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Heinrich Bullinger and the Annotations on John's Revelation in the Geneva Bible of 1560¹

The Geneva Bible,² sometimes called the Puritan Bible for its association with Puritanism, is a monument of importance, not only to the translation of the Scriptures into English, but also to the interpretation of the Scriptures for English readers. From the time the Geneva Bible came on the market in 1560 and until the printing of the Authorized Version in 1611, it provided the reader with the best translation of the Scriptures then available in English, and was for much longer a popular source of theology, providing through its marginal notes clergymen and lay people with spectacles with which to read the

¹ Considerable scholarly attention has been given to the translated text and its literary influence. See C.A. Mackenzie: *The Battle for the Bible in England 1557–1582*, New York 2002, 7–24.111–159; G. Hammond: *The Making of the English Bible*, Manchester 1982, 89–136; I.D. Backus: *The Reformed Roots of the English New Testament*, Pittsburgh 1980, 13–18. A useful introduction to the Geneva Bible at large is provided by L.E. Berry: Introduction to the Facsimile Edition, in: idem (ed.): *The Geneva Bible. A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition*, Madison 1969, 1–28. In addition S.L. Greenslade (ed.): *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 3: *The West from the Reformation to the Present Day*, Cambridge 1963, 155–159; F.F. Bruce: *The English Bible. A History of Translations*, London 1961, 86–92. Less attention, on the other hand, has so far been given to the annotations in the form of a systematic analysis. See, however, B. Hall: *The Genevan Version of the English Bible. Its Aims and Achievements*, in: W.P. Stephens (ed.): *The Bible, the Reformation and the Church*, FS James Atkinson, Sheffield 1995, 124–149; M. Jensen: *Simply Reading the Geneva Bible. The Geneva Bible and its Readers*, JLT 9 (1995) 30–45; R. Bauckham: *Tudor Apocalypse. Sixteenth Century Apocalypticism, Millenarianism and the English Reformation*, Appleford 1978, 44–50; idem: *Heinrich Bullinger, the Apocalypse and the English*, in: H.D. Rack (ed.): *The Swiss Connection. Manchester Essays on Religious Connections between England and Switzerland between the 16th and 20th centuries*, n.p., n.d. (perhaps Manchester 1995), 9–54; M.S. Betteridge: *The Bitter Notes. The Geneva Bible and its Annotations*, SCJ 14 (1983) 41–62; D.G. Danner: *The Contribution of the Geneva Bible of 1560 to the English Protestant Tradition*, SCJ 12 (1981) 5–18; R.L. Greaves: *Traditionalism and the Seeds of Revolution in the Social Principles of the Geneva Bible*, SCJ 7 (1976) 94–109. In Lewis Lupton's eccentric and somewhat subjective history of the Geneva Bible: *A History of the Geneva Bible*, 25 vols., London 1966–1995, considerable attention has been paid to the annotations. The author deals with the annotations on John's Revelation especially in vol. 7, London 1975, 150–181.

² *The Bible and Holy Scriptures Conteyned in the Olde and Newe Testament*, Geneva/Rowland Hall 1560.

Bible.³ The Geneva Bible is noted for its copious annotations. All the English versions of the sixteenth century were annotated in the sense that they contained marginal notes explaining difficult words in addition to cross references. Nearly all included in addition expository notes. The expository notes, however, were few and far between, the exception being the Geneva Bible and the Rheims NT of 1582.

The term «Geneva Bible»⁴ is ambiguous. The name has been applied to the English version of the Bible first published at Geneva in 1560, incorporating a revised version of the English New Testament published at the same place in 1557. The term, however, is also applied to versions with Tomson's New Testament, or to versions with Tomson's New Testament, but with an English translation of Francis Junius' Latin translation of Revelation. In addition to the different textual versions there are different sets of aids in the various editions, and there are different sets of annotations. There are actually three sets of annotations on John's Revelation in the Geneva Bibles, four if we include the annotations on Revelation in the English New Testament of 1557. In the 1560 version of the GB the notes of the English New Testament of 1557⁵ on Revelation were retained in a slightly revised version and combined with abstracts from Bullinger's sermons on Revelation. In 1576 Lawrence Tomson brought out an English translation of the NT based on L'Qiseleur's edition of Beza's Latin New Testament of 1565 (second edition).⁶ This version appeared for the first time in a GB of 1587. The annotations on Revelation are from Beza's NT. They are few and short, but are supplemented by a longer preface to the book by Beza. A fourth set of annotations, that of the Dutch scholar Francis Junius, appeared together with the notes of Beza in a 1595 version, supplanting the former entirely in the version of 1599 (or the version of 1602) and in several later versions.⁷

Up to the present little research has been devoted to the annotations on

³ At least 140 editions of the Geneva Bible were published between 1560 and 1644. (See T.H. Darlow, H.F. Moule: *Historical Catalogue of the Printed Editions of Holy Scripture*, London 1903, 61). 24 of these were Bibles with Tomson's New Testament including Junius' Revelation. A few English Bibles with the King James text included in addition the Geneva annotations. (See L.A. Weigle: *English Versions Since 1611*, in: *The Cambridge History of the Bible* (fn. 1), 361.

⁴ Henceforth GB.

⁵ *The Newe Testament of Ovr Lord Iesus Christ*, Geneva 1557. Henceforth ENT 1557.

⁶ Backus: *Reformed Roots* (fn. 1), 18–28.

⁷ *The Cambridge History of the Bible* (fn. 1), 155–159; L.J. Trinterud: *Elizabethan Puritanism*, New York 1971, 203f. Betteridge: *Bitter Notes* (fn. 1), 44, argues that the eight 1599-editions of GB are pirated and antedated editions, all printed at Amsterdam in the 1630s during the Laudian troubles and smuggled into England. That would make the version of 1602 the earliest with Junius' notes.

John's Revelation in the GB 1560. Richard Bauckham, however, in a useful study on the English apocalyptic tradition of the 16th century, pointed out that «the annotations on the Apocalypse in the 1560 Geneva Bible were very closely dependent on Bullinger's commentary»,⁸ i.e. on Bullinger's *In Apocalypsim Jesu Christi ... conciones centum*, printed at Basel in 1557. Later Bauckham followed this up with a study on the importance of the Zürich Reformers for the English apocalyptic tradition, in which he demonstrated that the annotations on Revelation in the GB of 1560 were «very closely dependent on Bullinger, though not to the total exclusion of original contributions by the annotator.»⁹ In the last mentioned study Bauckham was primarily concerned to demonstrate the historical and literary relationship between Bullinger's sermons on Revelation and the annotations on Revelation in the GB of 1560. He did so by comparing the annotations from three select chapters of the GB 1560 on Revelation with parallel passages from Bullinger's commentary. This was all presented in a broad historical context. There is little discussion in the study in mention of how the annotator of GB 1560 uses Bullinger in his notes on Revelation. Bauckham did not appear to be aware of the presence of the notes from ENT 1557 among the notes on Revelation in GB 1560, but he allows for such a possibility and his conclusion about the importance of Bullinger as regards the notes on Revelation in the GB is indisputable.

In the present study we shall follow the lead of Bauckham by pursuing the influence of Bullinger, and the anonymous ENT 1557 annotator, on the GB 1560 annotations on Revelation. The annotations on John's Revelation in ENT 1557 were, as we have noted, incorporated verbatim into the marginalia of the 1560 edition, though with some minor corrections and omissions to harmonize them with abstracts from Bullinger's commentary on Revelation. This study is limited to an analysis of the GB 1560 annotations on Revelation and its immediate antecedents as named above. We shall discuss the background of the sources and survey their historicizing interpretation of Revelation. The focus will be on the theology of history, i.e. on the particular interpretation of the salvation historical schemata in John's Revelation, on periodization, on regressive and progressive elements in the interpretation of Revelation, and on the line of influence from Bullinger and the ENT 1557 to the GB 1560 notes as regards the view of history. Bullinger's *In Apocalypsim* will be analysed in greater detail because of its formative importance for the GB 1560 annotations on Revelation, and because it, as the only complete commentary among our sources, provides answers to questions about nature, purpose, method etc, answers which are assumed in the annotation of GB 1560, but hardly expressed in words. It is, however, beyond the scope of this

⁸ Bauckham: *Tudor Apocalypse* (fn. 1), 49.

⁹ Bauckham: *Heinrich Bullinger* (fn. 1), 24.

study to go into all the highways and byways of Bullinger's multifarious commentary. In the process of the investigation we shall look for signs of radicalism. The interpretation of John's Revelation in the 16th century was then (as now?) a suspect affair. The notes in the GB at large were suspected of radicalism in their own time.¹⁰ Were the notes on Revelation in GB 1560 radical in any way? The view of history is of the very essence of the salvation-historical interpretation. Is it possible to detect in the annotator's salvation-historical interpretation of Revelation a radicalizing tendency? Did he play any role in promoting an optimistic and progressive view of history, then seen as potentially dangerous, since it might lead to demands for change in both church and society? What kind of impulses came from Bullinger's commentary on Revelation in this regard?

1. *Antecedents*

In Apocalypsim Jesu Christi ... Conciones Centum by Heinrich Bullinger (1504–1575) is the more important source of the annotations on John's Revelation in the GB 1560 edition.¹¹ The commentary had its origin in a series of Tuesday sermons held between August 21, 1554 and December 29, 1556, a series

¹⁰ Best known of contemporary critical comments on the notes of the GB 1560 are the supposed comments of King James I at the Hampton Court Conference in 1604: «Some notes», he shall have said, are «very partiall, untrue, seditious and savouring too much of dangerous and traitorous conceits.» The king's comments are from a contemporary rapport of the Hampton Court Conference by Bishop Barlow, cited in: Hall: *Genevan Version* (fn. 1), 125. Basil Hall thinks that the king's statement was «reproduced, or manipulated» by its author, and points out that the bishops in general «feared the association of the Geneva Bible with the religious stance of its originators at Geneva, as well as that of its later promoters under Elizabeth I.» *ibid.*, 126f. For more on the question of the radicalism of the GB notes in general, see Betteridge: *Bitter Notes* (fn. 1), 41–62; Hammond: *Making* (fn. 1), 93f.; Danner: *Contribution* (fn. 1), esp. 5f.16–18; P. Christianson: *Reformers and Babylon. English Apocalyptic Visions from the Reformation to the Eve of the Civil War*, Toronto 1978, 38f.; Bruce: *The English Bible* (fn. 1), 90f. A central question is here what constitutes a radical view in a sixteenth century English context. In the present study we have a focus on the view of history in the GB 1560 and its immediate antecedents. A radical view of history would in the just mentioned context be a view that in some way gave support to the idea of a future, penultimate age of felicity in the realm of either church or state or both.

¹¹ There has for the last several decades been a growing awareness among students of the Reformation that Bullinger's sermons on the Revelation played a significant role in the history of the apocalyptic tradition of the sixteenth century, just as there is a growing awareness that there can be no proper understanding of Bullinger, his

that completed Bullinger's exposition of the New Testament.¹² Soon after the completion of the series a Latin edition of the sermons was sent to Bern for printing, apparently as a result of being refused by Froschauer, Bullinger's Zürich printer, perhaps on the recommendation of the magistrate. The city council of Bern also turned down the application for printing and the work was finally published at Basel in August 1557 by Johannes Oporin.¹³ A German translation by Bullinger's son-in-law, Ludwig Lavater, was printed at

work and his contribution to the Protestant Reformation without taking his apocalyptic writings seriously. The works listed below touch in one way or another on Bullinger's apocalyptic contributions and have all in one way or another made a contribution to the content of this section. I.D. Backus: *Reformation Readings of the Apocalypse*. Geneva, Zurich, and Wittenberg (Oxford Studies in Historical Theology), New York 2000. Irena Backus' study on the interpretation of the Revelation of John in Switzerland (and Germany) in the 16th century fills a gap in our knowledge about the continental apocalyptic tradition. It contains a useful examination of select chapters of Bullinger: *A Hundred Sermons*. Of importance to this study is Bauckham: *Tudor Apocalypse* (fn. 1); idem: *Heinrich Bullinger* (fn. 1), 9–54. Of equal importance is F. Büsser: *H. Bullingers 100 Predigten über die Apokalypse*, Zwing. XXVII (2000) 117–131; idem: *Heinrich Bullinger (1504–1575). Leben, Werk und Wirkung*, 2 vols., Zürich 2004/2005. The latter work is the foremost study on Bullinger, and is the first major work on Bullinger to pay serious attention to his apocalyptic works. Furthermore, Christianson: *Reformers and Babylon* (fn. 10); K.R. Firth: *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain 1530–1645*, Oxford 1979; A.A. Garcia Archilla: *The Theology of History and Apologetic Historiography in Heinrich Bullinger*, San Francisco 1992; B. Gordon: *Introduction: Architect of Reformation*, in: B. Gordon, E. Campi (eds.): *Architect of Reformation. An Introduction to Heinrich Bullinger, 1504–1575* (Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought) Grand Rapids 2004, 17–32; Ch. Moser: *Papam esse Antichristum. Grundzüge von Heinrich Bullingers Antichristkonzeption*, Zwing. XXX (2003) 65–101; R.L. Petersen: *Preaching in the Last Days. The Theme of «Two Witnesses» in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, New York/Oxford 1993; J. Staedtke: *Die Geschichtsauffassung des jungen Bullinger*, in: U. Gäbler, E. Herkenrath (eds.): *Heinrich Bullinger 1504–1575. Gesammelte Aufsätze zum 400. Todestag* (ZBRG 7), Zürich 1975, 65–74; E. Staehelin: *Die Verkündigung des Reiches Gottes in der Kirche Jesu Christi*, vol. 4, Basel 1957, 202–207; W.P. Stephens: *Bullinger's Sermons on the Apocalypse*, in: A. Schindler, H. Stikkelberger (eds.): *Die Zürcher Reformation. Ausstrahlungen und Rückwirkungen* (ZBRG 18), Bern 2001, 261–280.

¹² Staehelin: *Verkündigung* (fn. 11), 202. See also H. Bullinger: *A Hundred Sermons upon the Apocalypse*, London 1573, sig. Bv^v, where Bullinger notes that he had expounded Revelation during the years 1555–56.

