PAUL AND ANABAPTIST THEOLOGIANS
PAUL IN EARLY ANABAPTISM

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It is a truism that while the Protestant Reformers were Pauline, the Anabaptists built their distinctive theology and practice on the foundations of the Gospels, especially Matthew. Perhaps this explains why in the substantial literature on the Anabaptists there have been no studies of their use of the Apostle.¹ As a result, this essay will seek to map out the Pauline terrain in early Anabaptism. Much like an archeological regional surface survey that identifies the location of sites, their varying density, and the extent of their individual remains so that others can make informed and focused choices of the most promising places for detailed research, this survey identifies those Pauline chapters and passages to which Anabaptists appealed most often. It will also offer some observations on the broad outlines of the Anabaptist Paul.

The method was dictated by the nature and extent of the sources. Surprisingly, none of the critical editions of early Anabaptists included a scriptural index. Fortunately, however, modern English translations—most in the Classics of the Radical Reformation—were so equipped.² Their indices were used as finding tools for applicable texts in the critical editions where such editions were available. Where they are lacking, the translations are cited. Peter Riedemann’s 1565 print version of his Confession from the 1540s was not available to me and therefore I was forced to rely on the translation itself.³ The use of the scriptural indices also determined the selection of texts since the translations rarely contained all of the surviving evidence. As a result I was dependent

¹ Herald Press publishes The Believers Church Bible Commentary, but that is not historically focused on the earliest Anabaptists.
² John H. Yoder ed., The Legacy of Michael Sattler (Scottdale 1973); William Klassen and Walter Klassen eds., The Writings of Pilgram Marpeck (Herald Press 1978); Leland Harder ed., The Sources of Swiss Anabaptism, (Scottdale 1985); E.J. Furcha, Selected Writings of Hans Denck 1500–1527 (Lewiston 1989); H. Wayne Pipkin and John H. Yoder eds., Balthasar Hubmaier, Theologian of Anabaptism (Scottdale 1989); C. Arnold Snyder, Sources of South German/Austrian Anabaptism (Kitchener, Ont. 2001). All translations from Anabaptist sources in this study are drawn from these texts.