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Above: Johannes Gröger, German, Supper at Emmaus, 1965. One of a series of thirty-six paintings illustrating Old and New Testament stories. These are reproduced in full color as a series called “Wandbilder zur Bibel” by Patmos-Verlag, 4 Düsseldorf 1, Postfach 6213, Germany. Each reproduction is 23 x 30” and costs 8.40 DM (roughly $3.80).

The Theological Convocation
of the LC-MS

TO THE EARS OF THIS EDITOR, more noise has come in objection to the Theological Convocation of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (scheduled for mid-April) than articulated hopes. Perhaps such is to be expected in the face of the Synod’s financial problems and in the context of present fears.

I, for one, welcomed the announcement of the Convocation with enthusiasm. Admittedly, as the plans progressed and the topics were announced, my expectations were tamed. Tamed expectations are not bad, however. More important is the question whether or not the expectations of the members of the synod coincide with the goals of the convocation. According to news releases, the convocation “... would seek to 1) rediscover with joy that basic doctrinal consensus which we have under the blessing of the Spirit of God; 2) re-evaluate and reassess the theological differences which have been noted ... with the view of arriving again at a consensus on what matters must be held in the same way by all, and what need not be the same without disrupting our fellowship.”

That seems fair enough, although one wonders whether those stated goals actually express the expectations of the participants and the members of the synod. From what is not said in the new releases one could conclude that ends are seen within the internal management and control of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod rather than an engagement of pastors, theologians, presidents, and church leaders for the sake of correcting and edifying the church.

Let it be asked: where is that care for the church? Hundreds of thousands of men and women in a thousand different places watch with dismay as the conflict goes on. They are called upon to take sides and make decisions in areas where the technical knowledge required makes their decision one of trusting or mistrusting the spokesman rather than understanding the issues. In those matters of their competence, the matters of true or false doctrine, the places where sin is rebuked, where teaching and proclamation speaks to their faith and life, where discipline for the life of discipleship to Jesus Christ is exercised, they are left without much instruction, without much correction, without much training.

In this respect, I find some of the listed topics to be disappointing. Will the session on “Inspiration and Inerrancy” take its lead from Scrip-
ture itself and refer chiefly to the interpretation (cf. II Peter 1) and to the use of the Scripture for the life of faith, holiness, and good works (cf. II Tim. 3)? Or will it focus, rather, on the origin of the documents and speculate on their nature? Orthodoxy is not measured by what men say about the Bible. It is measured by what they say the Bible says about men.

Has the lead of American “conservative” Protestantism been followed rather than the Lutheran lead in the selection of the topic, “Gospel and Scripture”? The concern for understanding the Scriptures, for using them as the rule and norm for doctrine and life, would more likely (for Lutheranism) show itself as “Law and Gospel.” Are there not enough instances in our land which show that it is entirely possible to have an absolutist notion of the Bible and know nothing purely of the gospel, where the claims of inerrancy and inspiration are repeated sincerely, and yet nothing clearly is known about the use of the law? Have we not enough evidence to show and enough clear doctrine to underscore that evidence, that our Adamic natures are legalistic about both the law and the gospel, even if one has the most relativistic view of the Scriptures?

However, there may be some real benefit come from the discussion of the topic “The Church Under Scripture,” not only because the topic seems more to the point, but also because the controversy in the LCMS is really about the church. From the beginning of Missouri’s history that has been the question. For not having answered that question clearly, she continues to be agitated by it.

It is not merely pride of authorship that suggests The Cresset’s call for a mini-Nicea (cf. the issue of April, 1973) offered a better plan for the assembly. The advantage of that plan was the opportunity offered to the church to talk to herself. The synod is not the church. Presiding officers of the synod and theologians in her schools ought to furnish leadership and instruction to the pastors and churches for their growth in faith and holiness, for their work of edification, nurture, discipline, worship, and evangelism. Truth in doctrine means truth in teaching it that men may worship God in true faith and lead holy lives. If the Convocation becomes an exercise of accusing and excusing each other, it is clearly not leading the churches into the truth of the pure gospel. Rather, the entire transaction will be revealed as a sign of the churches being led back under the law.