¹³ See Staehelin: *Verkündigung* (fn. 11), 202f. Bullinger shall in his diary have stated that the sensors of Bern thought that his sermons on the Revelation were «dangerous». Eduard Bähler explains further that the city council of Bern turned down the

Mülhausen the year after, while a French translation appeared at Geneva that same year.¹⁴ An English translation by John Daus was printed at London in 1561 and bears the title, *A Hvndred Sermons vpon the Apocalips of Iesu Christe*. A second English edition, slightly revised, was printed in 1573.¹⁵ In 1567 a Dutch translation appeared, and by 1600 at least 24 complete editions of Bullinger's commentary on John's Revelation had been published in five languages, 11 in French alone.¹⁶

The commentary is dedicated especially to the exiles of England, France and Italy then residing in Germany and Switzerland.¹⁷ From the preface it is evident that the sermons were partly intended as a means of consolation for the exiles, who, as Bullinger suggested, would find in John's Revelation (as interpreted by himself) «all thynges that happen to you,» in addition to «all things» that had happened to the saints from John's time to the present, not omitting things to come.¹⁸ The commentary as well as the dedication was much appreciated by English exiles then, a fact that is attested, not only by the use of Bullinger's commentary for the GB 1560 annotations on John's Revelation, but by letters of thanks from the English congregations at Frankfurt and Arau.¹⁹ The commentary was also well received in England after the accession of Elizabeth I. In 1561 Bishop John Parkhurst of Norwich, who had heard some of the sermons in Zürich, instructed all the ministers of Suffolk and Norfolk to obtain a copy of either the Latin or English version.²⁰ Through its abstracts in the GB 1560 it reached a wider audience. Through

request to print because of the anti-Catholic and polemical nature of the sermons (ibid., 203, fn. 21.25). For more on the Latin editions see: J. Staedtke (ed.): Heinrich Bullinger Bibliographie 1. Beschreibendes Verzeichnis der Gedruckten Werke von Heinrich Bullinger, Zürich 1972, 327–356 (abbrev. *HBBibl 1*). The Latin edition printed at London in 1561 is not included in *HBBibl 1*.

¹⁴ A second German edition appeared in 1587, printed at Zürich. See Staehelin: Verkündigung (fn. 11). See also *HBBibl 1*, 327–356.

¹⁵ *A Hvndred Sermons vpon the Apocalipse of Iesu Christ*, London 1573. According to the title page the edition had been «faithfully corrected and amended». The main purpose of the revision was apparently to improve the language of the 1561 translation and to include a few omissions. This edition will henceforth be referred to as *A Hvndred Sermons 1573*. All references are to this edition.

¹⁶ The statistics are drawn from *HBBibl 1*, 327–356. The Latin edition of Bullinger's commentary printed at London in 1561, not in *HBBibl 1*, has been included in the statistics.

¹⁷ *A Hvndred Sermons 1573*, sigs. Av^r, Bvi^r.

¹⁸ Ibid., sig. Bvi^r.

¹⁹ See *Original Letters Relative to the English Reformation*, trans. and ed. for Parker Society by H. Robinson, Cambridge 1847, 169f.763f. See also Bauckham: Heinrich Bullinger (fn. 1), 21–23.

²⁰ Bauckham: *Tudor Apocalypse* (fn. 1), 49.

the Latin and English versions it reached a smaller, but influential audience, among which were several subsequent authors of commentaries on John's Revelation.²¹

The work, as suggested by the title, is divided into a hundred sermons,²² each paraphrasing and interpreting the text sequentially. The Bible version used does not divide the chapters into verses, but the length of the text used for each sermon would on the average correspond to 4–5 verses in bibles with verse division. There is, however, considerable individual variation on this point and also considerable individual variation on the actual length of each sermon.²³ The commentary is a hefty volume of 339 folios in the English edition of 1573. This includes an introductory preface and index.

The sermons are well organized. The biblical text, placed at the head of each sermon, is preceded by a very brief summary and is followed by a somewhat longer one, which then gives way to the exposition of the text. The individual parts, in addition, are equipped with brief introductions and summaries. In the margins of the commentary one finds references to Scriptures and words and phrases summarizing the content. The exposition is characterized by many digressions of a doctrinal or pastoral nature and conveys strong Protestant sentiments, not only in its description of Antichrist, but in its general dogmatic orientation.

Bullinger had a high regard for John's Revelation. «I have verely loved this booke from my youth upward,» he states in the preface.²⁴ He considered the book apostolic, prophetic and evangelical.²⁵ Luther, on the other hand, questioned the apostolic authorship as well as the prophetic and evangelical nature of John's Revelation. In his preface to Revelation in the NT of 1522 he expressed doubt that such an obscure book, full of visions and figures, could be the work of the Holy Spirit. The apostles spoke clearly and in plain words, so

²¹ William Fulke, George Gifford, Arthur Dent. These follow Bullinger quite closely, and represent a «school». Associated with these are furthermore the commentaries of Francis Trigge, William Cowper and Bartholomew Traheron. John Foxe used some of Bullinger's periodization in the Acts of Monuments (see P.J. Olsen: Was John Foxe a Millenarian?, JEH 45 [1994] 603, fn. 24; 614, fn. 82), but his commentary on Revelation (*Eicasm*) marks a new trend in historicist interpretation and is not modeled on Bullinger's *A Hvndred Sermons* 1573.

²² Into one hundred and one, as a matter of fact. In the first Latin edition two sermons were given the same number (47), a matter that led to adjustments in later editions and translations.

²³ Sermon LX on Rev. 13:13–15 covers 11 fols, or 22 pages, including many historical details on the rise of Antichrist. This fact alone would suggest that this sermon, and many more as well, were edited before printing.

²⁴ *A Hvndred Sermons* 1573, sig. Biii^r.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, sigs. Aviii^r, Bii^r, Biii^r, and fols. 1v–6^r, fol. 97^v et al.

the book could not have been written by an apostle. The spirit of the book itself was foreign to him. Christ, he asserted, was «neither taught nor perceived» in this book.²⁶ Such words provoked a response from Bullinger. Luther, as it were, had «sticked this book with a dagger».²⁷ In his first sermon, before explaining a single word of the text, Bullinger sets out to refute Luther and indirectly others who nurtured doubts about the apostolic authority of Revelation.²⁸ Should books be excluded from the canon if they contained visions and figures, he wanted to know. Christ, after all, cited the Book of Daniel, and the calling of the Gentiles was shown to the Apostle Peter in a vision. The visionary nature and apparent obscurity of Revelation, Bullinger argues, was not unique to Revelation, but was shared by many other biblical books and served, furthermore, the purpose of clarity, rather than obscurity. To reject the authority of the Book on account of this feature was mistaken. Although Luther could cite church fathers and others who questioned the apostolic authority of Revelation, Bullinger claimed he could cite many more in support of apostolic authority and authorship, even Eusebius, whom Luther referred to for support to the contrary.²⁹

Luther's assertion that Christ was neither taught nor perceived in the Revelation was according to Bullinger a cardinal mistake. «I doubt», he writes, «whether there be in all the Canonick bookes (saving the prophecie of Esay, the story of the Gospel, and especially the Gospel of blessed S. John) any other booke which hath ... more goodly descriptions of Christ, than hath this booke. They are disceived and much abused, which suppose a rare Gospel to be preached in this booke.»³⁰ This is a point of view that Bullinger seeks to establish through his exposition, in fact there is hardly a 16th century commentary on Revelation that pays more attention to the Christological nature of the book than does Bullinger's *A Hvndred Sermons*.³¹ Luther moderated his view on the nature of the Revelation, a fact already apparent in a new preface to Revelation in the German Bible of 1530. In the preface to Revelation in this edition Luther still expresses doubts about the apostolic authorship of Revelation, but in the same place he presents as a conjecture a brief historicizing exposition of Revelation.³² It was anti-Roman, lucid, and much in accor-

²⁶ WA DB 7, 404. ET mine.

²⁷ *A Hvndred Sermons* 1573, fol. 2^r.

²⁸ Not least Erasmus and «Doc. Huldricus Zwinglius, my worshypfull Maister.» Ibid, fol. 2^v.

²⁹ Ibid., fols. 1^r–5^r.

³⁰ Ibid. fol. 129^v.

³¹ On Bullinger's response to Luther's criticism, especially to the Christological criticism, and on the Christological emphasis in *A Hvndred Sermons* 1573, see esp. Stephens: Bullinger's Sermons (fn. 11), 264–274.

³² WA DB 7, 406–420.

dance with Protestant sentiments at the time. Its influence on subsequent interpreters in the 16th century, rather ironically, was considerable, on Bullinger not the least.³³

A Hvndred Sermons is a multipurpose commentary. Bullinger was the chief pastor at the Grossmünster in Zürich when between August 21, 1554 and December 29, 1556 he expounded Revelation to his parishioners, among them students and teachers at the university, but also pastors, refugees et al. The sermon was a function of his office and the medium of his exposition of John's Revelation, a fact that colours the entire commentary. In the exposition one meets an experienced and devoted pastor who seeks to make the Revelation relevant to his hearers. There is a clear pastoral purpose in the Sermons, a purpose that has a natural foothold in the nature and content of the original text. Exhortation and admonition mixes with warnings and calls to repentance. On account of the precarious situation of Protestants at the time of preaching/writing, not least in England, France and Italy, Bullinger consistently picks out elements in the text which might serve the purpose of consolation, building faith and inspiring hope. This combines with calls to perseverance. In Revelation, Bullinger writes, «you shall finde all thynges that happen to you, and that wexe you now with paynefulnes ... Whereunto are added oftentimes most comfortable and sweete consolations.»³⁴ There is notably no call to activism, only to perseverance. Not surprisingly the commentary is dedicated to the exiles in Germany and Switzerland from France, England and Italy.³⁵

John's Revelation is a book difficult to understand. Bullinger, as we have seen, was convinced that it was a canonical and highly inspired prophecy. He shared with many of his contemporaries the conviction that it contained a revelation of the divine design in history, and was convinced that the coded language could be decoded. The language was meant to reveal, not to obscure.³⁶ It was Bullinger's intended purpose to show how this dark text could be made plain. Bullinger understands the prophecy as being related especially to the divine purpose for the church in history. In his unravelling of the divine design he is much concerned with the persecution and tribulations of the saints. How could the persecution and sufferings of the saints be a part of divine providence? His exposition is a powerful defence of the justice, goodness, and general government of God in history, a veritable theodicy, also much in accordance with the purpose of the original text. Again and again he points

³³ Luther's influence on Bullinger shows up especially in the identification of the major symbols and in the larger lines of interpretation. On the same subject see *Büsser: Heinrich Bullinger*, vol. 2 (fn. 11), 320.

³⁴ *A Hvndred Sermons* 1573, sig. Bvi^r.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. Av^r.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, sigs. Bii^v–Biii^f.

out that the tribulations of the saints are penultimate, not ultimate. There was light at the end of the tunnel, and this was the basic message of consolation of both John and Bullinger for the saints.

Part of Bullinger's purpose to explain the divine design as revealed in John's Revelation is his intent to explain the identity, work and final destiny of Antichrist. Here it becomes clear that Bullinger's purpose is partly polemical. When an expositor enters into the dualism of *Revelation* and identifies himself and his coreligionists with the protagonists in the apocalyptic drama, it is unavoidable that the account of the antagonist side becomes polemical. All the commentators of Revelation in the 16th century identified themselves with the protagonists in one way or another. This amounts to a legitimization of their own course, just as it automatically leads to a delegitimization of the antagonists, whoever they may be. Commentaries on the Revelation had long before Bullinger's time been an effective means of polemics, and they were no less in his time. Bullinger is aware of the ethical aspect of his polemics against Antichrist. In the preface he takes God as his witness that he had «taken this pain for no private hatred towards any man, for no desire of raylyng, nor for any intent (to) procure any mans displeasure, but simply to expound this excellent and right profitable booke of the New Testament.» He adds that «many godly and learned men out of sundry places ... had required my exposition vpon the Apocalypse», and continues, «neither do I role this stone alone. For all the world crieth out, that no other Antichrist shall come in the world then he that is comen already in the Bishops of Rome ... If I shall suppress and conceale this thing, the stones will cry out.»³⁷ That the work is not written out of personal malice need not be doubted. That Bullinger had been urged to write a commentary on Revelation by learned friends and wanted, even felt constrained, to tell things as they were, seen from his perspective, is likely. That many in addition shared his view of Antichrist is a well known fact. But this does not make his commentary an example of objective historical exegesis. On the contrary, it is a highly polemical work focussed on the papal Antichrist, characterized by strong language, and it places Bullinger among the prominent polemicists of his time.³⁸

It was noted above that Bullinger was convinced of the evangelical and

³⁷ Ibid., sigs. Biii^v–Biv^r. See also ibid., sig. Bv^v, and fols. 118^r, 229^v, and 251^v ff.

³⁸ Moser: *Papam esse Antichristum* (fn. 11), 98f., acknowledges the polemical element in *A Hundred Sermons* 1573 and other writings on apocalyptic themes, but thinks Bullinger's interpretation of the figure of Antichrist has not primarily a polemical purpose, but springs out of Bullinger's extraordinary interest in history. Bullinger's interest in history is undeniable, but so is the polemical nature of his commentary on Revelation and of the presentation of the figure of Antichrist. The historical purpose and the polemical one are complementary. See fn. 13 above for a contemporary appraisal of Bullinger's commentary.

Christological nature of Revelation, and it is clearly his purpose to demonstrate this conviction by means of the interpretation. Bullinger was also convinced that in John's Revelation was found «the chief articles of the creed», and Christian doctrines more generally, and as understood in the 16th century.³⁹ Bullinger, furthermore, was convinced that the conflict depicted in Revelation was in essence a conflict between truth and error, allowing him the opportunity to discuss this conflict in terms of doctrine, and doctrinal heresy. The range of doctrinal subjects discussed in the sermons is surprising. Most major areas of systematic theology, with an emphasis on Christology, soteriology and eschatology, are covered. Many of the doctrinal discussions may seem incidental and somewhat overdone, at least when considering the textual basis. On closer examination, however, it will be seen that many of the doctrinal issues discussed are an integral part of Bullinger's salvation-historical exposition as related to the apostasy of the church and the growth of heresy. The doctrinal discussions are all solidly reformed and serve to confirm Bullinger's orthodoxy (at least as a reformed theologian), a not unimportant matter since we are here speaking of a commentary on John's Revelation.

