiastical publishing and some popular vernacular work. There was no underground activity of heresy: no echoes of Waldensianism could be heard there. It was a trading centre on the economic crossways between Italy, France and Germany, its staple needs being in corn and wine. It was at the hub of the spokes of the wheel of political pressures between French Burgundy, Savoy, Berne and Fribourg: though it was to turn this source of weakness partly by skill and partly by sheer good chance into a source of strength and independence.¹ Though the contrast with the imperial cities is marked, yet one part of the pattern is similar to that of many German towns—the struggle for independence from a prince-bishop. Geneva strove at intervals for two centuries to gain greater autonomy from its bishops, who were members of, or sponsored by, the House of Savoy, and Savoyard in their outlook and sympathies. The citizens had won the “Franchises” from the bishop, which included their right to meet in general council and to choose their own chief officers, the four Syndics who were elected annually.² The councils of Two Hundred, Sixty, and the Twenty-five were formed gradually. But the citizens needed a lever to gain freedom from control from Savoy and they turned gratefully to the Swiss from 1519, first to Catholic Fribourg and then to Berne which was to become Protestant in 1528. It was with the aid of Berne, the most powerful military force near to Savoy, that a political revolution was initiated in 1530 when Geneva was blockaded by the bishop of Savoy, and relieved in 1535-6. Geneva was now in danger of becoming a subject of Berne, like neighbouring Lausanne. In May 1536 Geneva showed that Protestantism had also come to stay, following upon the political changes, in affirming that the city “would live henceforth according to the law of the Gospel and the Word of God and abolish all papal abuses”.³ According to Geneva they had reclaimed and endorsed ancient political liberties, but in fact their enterprise was revolutionary

² Naef, op. cit. vol. i, p. 31 ff.
in spite of, or because of, the fact that, as Richard Hooker said later, their bishop "had departed as it were by moonlight".  
But this change of status at Geneva was not the product of Protestant zeal. There had been little Lutheran activity at Geneva before 1535, in part because there was no intellectual milieu in which it could, as elsewhere, originate: humanists were few, unoriginal or unlikely to impress anyone beyond their walls; the canons of the cathedral chapter had the social interests of patricians and were little concerned with the arts, worship or theology. There was no native tradition of theological energy, and in the event her reformers had to be foreigners. Protestantism came in with Berne's troops billeted in Geneva during the revolution. The first promoters of Protestant preaching were ministers supported by Berne, of whom a Frenchman from Dauphiné, Guillaume Farel, was the chief. It is significant of Geneva's violence that Protestantism could be promoted by murder when a canon of Catholic Fribourg, sword in hand, shouted to all good Christians to gather round him during a street riot in the city and was killed by Protestant zealots whom he had attacked. Of themselves the Geneva leading families and the city's councillors would not have urged Protestantism forward in their city: they were cautiously conservative and with little religious zeal Catholic or Protestant, and preferred to remain content with the revolution they had achieved. It was Berne's steady pressure, since religion meant political allegiance in that time, which brought Geneva confusedly into Protestantism.

Farel, the leader of the early form of Geneva's Protestantism, had begun his career at Meaux, and then elsewhere in France before moving to Berne. His theology was much more simplistic and radical in its implications than that of Luther, and nearer to Zwingli on the sacraments (Berne itself had adopted Zwinglianism from its neighbour Zürich), without becoming wholly Zwinglian. He lacked the theological training or equipment to work out a deep and satisfactory theology, Zwinglian or other-

2 The fullest account of Farel is in Guillaume Farel, 1482-1565, Paris, 1930.
wise. His strength lay in preaching and exhortation: he could truculently face a hostile crowd. He was a storm trooper of reformation suited to challenge the violence and indifference prevailing at Geneva. A quieter and more attractive figure was the younger man who assisted him at a major Disputation at Geneva in 1535, Pierre Viret, a native of Vaud and therefore now a subject of Berne. But the council still hesitated to act, though it suspended the Mass for the time being. Calvin's description of the religious situation at Geneva when he arrived there is pointed: "When I first came in this church there was almost nothing. There was preaching and nothing more. They sought out the idols and burned them, but that is not reformation. Everything was in tumult." ¹

Calvin came as a young, humanist, French lawyer, originally preparing for the priesthood, in 1536 passing through Geneva on his way either to Basel or to Strasbourg, cities of humanist culture as well as reformed theology, but Farel, aware of Calvin's standing among French Protestants and the brilliance of the first edition of Calvin's *Institutio*, exhorted him to stay and assist with building up the reformation at Geneva. For Calvin, an unlettered city of swordsmen such as Geneva was, would never have been a first choice. For him the fundamental needs of the reformed Church by 1536 were order, liturgy, well-constituted sacraments, discipline and well-balanced theology. To struggle to achieve these things with little ministerial aid, no effective native traditions of culture, theological enterprise or significant piety, was formidable and heart-breaking. The councillors were always aware of the fact that they had got rid of the bishop and brought Geneva to independence. They had no thought of putting their city into subjection to a religious order and discipline imposed by French foreigners. Freedom from the bishop, the pope's laws and the rule of Savoy meant freedom to do as you please. ² Faced by this sullen indifference to what Calvin regarded, and by any of the ecclesiastical standards of his time (Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, or Anabaptist) justifiably regarded, as essential to church discipline, the inevitable conflict

¹ *Opera Omnia Calvini, Corpus Reformatorum*, vol. ix, col. 891.
² The attitude of mind of Bonivard is typical (Naef, vol. ii, p. 155 ff).
of wills led to Calvin's ignominious dismissal. Three years later a change of heart at Geneva led to Calvin being urgently recalled there, and reluctantly he came.