We commend the Convocation to the mercy of God with these three additional exhortations: (1) hear what the other party says; (2) ascertain what the other fears will be lost if that which he defends is lost; (3) remember God’s flock and do the godly work of caring for them.

Farmers on the Food Shortage

SPEAKING “FROM WHAT WE know best,” a group of 100 farmers from 13 states met at Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa in a Consultation on World Hunger. Although I was not present at the Consultation, I was moved by the news reports of the discussions and conclusions. The American Lutheran Church, convoker of the Consultation of Lutheran farmers, should receive public commendation.

The farmers argued that eating less meat as a way to reduce food shortages was no way to deal with world hunger. Reduction of meat consumption, rather, would damage the farmers, be of little use to relieve directly the hunger in other parts of the world, and would have the disadvantage in the “overall plant/animal” cycle of nature.

According to the news release of the Lutheran Council in the USA, the Consultation urged “diets of fewer total calories, refraining from excessive use of grains in animal feeding, eliminating the waste and excess cost required by ‘processed, convenience foods,’ and acting against waste in food packing.” The farmers also urged a decrease in the consumption of alcoholic beverages and in the non-agricultural uses of energy and fertilizers.

A sense of determination pervades the report of the Consultation and wisdom characterizes the proposals. There is a healthy pride manifest, joined with thanksgiving to God for the convergence of the gifts of soil and water and climate, with technology and ingenuity, that make this continent so abundantly productive. The farmers felt they could continue to produce food at the present levels, consistent with sound soil and water conservation practices, provided they are given "an opportunity for fair return on (their) investment of capital and labor.” Shrewdly, and very much to the point, they also add the proviso of the assurance that costs of continuing to provide “excess food for others are borne by all citizens and not disproportionately by farmers.”

The farmers advocated food reserves as insurance against disasters and famine. In their judgment, producing farmers and grain processors or an international authority should hold the reserves rather than the national governments of the contributing countries. Both a commodity reserve and a monetary must be included in the international system of reserves, and the international authority must have final control of the distribution process. Furthermore, the international system or reserves must rule out “the use of food for pursuing national political goals or international power-bloc games. It must be used in ways which do not create lasting dependency for receiving peoples.”

The Cresset
In the opinion of these farmers, food and technical assistance are key ingredients in friendly relations among the nations. They want farmers to become more active in political decision-making related to alleviation of world hunger. And, except in times of famine emergencies, they urged that church agencies and the government "give major attention to self-help development approaches rather than to direct relief."

The remnant of the farmer in me responded warmly to the reports of this Consultation. The proposals left me with a continuing sense that these Christian farmers can contribute vastly more to guide our thinking on ways to deal with the world food problem than can congressmen and bureau experts in Washington.

NOTES

FROM THE
EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

OF THE MAGAZINES THAT cross the editor's desk, two are this year celebrating their fiftieth anniversary: Commonweal and Saturday Review/World. I was struck by the fact that the November 15 issue Commonweal devoted the major portion of the issue to Faith: the struggle to believe; and the December 14 issue of SR/W devoted a special double issue to the restoration of confidence.

No doubt this coincidence struck me forcefully, not only because of the weight and challenge of the various articles or commentaries, but also because I think that of all the critical issues of the times, and of all the proposed solutions for a variety of problems, THE problem is the problem of faith. Year end reflections reminded me again of Jesus' saying about the end times: "... when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

Even the apparent shape of much contemporary religious controversy can be summed up by the question: "How much is the Bible to be trusted?"

If there is another day, I remind myself, I must write about the difference between securitas and certitudo. The consequences of the confusion of the two are horrendous for the spiritual life. But to sort out the passions and promises as people deal with practical realities while sighing for hope is delicate business. Nevertheless, two observations must be made:

First: faith is a flat word. It does not have its own shape, contours, or content. The shape of faith is made by the object to which it clings; the contours of faith are formed by what is received. Faith is not auto­genetic; it lives by what it receives. Hence, faith not only receives and grasps, faith also lets go, renounces, and repudiates.