One more matter should be mentioned here and that is a brief comment in the preface where Bullinger mentions a particular purpose regarding the publishing of the sermons. He writes: «I am willynge to deliver some example to such as will read and expounde the same booke to the Churches committed to their charge.»⁴⁰ The sermons were meant as models for preachers who intended to preach on Revelation. The modern reader will find all sorts of problems with the exposition, its method, the many doctrinal digressions hampering the flow of the salvation-historical exposition, the repetitions etc, not to speak of the choice of the sermon as a literary genre for a commentary on Revelation. However, when taking into consideration the intended use of the commentary as a manual for preachers, as a collection of model sermons, one begins to understand, not only the choice of literary genre, but also why this commentary became a bestseller. It must have been the preachers who were the primary target of this commentary and who assured the success of the work as a publishing enterprise. In the sermons the preachers found a model of interpretation. And they found more. They found an interpretation of their own role in the divine design. In addition they discovered in each sermon a veritable mine of relevant sermon material. It did not matter a great deal that the larger lines of interpretation in the 100 sermons collectively were blurred on account of the oral origin and multipurpose nature of the work. For them it was the individual sermon that mattered most, for it was there they found the key to Revelation and the very model for their own sermon-

³⁹ *A Hundred Sermons* 1573, sig. Bii^{r+v}.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. Bvi^t.

making.

Just as *A Hvndred Sermons* is a multipurpose work, so the commentary is a multi-methodological work. The relationship between purpose and method is significant. We have mentioned Bullinger's pastoral purpose and to this corresponds a hermeneutical approach that might be termed pastoral-homiletic. The text is applied to the situation of the audience, and spiritual lessons and guidance are drawn from the text. Such a use of the text in a preaching situation hardly needs explanation. It is found in the original text, although in a figurative language primarily, and Bullinger expands on the use in a plain language.

Bullinger understood John's Revelation as an inspired prophecy, as a revelation of the salvific design in history related especially to the history of the church from the time of John to the (assumed) consummation of history.⁴¹ It was his intent, as we have noted, to unravel this design. To this end he uses a historicist (not historical) method of interpretation, a combination of the so-called church-historical and world-historical ones. History is used as a key to unravel the text. History is applied to the prophetic text, but the text is also applied to history, interpreting history. The method is basically a theological one, since the commentator assumes that the text has a divine origin and communicates a message about a divine design in history. History is seen as more than history in the modern sense of the word. History is providential. History is salvation history and it is the salvation-historical design that is of interest to the commentator and his audience.⁴²

The correlation of the prophetic text with history is the essence of the method. Bullinger, as most of his contemporaries, use correlation with moderation, and shies away from individualized one-to-one correlation of the apocalyptic symbols. The chief actors of the apocalyptic drama are correlated mostly with historical institutions rather than with individual persons. The beast from the earth (Rev. 13:11 ff.) is, for instance, identified with the papacy turned Antichrist, rather than with individual popes. Events in the apocalyptic drama are identified with states and circumstances of a general kind, rather than with particular events in history, though on this point there is some variation. The trumpets, for instance, are interpreted as heresies ravaging the church from the first century and to the end of history. There are seven trumpets in a sequence. Bullinger is aware that many interpreters had used the septimal structure as a periodization devise. Somewhat surprisingly Bullinger insists that the trumpets at large are not to be understood as single events in a

⁴¹ Ibid., sig. Bii^{r+v}, fols. 6^r, 106^v, 307^r.

⁴² In this study we shall use the term «salvation historical» to describe this method. The term is broad and includes several more specific approaches, such as the church-historical, the world-historical and the futurist ones.

chronological sequence. Rather, the events symbolized by the trumpets are each and all to be understood as typical or general, belonging to the entire history of the church.⁴³ If one terms this a universalizing of the symbols (as opposed to particularizing) one should remember that the universalizing is limited in nature. The symbols are not dehistoricized, they are not lifted out of history, but they are made common to all of church history from the time of John to the final judgement. One may wonder why Bullinger makes use of this hermeneutical device, whereby he circumvents the sequential and chronological element in his historicist construction. The use of the device seems quite deliberate. Could it be that a sequential, chronological and more precise interpretation of the text in terms of the development of heresy from the time of the Apostles would be at odds with his general periodization?⁴⁴ It has never been easy to fit actual history to the apocalyptic paradigm, but when generalizing the historical reference, as Bullinger does, correlation of history with the apocalyptic text becomes a great deal easier. On the whole the historicizing of the text is general, but becomes more particular and chronological in the parts where Antichrist is the subject.⁴⁵

Bullinger also makes use of other hermeneutical devices and approaches related to the historicist interpretation. It lies beyond the scope of this article to enter into details. Nevertheless, it might just be noted that Bullinger does not interpret Revelation as one continuous prophetic narrative, but as several prophetic narratives culminating in the final judgement. Recapitulation, in other words, is of the nature of the interpretation. Bullinger makes only moderate use of the apocalyptic numbers for the purpose of periodization. The millennium (Rev. 20:2.3.7) is understood as a literal thousand years. The number of the beast, 666 (Rev. 13:18), is understood as so many years, and is used to reckon the rise of antichrist. The 42 months, 1260 days and 3 ½ years signify the time of Antichrist, but the numbers, although definite, signify indefinite time. Bullinger makes no use of the septimal sequences for purposes of periodization.

Bullinger's use of the OT to explain the text is significant. For eight years prior to his exposition of Revelation he had expounded the OT prophets,⁴⁶ and his knowledge of the prophets, and of the OT more generally, is remarkable. He is aware of the close relation of Revelation with OT prophecy and actually claims that Revelation is an interpretation or paraphrase of the prophets.⁴⁷ The OT prophetic text is usually understood as a type,⁴⁸ but someti-

⁴³ See *ibid.*, fols. 107^r, 111^v.

⁴⁴ See fn. 107 below for further comments.

⁴⁵ See, for instance, the comments on Rev. 13:11ff.

⁴⁶ See *A Hundred Sermons*, fol. 1^{r+v}.

mes as a prophecy with multiple fulfilments (not to be confused with multiple meanings),⁴⁹ in some instances as a prophecy parallel to the one in Revelation.⁵⁰

The historicist method is the overall integrating method of *A Hvndred Sermons*. The method grew out of Bullinger's understanding of John's Revelation as a prophecy of the church in history. In Bullinger's view this history was characterized by apostasy, primarily doctrinal apostasy, culminating in the great apostasy led by the papacy turned Antichrist. Such a view of the nature of the text opens for the discussion of doctrinal issues. Bullinger weaves into his historicist interpretation much discussion of a doctrinal nature, especially of controversial issues such as the doctrine of merits, the invocation of saints, transubstantiation etc. Independent of this historicist-doctrinal understanding and exposition of Revelation Bullinger may have nurtured a view of the text as a revelation of doctrine per se. At least Bullinger states in his preface that he found in Revelation «not only expressed, but also well expounded the chief articles of our beleefe.»⁵¹ The exposition bears witness to this conviction. Bullinger finds doctrine everywhere, not just in the Christophanies and theophanies of Revelation, but wherever words and phrases might seem to contain an allusion to a doctrinal subject.⁵² Just as history was applied to the text in the historicist method, so doctrine is applied to the text in what one might call a doctrinal hermeneutical approach, or doctrinalizing. This approach is rather standard in the sixteenth century, not least in the context of the sermon. This method, or hermeneutical approach, just as the homiletical and salvation-historical approaches mentioned above, grows out of Bullinger's understanding of the nature and primary purpose of Revelation. Together they constitute the chief hermeneutical approaches in *A Hvndred Ser-*

⁴⁷ Ibid., fol. 1^{r+v}. See also *ibid.*, fol. 3^r and sig. Bii^r, where he refers to Oecolampadius for a similar view.

⁴⁸ See the interpretation of the laments in Rev. 18, which are related to the laments in Isa. 12, 14 and 21; Jer. 50 and 51 and Exe. 27–29. The OT laments are seen as general types of the laments in Rev. 18.

⁴⁹ See *A Hvndred Sermons* 1973, fol. 101^{r+v}. The OT restoration hope is generally understood this way.

⁵⁰ Dan 11:40–45 (about the king of the north), is understood as a parallel to Rev. 20:7–10 (about the war of Gog and Magog), whereas the prophecy in Ezek. 38 and 39 is understood typologically as well as a parallel. See *A Hvndred Sermons* 1573, fols. 277^v, 280^r–281^v.

⁵¹ Ibid., sig. Bii^r.

⁵² See, for instance, the discussion of the 5th seal, where the mentioning of the «souls under the altar» leads into a discussion of the state of the dead, to the affirmation of the soul's immortality and separation from the body at death, as well as to the denial of the theory of soul sleep (fols. 89^v–90^r).

mons.⁵³ In practice the methods are intertwined, and Bullinger moves between them as if they were all of one kind.

Bullinger finds four major visions in the Revelation, but, when counting the prologue and epilogue, six parts in all.⁵⁴ The first vision (Rev. 1:12–3:22), or part two, covers the letters to the seven churches. They are understood as pastoral letters to the universal church and are not seen as predictive in the salvation-historical sense.⁵⁵ The Christophany in Rev. 1:12–20 is taken to represent Christ in glory, focussing on his role in relation to the Church.⁵⁶

⁵³ F. Büsser: *Bullingers 100 Predigten* (fn. 11), 122–125; idem: *Heinrich Bullinger*, vol. 2 (fn. 11), 322–325, also speaks of three methods or patterns of interpretation, though partly with different designations and meanings from the ones mentioned here, namely (a) the so called «zeitgeschichtliche» or «preterite» interpretation, (b) the «überzeitlich-frömmigkeitsgeschichtliche», or «idealist» interpretation, and (c) the «reichs- bzw. kirchengeschichtliche», or «world- and church-historical» interpretation. This typology of methods of interpretation of John's Revelation is the standard one used to describe modern interpretative approaches to John's Revelation. I agree with Büsser that *A Hundred Sermons* 1573 is a multi-methodological work. I am uncertain as regards the appropriateness of the typology as applied to Bullinger's commentary. The «reichs- bzw. kirchengeschichtliche» type is unproblematic and corresponds to the historicist or salvation-historical one mentioned in the present article. The use of the term «zeit-geschichtlich» or «preterite» to describe Bullinger's interpretation in part of *A Hundred Sermons* 1573 is more problematic. It is correct that Bullinger interprets parts of John's Revelation in terms of the history of the Roman Empire in the time of John (eg. Rev. 13:1–10, and parts of Rev. 17). But is Bullinger here using the preterite method (= historical method), or is this interpretation an integral part of Bullinger's general historicist approach? The preterite assumptions as regards the text and its nature are, furthermore, absent and even contradicted by Bullinger. The world- and church historical method generally accommodates correlation of the text with the history of the time of John and before without being preterite, just as it accommodates aspects of the text related to the future from the point of view of the interpreter without being futurist. As for the use of the term «überzeitlich-frömmigkeitsgeschichtlich» or «idealist», I am a little uncertain if the usual meaning of this term corresponds to the description given by Büsser, but there are certainly elements in the interpretation that, isolated, could be placed under the «idealist» label. It is necessary to ask, however, if this terminology would correspond to Bullinger's method in view of his understanding of the purpose and nature of Revelation? Bullinger's interpretation of the seals, trumpets and vials is not timeless or «überzeitlich», but represents a moderate form of historicizing. Bullinger's doctrinalizing and spiritualizing of the text could, on the other hand, be seen as a kind of idealizing, depending on a corresponding interpretation of nature and purpose.

⁵⁴ *A Hundred Sermons* 1573, fol. 5^{r+v}.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, fols. Av^r, 23^r, 28^r, 38^r.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. Av^v, fols. 15^r–21^v.

The second vision (Rev. 4:1–11:19), or part three, covers the seals, the trumpets and the introductory theophany in Rev. 4 and 5. The theophany functions as a backdrop for the interpretation in the following chapters. The vision at large, Bullinger declares, will assure the reader «that God by his providence governeth all thinges, and that he is just in all his wayes, and holy in all his works.»⁵⁷ The interpretation in Rev. 4–5 sets the tone. The seals are perceived as general judgements on the world for rejecting the gospel. They are not understood chronologically, as already noted,⁵⁸ but are individually seen as covering the time from John to the end of the world.⁵⁹ The first is understood in terms of the preaching of the gospel. The next three are seen as consequences for rejecting the gospel. The fifth seal is identified with the «continual persecutions of the Church».⁶⁰ The sixth predicts the «corruption of the doctrine in the Church, with the sorowfull and terrible effect of the same.»⁶¹ The trumpets, which are assumed to be contained in the seventh seal, are understood as particular judgements on the church in the form of heresies, and are seen as a specification of the sixth seal.⁶² They do not follow the seals chronologically, although coming out of the seventh seal, but are understood to be parallel with the seals as regards time. The first four are heresies undermining the doctrine of salvation in Christ alone. The fifth is the papacy and the clergy of the Roman church, the sixth Islamic nations, the «Saracenes, Turkes and Tartarians», and the seventh is the final judgement.⁶³ The historization of the fifth trumpet amounts to a damning critique of the papacy and the clergy. The star that falls from heaven (Rev. 9:1) describes the bishops, especially the bishops of Rome, and their apostasy. They hold, not the key of the kingdom of heaven, but the key of «the bottomless pit», full of «corrupt and counterfeit doctrine».⁶⁴ The «smoke» from the bottomless pit signifies «hurtfull and divillishe opinions» and doctrine, which hinders men to see the truth. The doctrine of the primacy of the bishop of Rome is here highlighted.⁶⁵ The «locusts» are false clergy, whose power constitute «evill doctrine, wherewith . . . they iniect the simple Christians, but especially those that contemne the doctrine of the Gospel.»⁶⁶ The «king» of the locusts, called the «angel of the bottomless pit» is seen as identical with the «star fallen from hea-

⁵⁷ Ibid., fol. 64^r.

⁵⁸ See above pp. 116f.

⁵⁹ *A Hvndred Sermons* 1573, fol. 82^vff.