One of the conditions of his return had been that the magistracy should accept the establishment of an agreed syllabus of order for church government, worship, marriage regulations and disciplinary procedure—the *Ordonnances ecclésiastiques*. This did not form a code of law but principles and methods for guidance: the magistracy would not allow it to be published for many years to come; that would have been to imply they were bound by it. They always wished to retain the initiative. Discipline at Geneva was always exercised by the Church's representatives by exhortation; the council alone could give punishment to those who gravely offended by heresy or immorality. The magistracy always reserved to itself the right to punish, and it held the reins of power at all times. The image of Calvin as Geneva's dictator is a stereotype invented and developed from the later eighteenth century onwards. Calvin did not suffer like a sultan from the ennui of power, but from the frequent frustrations and humiliations which occasionally brought on bouts of hysteria, through the obtuseness, indifference to, or insidious attack, upon his principles shown by Geneva's citizens until the comparative calm of the last few years of his life there. Nevertheless, Calvin impressed much of his organizing intellect and will on this small Savoyard city, which made it in the sixteenth century the "city of Calvin" in a way which cannot be said of Bucer's impress on Strasbourg or even Luther's at Wittenberg or Zwingli at Zürich. This was not only because Calvin created a theological order there to defend its reformed Church but also because no one native to the city or reflecting the city's own peculiar characteristics arose who was competent in the arts of government, law, politics and international relations as well as Church affairs to compare with Calvin. Without Calvin Geneva would have remained almost as culturally obscure as Neuchâtel in that time.

But how did Geneva affect Calvin? It is too often assumed that the impact was one-sided, and that Calvin masterfully moulded the city to his own will. The circumstances existing
and forces which came to bear on Geneva during his stay there made him more implicitly radical in his theology and Church practice and in his views of economic, political and international affairs than by temperament, training or original purpose he would have been in a different place, for example, in a town of his native France. It is frequently forgotten that Calvin claimed that it took some time for him to break "the visible unity of the Church" by becoming a Protestant: his sense of the Church, the body of Christ, an ordered sacramental society set in the world for sinful man, is more marked than in any other Reformer. The description of the Church, its sacraments and ministry, form the largest section of the *Institutio* and he wrote more elsewhere on these themes than he did on predestination; indeed, in his ecclesiological discussion he ignores the predestinarian emphases which were regarded as basic to that discussion by those who were later to be called "the Calvinists". His first period of creative writing at the full stretch of his powers was at Strasbourg where he had no authority. Geneva compelled him to apply his ideal views to conform to a situation differing from the setting he would have wished to give them. Again, it is too often not realized that when Calvin said he admired Luther and thought that he himself was fulfilling Luther's original teaching, he meant what he said and was not merely making a debating point. Like the young Luther, and even more like the French "légistes" among whom he had been trained, Guillaume Budé and others, he neither favoured armed resistance nor democratic political programmes: the contrary is true. His distaste for mobs of armed men at election times at Geneva is exposed over and over again in his sermons at those periods. In his economic thought, provided that justice was done between neighbours and that business men could make a modest living while remembering the golden rule (views he stated most guardedly), he showed no concern to allow usury. The needs of trade at Geneva constrained him here. His desperate efforts to avoid any positive concession to the Huguenots' wish to justify military action mark his insistence on avoiding overt rebellion: the nearest he came

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1 *Opera Selecta Calvini*, ed. P. Barth and D. Scheuner, ii (Munich, 1952), 392 ff.
to assent are two or three riddling sentences marked by ambiguity. In spite of this it has become a commonplace to refer to the Calvinist political activism of his followers or soi-disant followers. It is true that reading back towards Calvin's Geneva from later periods we pass through political radicalism, economic activism, sophisticated international politics, Presbyterianism in its varied forms, Puritanism, doctrinaire theological systems and much else—all of which at the most represent the later products of compromises he had to make with theGenevan ecclesiastical, social and political situation. That Calvin should have been associated on the wall monument of the Reformation in modern Geneva with Roger Williams, John Knox and Oliver Cromwell, for example, is an irony of history when we recollect the degrees of abhorrence to the views and actions of these men which Calvin would have held. Such men are represented on that wall because the consequences others drew later from his work there reflect the ways in which he was drawn beyond his own original hopes and aspirations.

I have attempted to show, though all too briefly, how it came about that Protestant theology came to be related to efforts at political and social change which had received new impulses in the period 1520-40. The one reacted upon the other even to effecting limitation or new moulds for a Reformer's theological views, and to encouraging new social patterns because of a Reformer's theological views. The small scale of the city enables us to see plainly the development of those relations. It is unwise, if not unhistorical, to ignore them.