Second: Archbishop Baum (dio­cese of Washington DC) is correct when he says, "The reality behind our problems, as well as the solution, are ultimately grasped and solved only in faith." He refers explicitly to the mystery of iniquity and the mystery of forgiveness. Nevertheless, I still find ambiguity in his words. My difficulty lies in the conception of faith as "problem solver." Dr. Paul Qualben, a New York psychiatrist, aptly diagnosed that problem when he said: Psychiatry aims at solving problems; Christianity is a way of life. A people is in deep trouble when Christianity becomes a way to solve problems and psychiatry becomes a way of life.

The confidence that bears the hope of solving problems is a faith whose shape is given by the human spirit, the human intellect shaping its options; its contours are formed by the devices, movements, and people who make promise of solutions, and, in fact, deliver some solutions. But under the full weight of life and death, these objects of "faith" crack. They cannot stand the weight.

The faith that receives its life from the heavenly Father is also generated from the outside. The faith that is salvation from sin, death, wrath, and condemnation is life. It is essentially child-like: it is begotten by and lives by the gracious One who is external to our need and superior to our hunger.

We are indeed in a "crisis of faith." The crisis is the judgment that we have, without discrimination, hung our lives on objects that could not sustain the load; we have put our feet down on ground that sinks under us from the excess weight. Under the just and merciful tutelage of that gracious Father we need to learn to discriminate among the objects of our "confidence"; we need to learn to discriminate among the claims of what kind of trust we put in what.

SURELY GOING IN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION from that of the farmers referred to above, and yet on the same subject, is the folder "An Alternate Diet," published by BREAD FOR THE WORLD, 235 E. 49th Street, New York, New York, 10017. This single page folder, arguing that "hungry people see our heavy meat diet taking a dispropor­tionate share of the world food supply," is available in quantity at no cost. Some of our readers may be persuaded that they want to contribute their share to the solution of the food shortage problem by such dieting. BREAD FOR THE WORLD has a larger program than offering alternate diets. The organization will furnish information to those who ask.

March, 1975
WHEN A MAN TURNS 40 HE SHOULD BE ALLOWED a looking back. After all, it begins to occur to him that there might be more behind than before him. A sobering thought. And when you have been teaching for almost half of those forty years, it suddenly looms larger and larger depending, of course, on how the scale reads, the waist line, hair line, etc. But those considerations notwithstanding, I took my dogs for our twice-weekly hike in the hills, and as I rambled along watching the too-rapid growth of our valley, I took a peek over my shoulder into the past eighteen years and said hello to some students, colleagues, places, who suddenly seem closer to me now than at any other time.

St. Matthew Lutheran School in Harbor City could be missed if you went south on any street but Normandie. Los Angeles annexed a narrow strip of land that ran from downtown L.A. twenty miles to the great San Pedro Harbor. St. Matthew was thus in Los Angeles. Not that that meant anything, really. The school was begun in a wing of the church... a sunday school room... some desks were hauled in, a teacher was called who stayed one year. That's where I came in eighteen years ago. Interestingly enough I was trying to finish college while working nights mopping floors in a factory. How I happened to find myself in Walter Uffelman's office at Good Shepherd Lutheran School in Inglewood I can't say. I went to Good Shepherd from grades six to eight so perhaps I stopped in to say hello to the great man. I remember his question: "Have you thought of being a Lutheran teacher?" The question was direct as he was always direct. I think I replied "no," because I hadn't thought of it. I thought I was going to do something with music, but nothing was certain. And all of a sudden I was standing in front of the board of Elders, Trustees, and church council telling them I could do the job. And I was off and running.

I found the kids waiting on that first day of the school year in 1957: grades 1-5 in one room. I couldn't believe anything like this existed. I had attended a one-room school in Illinois as a child, but I assumed that was a thing of the past. But here we were. And weeks of tearing up useless lesson plans, ordering new kickballs, playing baseball with the bigger kids during Homeric recesses led to four years of absolutely phenomenal memories. I continued to take classes at Long Beach State College at night. I played the organ for Sunday School, directed the kids' choir, drove Walther Leaguers around... in other words I did exactly what most teachers were doing. After one year we built with our own hands the new school: two rooms, an office, bathrooms. We hired a teacher and began to grow, stopping at grades 1-8 with three teachers when I left after four years. After that the school was closed.