⁶⁰ Ibid., fol. 88^r.

⁶¹ Ibid., fol. 93^v.

⁶² Ibid., fol. 107^r.

⁶³ Ibid., fol. 107^rff.

⁶⁴ Ibid., fols. 114^r–115^r.

⁶⁵ Ibid., fol. 115^v.

⁶⁶ Ibid., fol. 117^r.

ven». This is Antichrist. His name is in Hebrew «Abaddon» and in Greek «apollyon», meaning destroyer, because he through false doctrine destroys souls, and through tyranny wastes kingdoms and those who refuse to obey him.⁶⁷

In John's Revelation the protagonists or saints are the subject of special attention in the interludes in Rev. 7, 10 and 11. The vision in Rev. 7 is understood to have as its chief purpose to console the saints by showing «that God hath an innumerable multitude of people (Jews and Gentiles), which even in the mides of those Antichristian times or difficulties, are made safe: and that of the mere grace of God, through the intercession of Jesu Christ, of whom alone is salvation».⁶⁸ When the saints are in focus in corresponding texts in Revelation the purpose is seen to be the same.

Rev. 10:1–11:14 is one of the more important texts in Bullinger's salvation-historical interpretation of Revelation, for it is here that he develops a view of restoration that plays a significant role in his construction of salvation history. The angel with the little book is Christ coming spiritually with the gospel. John is a type of the preachers who, by their preaching of the gospel, will recover the church and discover Antichrist.⁶⁹ This view of the restoration of the true church through the preaching of the gospel is continued in the comments on Rev. 11:1–14. The «two witnesses» there symbolize the preachers of the gospel in the time of Antichrist, while the «temple» as well as the «Holy City» symbolize the true church. The restoration, as conceived by Bullinger, goes on into his own time, and then «the seventh trumpet» announces the end of all things and the establishment of the eternal kingdom of Christ.⁷⁰

The third vision (part 4) comprises Rev. 12:1–14:20 and recapitulates salvation history from the time of John to the end of the world. All the chief actors in the apocalyptic drama emerge in this vision, but the focus is on the leading antagonists, the dragon, i.e. Satan, and his two this-worldly instruments, the seven-horned beast and the two-horned beast, identified by Bullinger as the «Old and New Roman empire», or more precisely as the western Roman Empire to its fall at the hands of Totilas, and as the Papacy, also identified as Antichrist. The chief antagonists are united in opposition to Christ and the saints. They are described by both John and Bullinger as persecutors of the saints and as oppressors of truth. The «woman» in Rev. 12:1 is the church, the «male child» (Rev. 12:5) is Christ. The conflict between the «dragon» and Christ leads at an initial stage to his being thrown out of «hea-

⁶⁷ Ibid., fol. 121^r.

⁶⁸ Ibid., fols. 99^r–103^v.

⁶⁹ Ibid., fols. 128^v–134^r (i.e. 132^r).

⁷⁰ Bullinger's view of restoration is developed further below.

ven», i.e. out of the church – an idea that is picked up later in connection with the interpretation of the millennium. The dragon then goes on to make war on the church from without, but the church seeks refuge in the wilderness, i.e. in gentile territory. The historical application of the text (Rev. 12) is somewhat imprecise and ambiguous, possibly because the chief actor is a meta-historical being. Nevertheless, there are allusions to the persecutions of the apostolic church, just as there is a more general application of the theme of persecution to church history at large.

In the subsequent chapter (Rev. 13) one finds the most detailed historization in the entire commentary and the most extensive as well.⁷¹ The two chief instruments of the dragon, the beast with seven horns and the beast with two horns, are identified with historical institutions, with, as already noted, the «Old and New Roman Empire», and the latter is understood as succeeding the former. Bullinger, in other words, is moving towards a one-to-one identification, though on a corporate level only, and he is making use of the principle of chronology. In seeking to historicize the text Bullinger draws on a great number of historical documents and chronicles. The brief descriptions of the beasts in the text and the brief account of their actions serve as the quarry for a reconstruction of Roman and papal history. The seven heads of the first beast are the seven first kings of Rome, but also seven emperors, while the 10 horns are kingdoms under Rome. The mortal wound of one of the heads is the suicide of Nero. The worship of the beast refers to emperor worship, and the persecution of the saints is understood in terms of the pre-Constantinian persecutions etc. Bullinger follows the history of Old Rome to the sack of Rome under Totilas.⁷² Rome had used the sword against other nations, by the sword, therefore, it would fall.⁷³ The fall of the Old Roman Empire is seen as a necessary condition for the rise of the New Roman Empire.⁷⁴ Since Bullinger follows the apocalyptic text he is not able to construct a continuous history. But by means of the text he is able, nevertheless, to create an outline that fits his view of the history of the «old Roman empire».

Bullinger's chief focus in Rev. 13 and in the commentary at large, is Antichrist, and Bullinger finds Antichrist in the beast with two horns. This beast, as he sees it, is an imitation of the first beast, a new empire that rises on the ruins of the first one, and which exercises the authority of the first beast. The rise of this beast to power is by Bullinger applied to the rise of the papacy, to the papal «assumption» of spiritual primacy and political supremacy. It is this

⁷¹ One sermon (sermon LX on Rev. 13:13–15) covers 11 ½ folios alone.

⁷² *A Hvndred Sermons* 1573, fol. 175^v.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, fols. 170^v, 175^r. Bullinger also relates the destruction of the empire to Odoacer «about the year of our Lord 480» (*ibid.*, fol. 176^v).

⁷⁴ Bullinger finds support for this view in 2 Thess. 2:7; Dan. 7:20, and in the early Christian tradition (Jerome). *Ibid.*, fol. 176^{r+v}.

development that in Bullinger's eyes constitutes the essence of the apostasy, and the formal ground of the heresy and tyranny of the Roman Church. And it is the history of this beast which constitutes the essence of Bullinger's salvation-historical interpretation. The beast «rose out of the earth», signifying that its kingdom was of this earth, not of heaven.⁷⁵ The «two horns» of the beast are seen as symbols of the two swords. The beast had not only two horns, but «spoke like a dragon», i.e. «it calleth in doubt the certaintie and truenesse of Gods Word, and by that occasion placeth his owne worde in stead of the word of God.»⁷⁶ The beast, «works great signs», which is seen as a sure token of Antichrist.⁷⁷ The «mark of the beast» is by Bullinger associated with the profession of the faith of Rome and the declaration of obedience to the papacy.⁷⁸ To Bullinger the beast is Antichrist, Antichrist is Rome, and Rome, the papacy especially, is the this-worldly embodiment of all heresy, tyranny and evil. There are no signs of hesitation arising from uncertainty in Bullinger's identification and description of Antichrist. The inspired Word says so.

In Rev. 14 the scene shifts from the antagonist to the protagonists, before the apocalyptic drama once more culminates in the judgement of the ungodly. The visions of the Lamb with the 144'000 saints (Rev. 14:1–5), and of the three angels (Rev. 14:6–12) have as their chief function to comfort the faithful. The first vision will show that Christ is with his church and will preserve it in spite of the persecution of Antichrist. The second shows that «the preaching of the Gospel can not be oppressed, but that it shall rather be preached with great constancie through out all the world.» A message of warning is added by the second and the third angels, namely that «Rome also shall fall, and all the ungodly be punished.»⁷⁹

The fourth vision (Rev. 15:1–22:5), or part five, may be divided into two sections, according to Bullinger. The first (Rev. 15–20) describes the temporal judgements on Antichrist and his members, as well as the final destruction of Rome, the Church of Rome, Antichrist and the dragon etc. The second section (Rev. 21:1–22:5) describes the reward and everlasting felicity of the saints. The vials are end-time judgements on Antichrist and his followers. The first four are general. The fifth falls on the See of Rome and is thought of as then being fulfilled. The sixth foreshadows that Christians (kings of the east) will withdraw their support (especially financial) from the Antichristian church, and the seventh symbolizes the final judgement. The interpretation of the vials is part of Bullinger's view of the gradual destruction of Antichrist.

Rev. 17–19 repeat and amplify the apocalyptic narrative about the destiny

⁷⁵ Ibid., fol., 176^v.

⁷⁶ Ibid., fol. 178^r.

⁷⁷ Ibid., fols. 181^v–183^r.

⁷⁸ Ibid., fols. 192^v–194^r.

⁷⁹ Ibid., fol. 200^{r+v}.

of the antagonists. Bullinger identifies the whore, named Babylon, with the «New Roman Empire», the Roman church and the papacy, so with Antichrist. The beast on which the whore sits is the «Old Roman Empire». The figure of the whore on the beast will say something about the two beasts of Rev. 13, but from a different perspective. This perspective is the judgement. Bullinger uses some space on the retelling of the rise and fall of the «Old Roman Empire», but it is really the «New Roman Empire», the image of the first beast, the whore, that is seen as the main subject. The «Old Roman Empire» exists no longer in itself, but only in and as part of the «New Roman Empire». ⁸⁰ The description of the whore is the tale of her crimes. She is described as being drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs, understood to be those who suffered death at the hands of Antichrist. She is furthermore said to hold «in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication». This is understood to be the false doctrines of Rome with which the whore has «seduced and injected all nations, and even now also retaineth them in superstition and Idolatry.» ⁸¹ The scene once more shifts (in Rev. 19) from the antagonists to the protagonist, before the drama culminates in the final judgment and the destruction of the beasts and their followers. The vision of the great multitude in heaven is seen as a message of consolation. The saints might in times of oppression have felt that God had forsaken them, but now that the judgement of the whore is revealed, they see that God never did forsake his own and they rejoice at their deliverance and at the victory over Antichrist and all evil. ⁸²

Bullinger understands Rev. 20 as a recapitulation of the apocalyptic drama, thus following the lead of Augustine. The millennium, bounded by the binding and loosing of the Devil, is followed by a time of war and persecution, which again is followed by the final judgement and the destruction of the Devil. The apocalyptic schema is Bullinger's major periodization device. This will be described in greater details below. The time after the millennium, the time when the Devil is loose, has traditionally been associated with the time of Antichrist. In John's Revelation it is associated with «Gog and Magog» and with a gathering for war against the «Holy City», the church. The war ensuing is by Bullinger related to the crusades. This war was the longest, fiercest and worst in the history of mankind. The purpose was formally to liberate the Holy Land. Bullinger characterizes the war as a foolish venture of the Papacy. ⁸³ The text moves on to a description of the Judgement and the Final State. The interpretation of these passages is traditional.

⁸⁰ Ibid., fol. 234^{r+v}.

⁸¹ Ibid., fol. 233^r.

⁸² Ibid., fol. 254^{r+v}.

⁸³ Ibid., fol. 277^v–280^r.

Bullinger's view of salvation history is the Augustinian one in a Protestantized version.⁸⁴ History, in this view (Protestant version), is seen as regressive,⁸⁵ i.e. as passing from an ideal or better state to a worse and defective state; from a state when the church and the gospel were pure, to a state when they were seen as defiled; from a time of Christ and his apostles, to a time of Antichrist and his associates, all culminating in a final judgement. A final, other-worldly state would follow.⁸⁶ Thus stated Bullinger's view of salvation history is quite orthodox, certainly from a sixteenth-century Protestant point of view.

And Bullinger intends to be orthodox. He repeatedly states that the last times belong to Antichrist. «Antichrist ... shall lyve at the day of judgement,» and «the persecution of Antichrist shall indure, with all ungodlynes, even to the last day.»⁸⁷ The complement of this is that there is no time of felicity before the judgement, a point he also repeatedly makes. Bullinger emphatically rejects chiliasm, not only in its patristic, literalistic and materialistic form,⁸⁸ but also in its more subtle forms as an end-time universal Christian commonwealth, or as a time of ecclesiastical felicity and peace after Antichrist.⁸⁹ He feels constrained to reject the idea of a future general conversion of the Jew-

⁸⁴ By the Augustinian view of salvation history in a Protestantized version we mean Augustin's view of post-incarnation salvation history, especially as spelled out in *The City of God* XX, reinterpreted by Protestants in the sixteenth century. According to this view the time inaugurated by the Incarnation or First Advent is identified with the millennium of Rev. 20 (*City of God* XX:7.8.9.13.30). The millennium is the promised kingdom and the kingdom is the church (*City of God* XX:9). The time of Antichrist follows the millennium and is short, lasting but three years and a half (*City of God* XX:8). This again is followed by the Resurrection and Judgment, followed again by a final, other-worldly state (*City of God* XX:13.30). Antichrist, in addition, is understood to be a single individual. In the Protestant version of this schema the millennium is considered past, and is often understood as a literal period of a thousand years reaching only to the beginning of the eleventh century. The time of Antichrist is present, and is a long period of time which overlaps with the millennium. Antichrist is not a single individual, but is understood as a corporate symbol and is identified with the papacy. The time of Antichrist culminates in the Parousia and Final Judgment.

⁸⁵ In this article we use the term «regressive view of history» to designate a view that sees the general condition of affairs in the world (or church) as worsening, esp. as time approaches the assumed end. A «progressive view of history» is a term which here is used to designate a process in the opposite direction, which may or may not include the idea of a penultimate state of felicity. Both views are theological concepts.

⁸⁶ Described in figurative language in Rev. 21:1–22:5.

⁸⁷ *A Hundred Sermons* 1573, fol. 266^v. See also fols. 153^v, 204^v, 283^r.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, fols. 3^v, 269^v, 273^r.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, fols. 204^{r+v}, 275^r, 266^v. Bullinger expresses a similar view in the Second Hel-

ish people and other nations because of the chiliast implications,⁹⁰ and he emphatically rejects the idea of a future, this-worldly fulfilment of the OT hope.⁹¹

The two major periodization symbols in Bullinger's sermons on Revelation are the *millennium* and *the time of Antichrist*.⁹² The millennium, understood as a literal period of a thousand years, is reckoned from A.D. 34 (the year of ascension and the beginning of the mission to the Gentiles), alternatively from A.D. 60 (Bullinger's date for Paul's imprisonment at Rome), or from A.D. 73 (Bullinger's date for the destruction of Jerusalem), to either A.D. 1034 (Benedict IX), or A.D. 1060 (Nicholas II), or A.D. 1073 (Gregory VII), when «the devil brake loose agayne, and seduced the people» by means of the above mentioned popes.⁹³ The millennium, according to Bullinger, was the time when the Devil was bound, when «all force and power was taken away from (him)», and when «the preaching of the Gospell thundered continually» and freely.⁹⁴ The time after the millennium, after the loosing of the Devil, was the time when the preaching of the gospel was suppressed, and the message of the gospel was corrupted. This sharp contrast between the millennium and the time of Antichrist does not square well with his interpretation of church

vetic Confession (1566), art. XI.

