

# **THE LIFE OF ULRIC ZWINGLI**

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The Life of Ulric Zwingli by Jean Grob

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**JEAN GROB**

**THE LIFE OF  
ULRIC ZWINGLI**



THE LIFE

OF

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ULRIC ZWINGLI.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

OF

JEAN GROB.

NEW YORK:

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1883

## PREFACE.

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THE present is honored in appreciating the past. But the records of bygone days are largely made up of the deeds of individuals whose true greatness is estimated by the beneficence of their acts. If worthy, they should be held in everlasting remembrance. Such is the righteous treatment bestowed by every generation deserving of the inheritance of heroic ancestors.

Well-nigh the entire civilized world recently honored the memory of one of the moral heroes of the race. The four hundredth anniversary of the birth of another is at hand.

Ulric Zwingli, the Reformer of Switzerland, merits the gratitude of every lover of civil and religious liberty. For the highest welfare of his Fatherland on earth and for his best interests in his Fatherland in Heaven, he lived and died a true patriot and a sincere Christian.

It is the design of this volume to present a reliable record of the man, in Church and State, without entering into the details of political questions or theological problems.

Owing to the shortness of time for publication, the work of translation was divided between the Revs. I. K.

Loos and G. F. Behringer. To the latter was assigned the task of editing the whole.

In justice to the author, the Rev. J. Grob, it is due to state that portions of the original of a doctrinal and controversial nature were omitted in the translation, because of the undenominational character of the "Standard Library," of which this volume forms a part.

G. F. B.

BROOKLYN, Dec. 25th, 1883.

# THE LIFE OF ULRIC ZWINGLI.

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## CHAPTER I.

### ULRIC ZWINGLI'S FATHERLAND.

THE outline of Europe may be compared to that of a maiden in a sitting posture. Beautiful Switzerland forms the heart of this maiden. It is the native country of the man of whom this volume will relate great, wonderful, and truly divine things.

From the remotest times of its history, Switzerland seems to have been inhabited. In primitive ages, however, the people chiefly occupied the highlands, the lowlands consisting of swamps and forests. But the names of the tribes which first selected Switzerland as a permanent place of abode are not known. Six centuries before the birth of Christ, Rhetius, prince of an Etruscan race which had occupied Italy as far as the Alps, fleeing with many of his nobles and warriors before the wild and brave Gauls—who dwelt beyond Mount Jura and Lake Geneva, and who had overrun upper Italy and conquered the Etruscans in bloody battles—came from Italy across the Alps. He found a peaceful reception, and from this time forward the inhabitants, out of respect to him, called themselves *Rhetians*, and the country *Rhetia*. The primitive inhabitants whom he met placed no obstacles in his way, but gradually



adopted the customs and language of these fugitives. Thus the R hetians gradually grew to a numerous and warlike people, and spread themselves victoriously in all directions. Their boundaries extended, on the north side of the Alps, from the sources of the Rhine to Lakes Wallen and Constance, and far into the modern Tyrol ; on the south to Lake Como and the river Adige.

The R hetians, moreover, were divided into numerous small tribes, which for the common defence of their country formed themselves into a confederacy. The leaders of the united people dwelt in castles erected on almost inaccessible rocks. The R hetians were no strangers to agriculture. The sunny soil was well adapted to it, while the green mountain sides invited to grazing. Vine culture also received attention. The Emperor Augustus, who in a later age conquered the R hetians, was a lover of R hetian wine.

Their nearest neighbors on the west were the Helvetians, of the same lineage as the Gauls, who dwelt beyond the Jura Mountains and Lake Geneva. The Helvetians occupied twelve cities and four hundred villages, and numbered about two hundred and sixty-three thousand souls. They submitted about the year 58 B.C. to the Romans, by whom vineyards were planted, roads laid out, and Roman customs, culture, and language introduced. Forty-two years later the R hetians also submitted to the Emperor Augustus, and remained under the Roman government five hundred years, until 476 A.D., when the last Roman emperor was dethroned and part of Helvetia fell into the hands of the still savage Alemanni, and part into the hands of the Burgundians, who had already been converted to Christianity. The name of the *Helvetians* was extinguished. They had been slain by the sword or reduced to servitude, and

their formerly flourishing cities, Wifflisburg, Windisch, Augst, and very many others, fell into ruin and decay. Thus nations disappear. New generations dwell upon their graves. Joyfully the farmer drives his plough over the relics of a former age, and here and there strikes against remarkable monuments of it, as at Knonan, Maschwanden, Mettmenstetten, Affoltern, and Windisch.

But from the ruins of the disappearing ancient world, the Christian Church shines triumphantly upon us as the preserver and propagator of the doctrine of the Crucified Saviour. Upon it and by it the modern world was founded. In very early times the Gospel came to Rætia. The first herald of the Faith was St. Lucius. Other missionaries followed him, among whom was St. Gaudentius.

In Helvetia too, as early as the time of the Roman supremacy, Christianity was proclaimed. One of the first missionaries there was St. Beatus, who, after having preached the Gospel in various places, retired to a cave near Lake Thun, which still continues to bear his name. Ursus and Victor brought the Gospel to Solothurn, Felix and Regula to Zürich, and still others to other places. In Geneva, Martigny in Wallis (Vallais), Aven-ticum, Raurika, and Windisch, bishoprics were established, which were afterward removed to Sitten, Lausanne, Basel, and Constance. The terrible inroads of the heathen Alemanni, who devastated the country and destroyed the inhabitants, ruined most of these Christian congregations. The Burgundians and these Alemanni furnished a new population to Helvetia.

Then new missionaries arrived from neighboring France and distant England and Ireland. Thus St. Germanus came into the valleys of the Jura, through which flows the Birse; St. Immerius came into a valley

at the foot of Mount Chasseral, watered by the Reuss ; Romanus and Lupizinus came into the wilds of Jura, not far from Orbe ; and where these pious men lived and labored arose cloisters and villages—Münster, St. Inier, Romammotiers. Distinguished above all is St. Gallus, for he became the founder of the monastery of St. Gall. About A.D. 640, one of his companions, Sigisbert, founded the church of the Schattdorf, in the Canton of Uri, and the monastery of Disentis, in which undertaking St. Placidus, a rich man of that region, supported him. Victor I., Count of Chur, placed all possible obstacles in the way of these godly men, and caused St. Placidus to be beheaded.

These missionaries were always travelling, partly to confirm the faithful, partly to win additional souls ; and, disregarding all misery, even persecution and death, they established cloisters and schools ; and the enthusiasm which they awakened continued in its good effects during succeeding centuries. And when Christianity had long been established in Switzerland, new cloisters continued to be erected up to the highest solitudes. In those dark ages these cloisters were for a time radiant centres of light for the preservation and spread of Christianity. In the course of time, however, when the presents and bequests of the faithful enriched them more and more, they lost their good old spirit, the love of the world gained control of them also, and swerved them from their original design. After the death of Charlemagne,\* who had consolidated Germany, France, and Italy into one kingdom, Rhætia and Helvetia were incorporated with the German kingdom. Burgundy followed in the year 1032, and from this time forward

\* Charlemagne died January 28, A.D. 814.—L.