I learned by learning. I cared and was cared about. I found out how to teach by teaching. My kids and I were almost inseparable... Rick... Don... and Janice and
Pam . . . Richard . . . Phil . . . were the fifth graders and graduated from the eighth grade four years later. But not until weeks, months, years of things happened: vacations . . . Christmas programs with lights not working . . . little ones crying in the congregation just as Joseph says his big lines . . . picking up the everlasting rocks from the playground . . . baseball games from noon until three . . . uniforms with RAMS for basketball . . . the Pastor shaking his head . . . dark meetings with Boards who threatened this or that . . . money problems (forever). . . car pools and me driving the school bus for a week . . . and the field trips to the beach to look in tide pools . . . finding a giant sea-turtle in the surf at San Pedro . . . bringing it back. Now what? What else? We moved all the chairs out of the schoolroom and sent a kid home for his wading pool. Peter Hop's dad owned a dairy so we borrowed a pick-up truck and with milk cans banging around bumped our way back to the beach and filled them with salt water. We poured in the water and put Matthew (our turtle) in! We knew he loved it at once. Or we pretended he loved it. At any rate that began a feverish week or two of gathering specimens of octopi, seaweed, crab, sand . . . pictures of sharks . . . charts of tides . . . shells . . . large nets draped all over the room . . . pictures in the LA Times showing us grubbing about in tide pools with water crashing over us. That led to what has to be the greatest open house since they were invented. We had tables around the room and each student had his project: vials of muddy water showing God knows what; boxes of wet sand and boxes of dry sand so that one could see the difference; pictures and drawings of sharks, whales, boats, and fish of all kinds. In the back of the room was a Marine aquarium the kids bought with money saved. In it we had all manner of things, some of which were not happy to be in the same tank with each other and said so by fouling the water with purple ink and bad odors. But the parents filed by and asked “What’s that?” and “Will it bite?” and “Did it ever bite?” and the kids answering all questions with enormous dignity and just a touch of condescension. And the show lasted for what seemed an eternity but it was over. The parents went home. And we stood exhausted and watched Matthew swim in his wading pool . . . which the kid said he wanted back in his yard . . . and we could see that Matthew was dying because he had been harpooned (that was why he was floundering in California waters near the shore) . . . so we borrowed a rifle from another boy . . . but this only after I called UCLA and asked someone in the science department how you killed a Mexican Green Back Sea Turtle . . . and then the long pause before the voice said “You drive a silver stake through his heart . . .”

THEN TO THE FIRST TEACHERS CONFERENCE where I see the President of the Conference in the men's room, and he says “You're Bedwetter, aren't you?” . . . and more conferences even after that . . . with papers on the role of the Lutheran Teacher . . . and talk in the driveways about the lousy salary Lutheran teachers receive . . . and the woman's place in the church and should choirs sing in Latin . . . and names flood in like salt-water tears . . . Rooney . . . Schenewaark . . . Rowe . . . Selby . . . Ferrin . . . and car pools to track meets . . . more programs . . . and the kids finally ready to leave St. Matthew after these four years. And then the big day when they (Rick, Don, Phil, Richard, Pam, Janice) jumped into my car and we raced to Long Beach where they watched me receive my B.A. after so many years of part-time schooling, and racing back to St. Matthew where we got ready for the graduation exercises and I handed them their diplomas on the same day . . . and everyone crying and shaking hands and saying things no one can remember . . . and the church filled with streamers, cake and punch, and wills being read and my new watch from the kids . . . and them talking of high school . . . and the memories flood in too fast and they tail off and an end comes; as ends must come. And St. Matthew was left behind for all of us as we went different ways. After all, four years is a baptism by fire sometimes and First Lutheran, Culver City, Ca. called at just the right time. I guess the Lord knew that all along.