⁹⁰ Bullinger understands the conversion of the Jews as something that occurs throughout church-history, though he holds the eschatological option open, if only as part of the historical one. *Ibid.*, fols. 101^v, 102^r. (Cf. fn. 153 below).

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 101^{r+v}. Bullinger speaks of a threefold fulfilment of the OT hope: (1) a historical one, finding fulfilment in the post-exilic period; (2) a spiritual one, finding fulfilment in the church in the time between Christ (first Advent) and the destruction of Antichrist; and (3) an eschatological one, finding fulfillment in a final, other-worldly state. He opens for misunderstanding and a chiliast interpretation by stating that the third is «from the gospell restored, and the last iudgement.» *Ibid.* Does Bullinger think of this last restoration as twofold, i.e. first from the restoration of the gospel before the end and finally after the judgment? Bullinger actually believes in a restoration of the gospel in the sixteenth century, and Garcia Archilla: *Theology of History* (fn. 11), 145f., reads the passage in terms of this penultimate restoration. This interpretation is possible, but is at odds with the immediate context and its antichiliast intension.

⁹² Bullinger uses other periodization schemata and numbers. On the whole they are synchronized with the millennium – time-of-antichrist schema. See e.g. *ibid.*, fol. 84^{r+v}.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, fol. 270^r. Bullinger mentions a fourth calculation attributed to Cardinal Benno, i.e. from the Nativity to Sylvester II (c. A.D. 1000). He makes a point of stating that they «come all to one rekonyng». In other words, they are conjectures of the approximate time. For more on Benno and the millennium see *ibid.*, fol. 188^{r+v}, and note 191 below.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, fols. 267^v (parenthesis mine). See also 269^v.

history prior to the eleventh century, and he is consequently obliged to relativize the interpretation of the millennium. The devil, accordingly, was not bound absolutely, but only as far as the faithful were concerned, and only relatively, as far as they were concerned.⁹⁵ In addition the devil had been at work during the period through his two instruments, the beasts of Rev. 13.⁹⁶ Heresies had admittedly sprung up early, but the gospel, the doctrine of grace, had made it to the end of the period, but then it was «utterly obscured», by doctrines of «satisfaction and mans merites».⁹⁷ This kind of explanation renders the «binding» of the Devil nearly meaningless, and is an example of how Bullinger is trapped by his method, by the weight of an established tradition (Augustinian), and not least by his own biblicism.⁹⁸

Bullinger's other major periodization symbol, the time of Antichrist, is the more important frame of reference for his interpretation of history. According to Augustine the time of Antichrist followed the millennium. In Bullinger's *A Hvndred Sermons* the time following the millennium, the time of the loosing of the devil, is certainly seen as the time of Antichrist, but as a period the time of Antichrist is seen as overlapping with the millennium, beginning much earlier. This has partly to do with Bullinger's identification of Antichrist, partly with his understanding of the nature of the rise of Antichrist and his knowledge of history. Since Bullinger identifies Antichrist with the papacy, the time of Antichrist is linked to the history of the papacy. Bullinger understands the rise of Antichrist as a process and relates this especially to the struggle of the papacy for primacy in the church and for political supremacy in the secular realm. He writes: «Antichrist therefore hath his seedes: he hath his begynnyng: he hath his risyng up, his growyng and increases. But after a thousand yeares, he went to worke most impudently and most boldly.»⁹⁹ The state of the church had by far been ideal during the millennium, but after the millennium it was truly bad. The Devil came out of his prison; Antichrist was more active than ever; heresies proliferated; the saints were persecuted; there were wars and conflicts; hell was loose. Bullinger can therefore speak of the first thousand years as a time of «gold and silver» (using the imagery of Daniel), whereas the following five hundred were an age of «brasse, yron, lead, and clay».¹⁰⁰

Bullinger does not want to fall into the trap of calculating the time of Antichrist, and as a consequence the time of the Advent. He does believe that the

⁹⁵ Ibid., fol. 270^v.

⁹⁶ Ibid., fol. 273^r.

⁹⁷ Ibid., fol. 271^v.

⁹⁸ The things stated in Rev. 20 are, according to Bullinger, «true ... and it is not lawfull to doubt of the trueth of Christes wordes.» Ibid., fol 270^v.

⁹⁹ Ibid., fol. 272^r. See also fols. 85^r, 147^r, 265^{r+v}.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., fol. 272^r. See also fols. 89^r, 147^r, 233^v, 265^{r+v}, 276^v.

time of Antichrist is given in the apocalyptic numbers of 42 months (Rev. 11:2; 13:5), 1260 days (Rev. 11:3; 12:6), and 3 ½ years (Rev. 12:14), but these numbers are thought of as symbols of indefinite time.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, he knows both when the period begins and when it terminates. The terminus *ad quem* is the Final Judgement, the precise time of which was not revealed in accordance with the Dominical saying of Mt. 24:36.¹⁰² The terminus *a quo* is the thirteenth year of Pippin, or A.D. 763, calculated by means of the «number of the Beast», i.e. 666 (Rev. 13:18), and counted from the supposed year of the composition of John's Revelation, A.D. 97.¹⁰³ Bullinger, however, has not found a specific date for the rise of Antichrist. He believes in a progressive rise of Antichrist, and A.D. 763 signifies only a point in the process. According to Bullinger the foundation of Antichrist's kingdom was laid «under the

¹⁰¹ Ibid., fols. 141^vff, 149^r, 172^v.

¹⁰² Bullinger can sometimes be rather ambiguous. An experienced scholar attributes to Bullinger the view that the number of the beast, 666 (Rev. 13:18), understood by him as so many years, not only was used by Bullinger to calculate the approximate time of the rise of Antichrist (763 A.D., calculated from the supposed date of the composition of Revelation, 97 AD), but also the year of the end of Antichrist (1739 A.D., calculated from the supposed date for the end of the millennium, or 1073 A.D.). The latter calculation is understood as being intimated only, rather than explained fully (see Backus: Reformation Readings [fn. 1], 110f.). The disputed passage in Bullinger's commentary appears in a discussion on the meaning of the term «binding of Satan», understood by the author as being related to a literal period of years (millennium of years) and calculated from the destruction of Jerusalem (73 A.D.), to the papacy of Pope Gregory VII. (1073 A.D.). In what sense could Satan be said to be «bound» if among other things Antichrist had appeared long before the end of the millennial period? Bullinger admits that Antichrist appeared before the end of the millennium, affirming the calculation by means of the number 666, but argues that «it foloweth not, that the Devill was then quite loosed, or that the light of the Gospell was utterly extinguished.» (See *A Hvndred Sermons* 1573, fol. 272^r). There is no alternative theory of the calculation of the 666 years here, no intimation of two separate periods of 666 years. What Bullinger says in the disputed passage is that Antichrist rises gradually, and his rise during the millennium is not entirely incompatible with the idea of Satan being bound during this same time. The idea of the gradual rise of Antichrist is an important element in Bullinger's view of history. So is the overlap of the time of Antichrist with the millennium. In addition it should be noted that Bullinger is rather cautious as regards the use of apocalyptic numbers, and quite orthodox in general. If he should have calculated the time of the end of Antichrist, he would have calculated the time of the Final Judgement and Christ's Second Advent. In so doing he would have committed one of the unpardonable sins of eschatology. Bullinger more than once states in *A Hvndred Sermons* 1573 that the time of the end is not known (see fols. 92^v, 261^r).

¹⁰³ 97 + 666 = 763. Ibid., fols. 141^v, 142^r, 198^r, and sig. Bi^r.

emperour Phocas, ... builde ... under the kings of France (Pippin et al.): ... enlarged ... under the Emperours Henrickes and Friderickes, and finally, established ... under the Emperours following.»¹⁰⁴

Linked to this idea of a gradual rise of Antichrist in terms of the papacy, is the idea of a gradual apostasy of the papacy, and by extension, of the church. Commenting on the star that fell from heaven (Rev. 9:1), Bullinger writes:

«The Church of Rome was notable and pure. Yea and renowned sometye by the commendation of the Apostles. The same had Byshops, that is to say, Ministers of the Church, unto the Emperour **Constantine**, about. 32. for the most part very well learned, most holy (yet men) and most glorious Martyrs of Christ. Agayne from the Emperour **Constantine** unto Gregory the great are accompted about. xxxii. Bishops or Pastours of the Church of Rome, amongst whom there were many meetly diligent inough, learned, and godly: but yet amongst these were some founde also, which beyng blynded with the evill of ambition, began more to incline to seeke honours, and glorious titles, than the doctrine of Christ concernyng humilitie and simplicitie, and example of Christ, and Apostles hath permitted... . Neither was Gregory ashamed to say expresly, that he is the forerunner of Antichrist, who so ever would covet the name or title of the universall Byshop. But Boniface the 3. of that name being no whit moved herewith, required and obteyned of the emperour Phocas within a while after the death of Gregory, that the Church of Rome might be called and taken for the chief and head of all churches. Whereby the Bishops of Rome beyng plucked out of heaven, and cast to the earth, utterly began to cleave unto earthly thynges, to care for earthly thynges, yea and even to aspire to the Empire chief rule and gouvernement. Here have you, what starre fell from heaven to the earth.»¹⁰⁵

Bullinger here distinguishes three stages in the fall of the papacy (church). The Church of Rome was pure to Constantine, moderately pure to Gregory the Great, but after Phocas recognized the primacy of Boniface III, the foundation of the kingdom of Antichrist had been laid. The ecclesiastical view of history is clearly regressive.

Nevertheless, in Bullinger's view of history, as spelled out in *A Hyndred Sermons*, there are also some significant progressive features, for Bullinger not only believed in a suppression of the preaching of the gospel, in an apostasy of the church, in a time of Antichrist, he also believed that the gospel and the Church would be restored. Bullinger's interpretation of this subject is ambiguous and subject to misunderstanding. On the one hand Bullinger speaks of the preaching of the gospel as something going on throughout history, just as the suppression of the gospel and its restoration is something ongoing. On the other hand he speaks of a special time of suppression of the gospel, the

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., fol. 198r.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., fol. 114r+v.

time of Antichrist, and of a special time of restoration, «in the latter times», «before the last judgement».¹⁰⁶ The distinction between the general and particular application is not always clear,¹⁰⁷ and Bullinger may have wanted it this way.

The chief locus of Bullinger's doctrine of restoration is Rev. 10; 11; (14). The «angel with the little book» (Rev. 10) is Christ who comes «spiritually» and by the preaching of the gospel casts out Antichrist and recovers his possession, the church.¹⁰⁸ John, who received the «little book», is a type of the evangelical preachers who «professe Christ against Antichrist.» The command to prophesy signifies that «the Apostolical and Evangelicall doctrine must be restored in the last tymes before the judgement agaynst Antichrist and Mahomet.»¹⁰⁹

The «measuring of the temple» (Rev. 11) signifies that «the Lord is fully mynded to buylde up the Church.»¹¹⁰ The «two witnesses» are «the preachers of the Gospell, which shall fight agaynst Antichrist, in the last age before the judgement, and buylde up the church, and confirme the believers.»¹¹¹ The witnesses are slain by «the beast that ascends from the bottomless pit» (Rev. 11:7), i.e. by Antichrist, identified also as the papacy. The «slaying of the witnesses» is applied to the persecution of Antichrist for the five hundred years after the millennium, i.e. for «all that tyme wherein the Bishop of Rome hath usurped, and taken upon him authoritie over all Churches.»¹¹² Antichrist,

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., fols. 131^v, 135^v.

¹⁰⁷ When reading the commentary one gets the feeling that this ambiguity is deliberate and strategic. A historicizing interpretation of Revelation could be risky, both politically and ecclesiastically. By drawing emperors, princes and magistrates into his historicizing interpretation, often on the antagonist side in the interpretation, he clearly created political problems, and not only for himself, but for the city of Zürich and for other supporters. Bullinger's several attempts to shield the good emperors, princes and magistrates from his damning characterizations exposes the problem (see *ibid.*, sig., Aviii^{r+v}, fols.10^v, 168^v, 179^v, 186^r–188^r, 239^v). The refusal of the censors in Zürich and Bern to allow the work to be printed (see above fn. 13) may prove the point. There was an ingrained fear among the princes and magistrates of the sixteenth century of radicalism, and who might not (maliciously) suspect that Bullinger's exposition had a radicalizing intention? By keeping the generalizing option open it was more difficult to nail down Bullinger on his interpretation of a particular text. In addition, as noted above, it made the historicizing interpretation in general more flexible (see fn. 44 above).

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., fols. 129^r–132^r.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., fol. 135^v.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., fol. 139^v.

¹¹¹ Ibid., fol. 146^v. The «last age before the judgement», may be no other than the time of Antichrist.

¹¹² Ibid., fol. 147^r. There is a special application of the symbol to the martyrdom of

however, is not able to suppress the witnesses permanently. After 3 ½ days, i.e. after a short time, they are resurrected, not in person, but in other witnesses, who continue their work of restoration. As an example Bullinger mentions the execution of Huss and Jerome. Their death did not mean the end of preaching the gospel, or the end of restoring the true church in the grip of Antichrist, on the contrary, in a short time they were replaced by other witnesses who continued their work. There follows a short catalogue of such witnesses, including Valla, Savonarola, Mirandola, Reuchlin, Erasmus, Luther, Zwingli, Oecolampadius, Melanchthon «and innumerable others».¹¹³ The «resurrection of the witnesses» is applied to the author's present and near present, to the evangelical cause in the 16th century and a little before. The «earthquake» signifies «great alterations, commotions, seditions, warres, slaughters and destructions», and is seen as fulfilled in contemporary events, including the Sack of Rome in 1527.¹¹⁴ The «fall of a tenth part of the city» is applied to the defection from the Roman Church, thus to Protestantism, and the seventh trumpet following is understood in terms of the final judgement.¹¹⁵ Bullinger is on slippery ground here. The text indicates that there is time between the resurrection of the witnesses and the final judgement, symbolised by the seventh trumpet. If the two witnesses preach during the time of Antichrist and are slain when the period comes to an end, then logic would have it that the time following their resurrection is a time after Antichrist. This, however, is not the way Bullinger sees it. Antichrist remains to the end of time. The 3 ½ days are part of the time of Antichrist. The persecution, slaying and resurrection of the witnesses happens during the time of Antichrist, and repeatedly.

The idea of the restoration of gospel and church is linked to that of the gradual destruction of Antichrist. While gospel and church are being progressively restored, Antichrist is being progressively destroyed.¹¹⁶ The agency of this destruction within history is the gospel, or the preachers of the gospel, among them learned men who at one point defended the «See of Rome ... and her stinking Idol», but after their conversion to Christ began «to hate both Rome and the Romish Church ... and (to) burne (her) with the fier of Gods word.»¹¹⁷ The destruction is spiritual rather than physical. Bullinger em-

Huss and Jerome, an application that was to be popularized by John Foxe and others.

¹¹³ Ibid., fol. 151^v.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., fols. 152^v, 153^r.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., fol. 153^r ff.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., sig. Biiii^r, and fols. 137^{r+v}, 142^v, 145^{r+v}, 241^v. Bullinger distinguishes a gradual destruction of Antichrist from a final one. The theory is based on an interpretation of 2 Thess. 2:8.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., fol. 141^v, parenthesis mine. See also fols. 131^r, 132^r, 141^v–142^v.

phasizes this point, namely, that the warfare against Antichrist must be spiritual and not corporal.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, in his comments on Rev. 17:16–18 he suggests that the Turks as well as Christian princes may have a part in the destruction of the kingdom of Antichrist, the «newe Rome», in fact he goes so far as to suggest that just as «olde Rome» was destroyed by the nations (Goths and others) so the «newe Rome» may be destroyed by either the Turks or Christian princes, although «Christ alone wyth his hand shall bring downe Antichrist, and abolishe hym with hys commyng.»¹¹⁹ The distinction of a destruction of «newe Rome», or the kingdom of Antichrist, from the destruction of Antichrist himself is part of Bullinger's theory of a gradual destruction of Antichrist, and is presented as a conjecture rather than as a certainty.

Do we meet a radical Bullinger here? We have noted that the magistrates in Zürich and Bern considered *In Apocalypsim* «dangerous», and refused to issue a printing license. Eduard Bähler gave as a reason the anti-Catholic and polemical nature of the work.¹²⁰ Bullinger's interpretation of Revelation, esp. his polemics against the papacy and its supporters, including princes and magistrates, had political implication. There was a smell of radicalism here. What about Bullinger's view of history? There is a marked departure from the Augustinian paradigm in Bullinger's interpretation of history. The progressive features, the idea of the restoration of gospel and church, including the idea of a gradual destruction of Antichrist, could be seen as steps toward a millenarian view of history, and at least as signs of a development in the direction of the more subtle, semi-chilastic view of a time-after-antichrist, a development that was well on its way in the sixteenth century.¹²¹ The progressive features, however, are not in themselves millenarian and it will be remembered that Bullinger categorically rejects chiliasm, and associated ideas of penultimate felicity, whether social or ecclesio-spiritual in nature. Bullinger does not expect a new age in history. The restoration of gospel and church is juxtaposed with and held in check by the time of Antichrist and belief in the imminent end of history.¹²² Even if the kingdom of Antichrist is seen as being destroyed gradually, Antichrist and evil would nevertheless remain to the end. The view of history is triumphalistic. Ultimately the view is optimistic because Bullinger expects the imminent overthrow of Antichrist and this-worldly evil, and because he looks beyond history to a final, other-worldly state of felicity.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., fols. 145^v, 129^v, 137^r.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., fols. 241^v, 239^r.

¹²⁰ See above fn. 13 and associated text.

¹²¹ See R. Lerner: Refreshment of the Saints. The Time after Antichrist as a Station for Earthly Progress in Medieval Thought, Tr. 32 (1976) 97–144; Olsen: John Foxe (fn. 21), 623f.

¹²² Bullinger's belief in imminence is expressed repeatedly in *A Hundred Sermons* 1573. See sig., Bii^r, Bvi^{r+v}, and fols. 238^r, 306^r–307^r, 314^v.

But Bullinger's view of history as such is hardly of the optimistic variety, in spite of the progressive features. The end is near, and evil would remain as long as history should last.¹²³

What then is the point of these progressive features? We have noted the ambiguity in Bullinger's view of restoration. Even if Bullinger believes in multiple and repeated restorations throughout history, it is clear that he also believes in a restoration of gospel and church towards the end of time. That this restoration is related to the Reformation, at least in part, can hardly be doubted. That Bullinger spends most of his ink on the rise and fall of the Western Roman Empire (the «Old Roman Empire»), and on the rise of the papacy (the «New Roman Empire») with the aid of the French kings, and hardly any ink on the Reformation as such, does not mean that Bullinger does not «attribute any importance to the Reformation».¹²⁴ On the contrary, it could be claimed that all that Bullinger writes in his *Hundred Sermons* is about the Reformation. His book is an attempt to explain divine providence for his own time. The theme of end-time restoration is a means of giving the Reformation of the 16th century a salvation-historical meaning and evangelicals a salvation-historical identity. Bullinger's restoration message is a message of consolation, not for the dead, but for the living, and not just for all times in general, but for the then present in particular. Bullinger's view of history did contain progressive elements. It was triumphalistic, rather than optimistic. It was not radical, but there were elements in his interpretation with a potential for misunderstanding and misuse.

The English New Testament of 1557,¹²⁵ the only English Bible printed during the reign of Mary, has commonly, and as far as the translation and editing of the text is concerned, been considered primarily the work of William Whittingham (c. 1524–1579), then an English exile at Geneva and later dean of Durham. The principles of the revision are explained in a foreword «To the Reader». The text, according to this, «was diligently revised by the moste approved Greke examples and conference of translations in other tonges.»¹²⁶ It shows some dependence on Jugge's revision of Tyndale's New Testament, as well as on Beza's Latin New Testament of 1557 (1556).¹²⁷

¹²³ Gordon: Introduction (fn. 11), 25, speaks for many Bullinger scholars when he states: «For Bullinger the world was a dark place and he ultimately looked to the next world for relief. He had little of Calvin's humanist optimism.»

¹²⁴ Backus: Reformation Readings (fn. 1), 111. See also *ibid.*, 104.

¹²⁵ *The Newe Testament of Ovr Lord Iesus Christ* was published on June 10, 1557 at Geneva. Berry: Introduction (fn. 1), 9.

¹²⁶ ENT 1557, sig. **iii^v.

¹²⁷ See Hall: Genevan Version (fn. 1), 129–131.

The annotations were taken from «the best learned interpreters».¹²⁸ The annotations in ENT 1557 are more copious than in any earlier English version, though few in comparison with the marginal notes of the GB 1560. There are two types of annotations. In the inside margins are found variant readings, explanations of words and cross references. In the outside margins, marked with the letters of the alphabet, there are short expository notes. In addition brief summaries or arguments introduce each book and each chapter. The chapters were divided into verses, while paragraph signs are retained. The identity of the annotator(s) is not known.¹²⁹

The annotator of the Revelation of John in ENT 1557 understands this book as essentially a prophecy of things that «shulde be fulfilled after the comming of Christ».¹³⁰ The annotations, however, are so few, concise and general that one gets only a vague picture of the annotator's view of salvation history post Christ.¹³¹ Many of the notes apply the text to the spiritual life of the individual. When the text is applied to the church in history, the historization is general and cautious. When the notes are read as a whole one sees that the dualism of the apocalyptic drama is applied to the conflict between Christ and Satan on a trans-historical level, and to the conflict between the church and Antichrist on the historical one, more precisely to the conflict between the (true) church and the Roman Antichrist. There is no attempt to translate the apocalyptic numbers into specific historical periods,¹³² no attempt to fix dates, and only a couple of vague allusions to specific historical events.¹³³

The letters to the seven churches are apparently understood as pastoral letters to the universal church. The seven seals concern God's providence for the elect,¹³⁴ the sixth is seen as a prophecy of the second advent.¹³⁵ The first

¹²⁸ ENT 1557, sig. **iiii^r.

¹²⁹ The author of the unsigned general preface «To the Reader» in ENT 1557 identifies himself with the annotations by using first person (see *ibid.*, sig. **iii^v–**iiii^v). If the author of the preface is identical with William Whittingham, then the question of the authorship of the annotations of the entire NT, including the notes on Revelation, should be settled.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, «The Argument», sig. Ee 5^r.

¹³¹ The «Argument» of the book, an extremely brief salvation-historical paraphrase of John's Revelation, together with the expository notes in the outside margin (95 notes in all), and some of the exegetical notes from the inside margin, are here the primary sources for this section.

¹³² The 42 months of Rev. 13:5 are understood to refer to the time of Antichrist, and to mean that his «tyme and power is limited.» (Rev. 13:5, note b). The millennium of Rev. 20:2 means «for ages.» (Rev. 20:2, inside margin).

¹³³ ENT 1557, Rev. 17:8 and 13, notes b and c.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, «The Argument», fol. 404^r.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, Rev. 6:12, note b.

four trumpets are understood as plagues «for the contempt of the Gospel».¹³⁶ The last three, the woes, are «horrible threatenings against the infidels and rebellious persones.»¹³⁷ The two preachers in Rev. 11 are preachers of truth. The seventh trumpet announces the arrival of the kingdom of Christ.¹³⁸

Chapters 12–19 are understood primarily in terms of the conflict between Antichrist and the elect. Antichrist is symbolized by the seven-horned beast of Rev. 13:1–10, and is identified as «the Romishe Antichrist.»¹³⁹ The two-horned beast (Rev. 13:11–18) is the clergy of Antichrist, who «spoke devilish doctrine whereby the Romishe Antichrist is mainteyned.»¹⁴⁰ The «harlot», or «Babylon», of Revelation 17 is also seen as a symbol of Antichrist, and is so designated «because he seduceth the worlde with vaine wordes, doctrines of lyes, and outwarde appearance.»¹⁴¹ «Babylon», in addition, «signifieth the great confusion of the popishe kingdome.»¹⁴² The beast on which the harlot sits «is the Roman empire which being fallen into decay, the whore of Rome vsurped autoritie (sic).»¹⁴³ Satan is symbolized by the dragon of Rev. 12 and 20, and Gog and Magog (Rev. 20:8) are «divers and strange enemies of the Church of God.»¹⁴⁴

On the protagonist side in the conflict is Christ, symbolized by various angels,¹⁴⁵ by the lamb of Rev. 5:6 and 14:1, and by the rider on the white horse in Rev. 19. The church is symbolized by the woman of Rev. 12, and the elect by the 144,000 of Rev. 14:1–5. The annotator would understand Rev. 20:11–15 as a symbol of the final judgement, and this is seen as followed, on «the day of restauration of all thinges,» by a final, other-worldly state, portrayed by the Holy City of Rev. 21; 22.¹⁴⁶ A final note expresses faith in the imminent coming of the Lord.¹⁴⁷

The annotations on the millennium (Rev. 20:1–10) are few. The first re-

¹³⁶ Ibid., Rev. 8:12, note e.

¹³⁷ Ibid., Rev. 8:13, note f.

¹³⁸ Ibid., Rev. 11:15, note d. The interpretation here, as well as that of the sixth seal, would suggest that the annotator understands the text, not as one continuous narrative, but as a recapitulation of salvation history in several acts.

¹³⁹ Ibid., Rev. 13:1, note a. It is clear that the beast, identified as the «Romishe Antichrist», is primarily a reference to the papacy. It is unclear if it also includes the Roman Empire. In the composite symbol of harlot-beast in Rev. 17 the beast is the empire, whereas the harlot is Antichrist.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., Rev. 13:1 and 11, notes a and f.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., Rev. 17:1, note a.

¹⁴² Ibid., Rev. 14:8, inside margin.

¹⁴³ Ibid., Rev. 17:8, note b.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., Rev. 20:8, note c.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., Rev. 8:3; 10:1; 20:1.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., Rev. 21:1, note a.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., Rev. 22:20, note c.

surrection is taken as spiritual, the second signifies «eternal damnation».¹⁴⁸ In the chapter summary on Rev. 20 it is stated: «Satan being bounde for a certayne tyme and after let lose vexeth the churche greuously, and after the worlde is judged, he and his are cast into the ponde of fyre.» The millennium, in other words, is followed by a time of persecution or tribulation, which again is followed by the final judgement. Since the first resurrection is interpreted as spiritual¹⁴⁹ one may safely assume that the annotator is thinking in terms of the Augustinian schema,¹⁵⁰ though Protestantized as regards the length and nature of the post-millennial period.

One exception to this essentially regressive view of history may be the annotation on the sealing of «an hundred and foure and fourty thousande of all the tribes of the children of Israel,» in Rev. 7:4. To the annotator this signifies «the great number of Iewes, which go before us to salvation.»¹⁵¹ This reference to a (future?) conversion of the Jewish people does not in itself amount to a progressive view of history. However, when put alongside the annotations on Romans 11:15.26 the case may be different. The revival of Israel from the dead in Rom. 11:15 signifies that «the Iewes now remaine (as it were) in death for sake of the Gospel: but when both they and the Gentiles shal embrace Christ, the worlde shalbe restored to a newe life.»¹⁵² In the notes on the salvation of «all Israel» in Rom. 11:26 the annotator states: «He sheweth that the tyme shal come that the whole nation of the Iewes, not every one particularly, shalbe ioyned to the Church of Christe.»¹⁵³ Here, it would seem, the talk is not just of a future, national conversion of the Jews to Christ, but also of some kind of universal restoration, if only spiritual in nature. The restoration is future from the point of view of the annotator. If the annotator on John's Revelation is identical with the annotator on Roman's,¹⁵⁴ we would here have evidence of belief in penultimate felicity.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., Rev. 20:5, notes a and b; Rev. 20:6, inside margin.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., Rev. 20:5, note b.

¹⁵⁰ See fn. 84 above.

¹⁵¹ ENT 1557, Rev. 7:4, note c.

¹⁵² Ibid., Rom. 11:15, note c.

¹⁵³ Ibid., Rom. 11:26, note d. It is not without interest that the annotations on Romans 11:15 and 26 were carried over into the GB 1560 annotations, whereas the former on Rev. 7:4 was not. As we have stated already, the annotations of ENT 1557 were carried over into the GB 1560 verbatim, but in a few cases, where they did not agree with Bullinger's commentary on Revelation, they were either corrected or omitted. (Cf. fn. 90 above).

¹⁵⁴ See fn. 129 above.

2. *The Annotations on John's Revelation in the 1560 Edition of the Geneva Bible*¹⁵⁵

By the time the ENT 1557 was being revised for publication as part of the 1560 edition of the Geneva Bible, Bullinger's commentary on Revelation was available in print. A quick reading of the commentary may have convinced the editor that the original set of notes on Revelation was inadequate. Since it was the express purpose of the editor to make use of the best available commentaries for the annotations,¹⁵⁶ and since in addition Bullinger's commentary was dedicated to (among others) the English exiles in Switzerland and Bullinger himself was held in high esteem by the exiles, it is not difficult to understand why this commentary in particular should make its mark on the revised set of annotations.

The organization of the GB 1560 follows the lines laid down in the ENT 1557. The text, divided into verses, is nearly identical with the text of ENT 1557. An «argument» heads each book, and summaries precede each chapter. The argument of the book of Revelation, cross references and variant readings are a carry-over from the ENT 1557. Chapter summaries have been moderately revised, and nearly all of the expository notes of ENT 1557 were carried over into the new set of annotations where they were combined with abstracts from Bullinger's sermons on Revelation. There were 95 expository notes on Revelation in the outside margin of ENT 1557. 86 of these, together with many of the variant readings and cross references from the inside margin, were incorporated in the marginalia of GB 1560 on Revelation. Together with abstracts from Bullinger's *A Hvndred Sermons* the number of notes swelled to 416.

The revision of the ENT 1557 annotations on Revelation for the GB 1560 version is comparatively light. 9 notes from the outside margin were replaced because of their incompatibility with Bullinger's *Hvndred Sermons*.¹⁵⁷ Some

¹⁵⁵ The Bible and Holy Scriptures Conteyned in the Olde and Newe Testament, Geneva 1560.

¹⁵⁶ See GB 1560, the preface «To Ovr Beloved in the Lord,» sig. ***iiii^v; and also ENT 1557, the preface «To the Reader,» sig. **iii^r.

¹⁵⁷ The following notes were dropped or replaced by abstracts from Bullinger's sermons: Rev. 6, note b; Rev. 7, notes b and c; Rev. 11, note b; Rev. 12, note a; Rev. 13, notes a, f and i; and Rev. 15, note a. The last one was moved to Rev. 15 c and reworked. The others were dropped because of their incompatibility with Bullinger's interpretation. Eg. the sixth seal was by the ENT 1557 annotator understood in terms of the Second Advent, by Bullinger as a prophecy of the change of doctrine (heresy). The beasts in Rev. 13 were by the ENT 1557 annotator interpreted as the Roman Antichrist and his clergy, by Bullinger as the Old and New Roman Empire and it was the latter that in Bullinger's view was Antichrist.

were reworded,¹⁵⁸ more were slightly expanded,¹⁵⁹ most were retained verbatim. The revision was not in all places consistent. In the ENT 1557 set of notes the two beasts of Rev. 13 were identified as Antichrist and his clergy respectively. In the GB 1560 set of notes they are, in accordance with Bullinger's sermons, identified as the «Roman empire» and the «Popes kingdom» or Antichrist respectively. The change was not carried through consistently, since some of the notes retained from ENT 1557 on Rev. 13 still identified the first beast with Antichrist.¹⁶⁰ The inconsistency is most likely the result of editorial haste.

The 321 notes in GB 1560 which did not come from ENT 1557, together with the replaced notes and the emendations, are all from Bullinger, allowing the annotator a little editorial freedom. What the annotator does in these notes is primarily to provide the reader with a distinctly Protestant salvation-historical explanation of the text by means of abstracts from Bullinger's *A Hundred Sermons*. The doctrinal explanation of the text, so prominent in Bullinger's sermons, is less conspicuous,¹⁶¹ but the subject of doctrine as such has, nevertheless, a significant place in the salvation-historical explanation of the text.¹⁶² Many of the pastoral-homiletic type of notes in GB 1560 are from the ENT 1557 set of annotations. The result of the editor-annotators work is a new set of annotations with greater cohesion and system, much more specific in polemical reference to the Roman Church and the papacy, and somewhat more specific in its salvation-historical exposition. The view of the nature and purpose of John's Revelation, hardly a subject in the GB 1560 notes, as well as the general method of interpretation, is in principle identical with Bullinger's. The annotations, though, are only a faint reflection of Bullinger's more explicit and better organized comments. Nevertheless, it is Bullinger's

¹⁵⁸ See Rev. 8, note c in GB 1560 (originally ENT, Rev. 8, note a).

¹⁵⁹ See, for instance, Rev. 11, note x in GB 1560 (originally ENT 1557, Rev. 11, note d); Rev. 14, note a in GB 1560 (originally ENT 1557, Rev. 11, note a); Rev. 15, note g in GB 1560 (originally ENT 1557, Rev. 15, note c).

¹⁶⁰ See *ibid.*, Rev. 13, note m. It reads: «Antichrist hathe not power over the elect.» «Antichrist» in this note refers to the first beast. See also *ibid.*, Rev. 13, notes i and l, where the identification of the first beast with Antichrist is implied. The notes in GB 1560 here mentioned are all from ENT 1557.

¹⁶¹ Brief doctrinal/dogmatic notes, however, are scattered within the marginalia, primarily Christological ones. See, for instance, the comment on «I am the first and the last» in Rev. 1:17, note b: «Equal God with my Father, and eternal». See further Rev. 2:8, note k; Rev. 19:12, note p; Rev. 19:16, note u; 21:22, note q, and Rev. 22:16, note k. Some of the dogmatic notes are from ENT 1557, eg. Rev. 7:14, note n.

¹⁶² See, for instance, GB 1560, Rev. 8:7, note g on the first trumpet: «That is, proclaimeth warre against the Church, and troubles by false doctrine, and so admonisheth them to watch.» See also Rev. 9:3, note d, and Rev. 13:11, note r.

salvation-historical exposition, Bullinger's view of salvation history, even Bullinger's view of literary units¹⁶³ that shines through and colours the entire set of notes.

The editor-annotator of the new set of expository notes for Revelation in GB 1560 may not have created a very balanced set of notes, but he succeeded nevertheless in making a set of notes which, under the circumstances and subjectively, could help his select audience make sense of John's Revelation. The use of Bullinger was not only a plus on the expository side, it was a plus on the credibility side, given Bullinger's standing among the exiles and English Protestants more generally. In this new set of notes the seven churches (Rev. 1–3) signify the universal church.¹⁶⁴ The seven seals were understood as «a general prophecie to the end of the worlde».¹⁶⁵ The «white horse», or first seal, signified the initial victory of the gospel, while the following three seals symbolized plagues, i.e. war, famine and pestilence, for the refusal of the gospel. The fifth seal denoted the «continual persecution of the Church»,¹⁶⁶ and the sixth the «change of the true doctrine».¹⁶⁷

The seventh seal contained the seven trumpets, understood as «sectes and heresies».¹⁶⁸ The fifth trumpet is related to the Roman Church and the papacy. The «angel of the bottomless pit» is «Antichrist the Pope, king of hypocrites and Satans ambassadour».¹⁶⁹ The «star fallen from heaven» is thought to be «Bishopes and ministers, which forsake the worde of God.»¹⁷⁰ The «locusts» are «false teachers, heretikes, and worldlie futil Prelates, with Monkes, Freres, Cardinals, Patriarkes, Archebishops, Bishops, Doctors, Baschelers and masters which forsake Christ to mainteine false doctrine.»¹⁷¹ The «horses» are «the Popes clergie,» who are characterized as «proude, ambitious, bolde, stoute, rash, rebellious, stubborn, cruel, lecherous and autors of warre and destruction of the simple children of God.»¹⁷² The sixth trumpet has reference to «the enemies of the East countrey, which shulde afflict the Church of God, as did the Arabians, Sarasines, Turkes and Tartarians.»¹⁷³ The se-

¹⁶³ See Rev. 12:1, note a, and Rev. 15:1, note a, where there is reference to the «third» and «fourth vision». This is Bullinger's view of literary units.

¹⁶⁴ See GB 1560, Rev. 1:4, note f.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., Rev. 6, the chapter summary.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., Rev. 6:9, note l.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., Rev. 6:12, note n.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., Rev. 8:1, note a.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., Rev. 9:11, note x.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., Rev. 9:1, note a.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., Rev. 9:3, note d.

¹⁷² Ibid., Rev. 9:7, note n.

¹⁷³ Ibid., Rev. 9:14, note a.

venth trumpet is applied to the Final Judgement.¹⁷⁴ This is all Bullinger. The understanding of the septimal sequences in regard to time and the chronological relation between the seals and trumpets is unclear. This also is a reflection of Bullinger's exposition.

Rev. 12:1–14:20, in Bullinger's view, constituted the third vision in the Revelation of John. This understanding of structure is repeated by the GB 1560 annotator in the first note to Rev. 12, but in contrast to Bullinger, who used 57 folios to unravel the meaning of this vision, the annotator has little more than the outer margins of two pages to accomplish the same. The annotator seeks in his brief abstracts to identify the antagonists in accordance with Bullinger, and to characterize their work. The «dragon» is Satan, who persecutes the «woman», the church, and her child, Christ. The church flees into the «wilderness», i.e. to the gentiles, and the «dragon», in the ensuing conflict with Michael (Christ), is thrown out of «heaven», the church, and consequently «was deprived of all his dignitie and had no more place in the church.»¹⁷⁵

The two associates of the dragon, the «beast with the seven heads and ten horns» and the «beast with the two horns» are the Roman Empire and the papal Antichrist respectively. The seven heads of the first beast are seven emperors, and the ten horns are «manie provinces».¹⁷⁶ The «wounded head» of Rev. 13:3 «maie be understood of Nero, who moved the first persecutions against the Churche, and after slewe himself.»¹⁷⁷ The focus in the notes is naturally on the second beast, the two horns of which symbolize «the priesthode and the kingdom», i.e. the spiritual and temporal power of the papacy, also represented by the two keys in the armes of the pope, and by the two swords.¹⁷⁸ This second beast «spoke like the dragon», i.e. «he spoke devilish doctrine, accused Gods worde of imperfection, set vp mans traditions, and spake things contrarie to God and his worde.»¹⁷⁹ The «mark of the beast» is the confession of the faith of Rome, for «this Antichrist wil accept none but suche as wil approve his doctrine: so that it is not ynough to confesse Christ, and to believe the Scriptures, but a man must subscribe to the Popes doctrine: moreover their chrismatories, grasings, vowes, o(a)thes and shawings are signes of this marke . . .»¹⁸⁰ The description of Antichrist is radical; the language is harsh and offensive, at least when measured by modern standards, but hardly when compared with the language of the polemical literature of the sixteenth century. Bullinger's account of the historical relationship between

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., Rev. 10:7, note k. See also Rev. 11:15–17, notes x–z.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., Rev. 12:8, note l.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., Rev. 13:1, notes a–c.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., Rev. 13:3, note f.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., Rev. 13:11, note q.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., Rev. 13:11, note r.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., Rev. 13:16, note c (parenthesis mine).

the beasts, the fall of the Roman Empire, the gradual rise of the papacy/Antichrist to power, the account of the growth of apostasy, are somewhat inconspicuous themes in the GB 1560 notes. The focus is on the description of Antichrist rather than on his history. The third vision culminates in the harvest and the vintage, understood as symbols of the coming of Christ to judgement.

The fourth vision (Rev. 15:1–22:5) according to both Bullinger and the annotator deals primarily with the judgments of God on the wicked, with a focus on the chief antagonists, of course. The annotator follows Bullinger closely. The vials belong to the time of the end. The sixth, the drying up of «the Euphrates», signifies that the revenues of Rome etc. are being dried up;¹⁸¹ the seventh is the final judgement «when Christ shal come to destroy the wikked and deliver his Church.»¹⁸² «Babylon» then falls, and with it the «cities of the nations», i.e. the religions of «Jewes, Turkes and others».¹⁸³ He explains the capture of the «beast» as: «The ouerthrowe of the beast and his which shalbe chiefly accomplished at the seconde comming of Christ.»¹⁸⁴ This «chiefly» may suggest that the annotator thinks of a gradual destruction of Antichrist, such as is described under the vials. The «whore» in Rev. 17 is Antichrist, who is «compared to an harlot because he seduceth the world with vain wordes, doctrines of lies and outwarde appearance.»¹⁸⁵ The «scarlet beast» on which the harlot sits is understood to signify the Roman Empire, «whose cruelties and blood shedding is declared by scarlet.»¹⁸⁶ The GB 1560 annotator tries to include information on the history of the beast, à la Bullinger, and includes a short note on the relation of the «whore» and the «beast», stating that the «beast» «is the Romaine empire which being fallen into decay, the whore of Rome vsurped authority ...».¹⁸⁷ In other words, the papacy usurps the secular authority of the Roman Empire. The emphasis in these chapters (Rev. 17–19) is on the overthrow of the antagonist(s). The battle scene in Rev. 19:11–21 describes the fight of the pope and worldly princes against Christ «even until this last day». The overthrow of the beast and his allies «shalbe chiefly accomplished at the second coming of Christ.»¹⁸⁸ Once more the use of «chiefly» may be an allusion to the ongoing conflict with Antichrist, and his gradual destruction, culminating in the Second Advent. The final overthrow is beyond doubt, for the apocalyptic paradigm guaranteed this conclusion.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., Rev. 16:12, note l.

¹⁸² Ibid., Rev. 16:17, note r.

¹⁸³ Ibid., Rev. 16:19, note t.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., Rev. 19:20, note z.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., Rev. 17:1, note b. This note is actually one carried over from ENT 1557. It agrees entirely with Bullinger's exposition.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., Rev. 17:3, note d.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., Rev. 17:8, note i. This is one of the revised notes from ENT 1557.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., Rev. 16:19 and 20, notes y and z.

Bullinger, as well as the ENT 1557 annotator, understood Rev. 20 in terms of the Augustinian recapitulation schema, i.e. in its Protestant version.¹⁸⁹ This is also the understanding that lies behind the notes on this chapter in GB 1560. The «angel coming down from heaven» to bind the «dragon» is either Christ or «the ordre of the Apostles». The «key» in the angel's hand is the «gospel», and the «first resurrection» is spiritual regeneration.¹⁹⁰ The millennium, or time of binding, is calculated from the Nativity to Pope Sylvester II, i.e. as long as «the pure doctrine shulde after a sorte remaine(d).»¹⁹¹ After the «loosing» the «true preaching of Gods worde is corrupt.»¹⁹² In other words, a distinction is made between a time of doctrinal purity and a time of doctrinal corruption. «Gog and Magog», i.e. «the Turke, the Sarazins, and others», then afflict the church.¹⁹³ At last the world is judged and a «new heaven and earth» follow.

Bullinger was committed to a regressive view of history, the one reflected in the above-mentioned notes, and he was very explicit in his rejection of chiliasm. Nevertheless, he did believe in an end-time revival of the gospel and saw a fulfilment of this in the Protestant Reformation and its antecedents. This view of revival or restoration, which he found especially in the interludes of Rev. 10; 11 and Rev. 14:1–12, is toned down in the GB 1560 annotations. The angel of Rev. 10:1 is «Jesus Christ that came to comfort his Church against the furious assaltes of Satan and Antichrist.»¹⁹⁴ The «little book» in the hand of the angel signifies «the Gospel of Christ, which Antichrist can not hide, seing Christ bringeth it open in his hand.»¹⁹⁵ The message of the angel,

¹⁸⁹ For an explanation of the term, see above fn. 84.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., Rev. 20:1, notes a and b; Rev. 20:5, note h.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., Rev. 20:2, note c. Bauckham: *Tudor Apocalypse* (fn. 1), 217f., and K.E. Firth: *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain 1530–1645*, 122, cautiously suggest that the GB annotator in this one place may have chosen to follow John Bale rather than Bullinger. Christianson: *Reformers and Babylon* (fn. 10), 36–39.46, and J.N. King: *English Reformation Literature: Princeton 1982*, 429, seem to allow for a much more extensive influence of Bale on the GB 1560 notes. The influence of Bale on the GB 1560 notes on the calculation of the millennium is theoretically possible. The calculation of the millennium from the Nativity to Pope Sylvester II, however, is found not only in Bale's writings (see J. Bale: *Select Works of John Bale*, ed. by Henry Christman for the Parker Society [Cambridge 1849], 559f.), but also in Bullinger: *A Hvndred Sermons 1573*, fol. 270^f, where the calculation is mentioned as one of several possible conjectures (see above, note 93). Bullinger as well as Bale ascribe the Nativity-Sylvester II calculation to Cardinal Benno: *Vita Hildebrandi* (see Bullinger: *A Hvndred Sermons 1573*, fol. 188^{r+v}, and J. Bale: *Scriptorum Illustrium maioris Brytanniae* [Basel 1557], 142ff.).

¹⁹² Ibid., Rev. 20:6, note i.

¹⁹³ Ibid., Rev. 20:8, note n.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., Rev. 10:1, note a.

spoken with «a loude voice», «declareth that ... despite of Antichrist the Gospel shulde be preached through all the worlde: so that the enemies shalbe astonied.»¹⁹⁶ Finally, John is a type of the «true preachers», whose duty it is «to discover the Pope and Antichrist.»¹⁹⁷ The «measuring of the temple» in Rev. 11 is explained in terms of Christ's desire to «buyld his Church and not (to) have it destroyed.»¹⁹⁸ The «two witnesses» are «all the preachers that shulde buylde vp Gods Church.»¹⁹⁹ In contrast to Bullinger the «resurrection of the witnesses» (Rev. 11:11) refers only to the final Resurrection and not also, in a typological sense, to the contemporary restoration of gospel and church.²⁰⁰ Bullinger's restoration theology is present in principle, but in a toned down and more general version.

As we have seen, there is a marked concern with Antichrist in the GB 1560 annotations. This end-time figure is discovered, in the fifth trumpet, but chiefly in the «two-horned beast» of Rev. 13 and in «Babylon» or the «whore» of Rev. 17 and 18. As in Bullinger's sermons on Revelation, one detects a certain ambiguity in the historicizing application of the symbols. They have reference to both the «pope» and the «popes kingdome», to Rome, as well as the kingdom of Rome or kingdom of Antichrist, the church of Rome.²⁰¹ The GB annotator is primarily concerned with a characterization of Antichrist, less with the history of Antichrist, though the keen reader will discover allusions to the subject in many notes. The «time of Antichrist» is briefly mentioned. The apocalyptic numbers of 42 months and 1260 days signify that «Antichrist's time and power is limited.»²⁰² They do not signify a given number of days, months or years and are not used to calculate the time of Antichrist as such. The terminus *a quo*, however, is calculated by means of the number of the beast (Rev. 13:19) à la Bullinger. «About 666 yeres after this Reuelation,» i.e. 666 years after the composition of the book, «the Pope or Antichrist began to be manifest in the worlde.»²⁰³ That would mean around 763 A.D. In this there is an allusion to the gradual rise of Antichrist before the end of the millennium. The terminus *ad quem* is the final judgement. There is no attempt

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., Rev. 10:2, note e.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., Rev. 10:3, note f.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., Rev. 10:8, note l.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., Rev. 11:1, note a.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., Rev. 13:3, note e.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., Rev. 11:11, note r.

²⁰¹ Ibid., Rev. 13:12, note s (the two-horned beast as pope), Rev. 13:11, note p (the two-horned beast as the pope's kingdom), Rev. 17:1 and 4, notes a and f (the whore as Antichrist, and Antichrist as pope), Rev. 14:8, note m (Babylon as Rome as well as kingdom of Antichrist).

²⁰² Ibid., Rev. 13:5, note i. See also Rev. 11:2, note d; Rev. 11:3, note f.

²⁰³ Ibid., Rev. 13:18, note e.

to predict the time of the end, but it is imminent.²⁰⁴ Antichrist lasts to the end.

The view of salvation history in the GB 1560 annotations is a stripped version of Bullinger's view. It is clearly regressive. History moves from a time of Christ, to a time of Antichrist. From a time when the gospel was pure and freely preached, to a time when it was corrupted by false doctrines and the saints were oppressed. Ultimately the view is optimistic, since the oppression of the saints and truth culminate in the overthrow of the enemies of truth, which then is followed by a final, other-worldly state of felicity, but the view of history as such is regressive, quite pessimistic, focused as it is on the evil works of Antichrist to the end. The view of history that emerges in the GB 1560 notes does not contain the fine distinctions of Bullinger's *A Hvndred Sermons*. The idea of a gradual rise, reign and gradual decline of Antichrist is downplayed. The complementary idea of a gradual decline of the true church and of a gradual restoration towards the end of time is ambiguous, but the idea of a restoration of gospel and church, without a clear time reference, is there. It may not have been accidental, nor a consequence of extreme abbreviation. The end is near and the annotator already hears the footsteps of the Lord.²⁰⁵ The GB 1560 annotations on Revelation leave no room for a future, penultimate, this-worldly period of felicity, whether social or spiritual in nature.²⁰⁶ If there should be any signs of radicalism in the GB 1560 notes on Revelation it would be in the anti-Catholic and polemical nature of the notes.

The surveys of the historicizing interpretation in Bullinger's sermons and in the GB 1560 notes on Revelation above show, when compared, that the GB annotator follows Bullinger from chapter to chapter and from verse to verse, but it is an abridged, compressed and edited Bullinger we find there. The ENT 1557 notes made their own small contribution. They constituted

²⁰⁴ Ibid., Rev. 22:20, note p.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., Rev. 22:20, note p.

²⁰⁶ There is little of a restorationist theology with millenarian functions in the GB 1560 annotations at large. An exception, as far as the NT is concerned, may be the above mentioned ENT 1557 schema in Rom. 11 on the restoration of the Jews (see footnote 153 and associated text above). This schema is also found in the GB 1560 notes on Romans, since the ENT 1557 annotations on Rom. 11 were carried over unchanged (GB 1560, Rom. 11:15, note k; Rom. 11:26, note r). The annotations on the OT are quite traditional in terms of eschatology. The OT restoration hope is spiritualized and applied, mostly to the kingdom of Christ of grace (see GB 1560, Isa. 61:6, note k; Isa. 62:10, note l), but in a few instances to the kingdom of glory (see Isa. 65:20, note z; Eze. 37:25, note f). The annotations on Dan. 2:44, 45 apply the text to the kingdom of grace. This kingdom is seen as progressive in nature and it has no apparent chiliast functions. An exception may be the note on Ezek. 39:9 which speaks of a time of ecclesiastical «peace and tranquility» after the destruction of Gog and Magog. But who is «Gog and Magog» here?

the point of departure for the revision. The editor-annotator of the GB 1560 set of notes must have realized that, although inadequate, they were largely compatible with Bullinger's sermons, because the historization of the text was rather general. The retention of the ENT 1557 notes reflects as well a fundamental consensus on theological and salvation-historical questions.²⁰⁷ The ENT 1557 notes, however, are less conspicuous in the revised set of notes. It was Bullinger's exposition that came to set its stamp on the new GB 1560 notes on Revelation. Nevertheless, it was the editor-annotator of the GB 1560 set of notes, perhaps identical with the annotator of the ENT 1557 notes,²⁰⁸ who had the final word, not just on what to include, but also on what to exclude. If he, in the supposed words of King James I, should have contributed notes that were «very partiall, untrue, seditious and savouring too much of dangerous and traitorous conceits,»²⁰⁹ he has left little evidence of this in the GB 1560 notes on Revelation, the anti-catholic polemics excepted.

Abstract

Die Genfer Bibel – sie wird manchmal auch die Puritanische Bibel genannt wegen ihrer Verbindung zu den Puritanern – ist ein bedeutendes Dokument. Nicht nur weil sie die Heilige Schrift ins Englische übersetzte, sondern auch weil sie die biblischen Schriften für englische Leser interpretierte. Sie kam 1560 auf den Markt. Von da an bis zum Druck der *Authorized Version* von 1611 (die autorisierte Fassung der Englischen Bibel, auch King James Bibel genannt) versah die Genfer Bibel (GB) die Leser mit der besten damals erhältlichen Übersetzung. Weit darüber hinaus war sie eine volkstümliche Quelle der Theologie. Sie stellte Geistlichen und Laien eine Brille zur Verfügung, mit der man die Bibel lesen konnte bzw. sollte.

Diese Studie untersucht die Randbemerkungen der Johannes-Offenbarung in der Genfer Bibel von 1560 und ihre unmittelbaren Quellen. Schon früher wurde festgestellt, dass die Anmerkungen zur Offenbarung abhängig sind von Heinrich Bullingers Predigten *In Apocalypsim Jesu Christi ... Conciones centum*, die 1557 in Basel gedruckt wur-

²⁰⁷ An alternative or complementary explanation for the relative compatibility of the two sets of notes might be that the annotator of the ENT 1557 set of notes had knowledge, from the time before 1557, of Bullinger's sermons on Revelation through acquaintances attending his sermons in Zürich. Bauckham mentions several persons who could have served in such a role (see Bauckham: Heinrich Bullinger [fn. 1], 21ff.). The annotator might consequently have used the information derived from his acquaintances as at least one of the sources for his notes in the ENT 1557. The general nature of the ENT 1557 notes on Revelation, and the difference in salvation historical interpretation, show that Bullinger, in this case, would have been only one of several sources.

²⁰⁸ See fn. 129 and 154 above.

²⁰⁹ Cited in: Hall: *Genevan Version* (fn. 1), 125. See fn. 10 above.

den. Wir haben gezeigt, dass es noch eine zweite Quelle gab: die Anmerkungen zur Offenbarung im *New English Testament* von 1557. Zudem haben wir die Anmerkungen zur Offenbarung in der Genfer Bibel und ihre unmittelbaren Vorgänger analysiert. Wir behandeln ihren Hintergrund, ihre Art, ihren Zweck und ihre Methode und wir betrachten ihre historisierende Interpretation, um sie vergleichen zu können. Im Mittelpunkt steht dabei die besondere Interpretation der heilsgeschichtlichen Schemata in der Johannes-Offenbarung, die Periodisierung der regressiven und progressiven Muster und der Einfluss von Bullinger und des *English New Testament* auf die Genfer Bibel von 1560 im Blick auf ihr Geschichtsbild. Bullingers Schrift zur Apokalypse wurde detaillierter analysiert wegen ihrer prägenden Bedeutung. Bei dieser Untersuchung achten wir besonders auf Zeichen der Radikalisierung.

Unser Ergebnis ist, dass Bullingers heilsgeschichtliche Interpretation der Johannes-Offenbarung die Anmerkungen der Genfer Bibel von 1560 beherrscht. Bullingers Sicht der Geschichte enthält regressiv und progressive Merkmale. Er glaubte an eine endzeitliche Wiederherstellung des Evangeliums und der Kirche, aber diese Restauration würde gleichzeitig stattfinden mit der Zeit des Antichrists. Dieser würde bleiben bis zum Ende. Bullinger verwarf nachdrücklich den Chiliasmus und seinen subtileren Ausdruck in der Form einer zukünftigen vorletzten Periode kirchlicher Segensfülle.

Der Glaube an das immanente Ende war ein zentraler Gedanke in Bullingers Predigten. Der Verfasser der Anmerkungen in der Genfer Bibel von 1560 hat Bullingers Sicht der Geschichte abgeschwächt. Er behielt die Idee der Wiederherstellung bei, aber er sagte wenig über die Wiederherstellung in der Endzeit. Weder Bullingers Sicht der Geschichte noch die des Kommentators der Genfer Bibel kann als radikal bezeichnet werden.

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