Culver City is another city within the great city. But this time I met the fifth and sixth grades in one room and new names became my names: Howard, Prange, Kohrs, Benham, Gerth. I worked with kids again . . . choirs . . . youth. We loved to make up spectacular endings to choral anthems or hymns and once decided to do a concert of endings. It never came off. More programs at Culver City. And peace. Pastor Kahloff with kind words . . . and patience . . . and good parents . . . and still attending conferences where I learn of teachers having nervous breakdowns . . . hear papers read about the Real Presence and the role of the Lutheran Teacher . . . and how tight-fisted parochial schools are . . .

But one year of peace and off to Lutheran High School in Los Angeles to teach juniors and seniors. A new life. The faculty and student body couldn't have been better . . . new names to remember forever . . . Moss . . . Brommer . . . Labrenz . . . Norm . . . “Fern” . . . Miss Mary . . . Old Frank . . . Dahl . . . and . . . Grzeskowiak (now married) . . . Ebel . . . Young . . . Joesting . . . talent in writing and art. And two years of football games, assemblies . . . rallies . . . and some time for books and study. I found the same kinds of money problems at LHS that we enjoyed at St. Matthew. The kids were bussed from too far, but parents wanted kids to come to LHS. We won championships in all sports but never got the gym we needed. (It is still not there.)

And after looking at the situation closely, I began to take some English classes which, I assumed, would make me a better English teacher. After so many awful hours in education classes I found a home in courses in poetry. And we began a time of creativity at LHS with so many people reading . . . writing . . . fiction, poems, giving poetry readings . . . painting, drawing, pottery; the
list seemed endless. Brommer and Sylwester in art leading
the good fight . . a mix of kids and faculty the likes of
which is rarely seen.

And one day walking with Ted Labrenz, munching
my apple, and hearing him say “No” to an offer from
CTC Seward . . and would I like to go in his place,
my apple, and hearing him say
of which is rarely seen
ing the good fight . . a mix of kids and faculty the likes

Johns with the beautiful banners .. . and snow on our
warm heart . . Roundey, clever man in the the-

we were leaving Los Angeles for a place called Seward,
Nebraska . . and her asking “What?” in that special
way that tells me I should probably have more facts at
my disposal, or better yet never mentioned it at all . .
but off we go anyway to a place called Seward, Nebraska
68434 where I meet new faces . . hear new names . .
Wolfram . . Grzeskowiak (again) . . Korinko who ar-
gues with me for two years about how bad Wordsworth
is and me fuming for words to refute him (but enjoying
so much the bubbling and gurgling wine he makes in
his dark cellar) . . Haich who has the office across the
hall and does yoga sometimes and eats peanuts and
smokes good tobacco . . Hake with the bow ties and
warm heart . . Roundey, clever man in the theater . .
Dean Walt Mueller who actually looked like what I
thought a Dean would look like . . President Janzow,
quiet, good . . giving the school strength . . and the
art department with Marxhausen, Wolfram, Wiegmann
. . . what talent! And I begin to collage with Wolfram and
have not stopped . . the trees at Plum Creek with their
special quietness and secret murmurings which I can
carely hear and half understand . . and singing in St.
Johns with the beautiful banners . . . and snow on our
noses and our dogs cold and statue-like looking in at us
looking out at them during the cold months . . . and con-
ferences where they still debate the question: “What is
a Lutheran Teacher? . . .”

BUT MEMORIES WON’T STOP BECAUSE ONE
moves to a place called Seward, Nebraska. And back to
LHS I go for four more years because I know there is
work to be done at the high school level . . . missing
Seward more than I could say . . working with the kids
at LHS again . . . singing in the LA Lutheran Chorale
under Bud Bisbee, one of the finest . . . more confer-
ces . . more English classes and trips on I-80 to Sew-
ward for the summer while I attend the U in Lincoln . .
and the summers at Seward are alive and very beautiful . .
listening to the cicadas sing in the humid trees in
July and August . . . listening for sirens that will mean
tornadoes . . . watching students graduate who will be
Lutheran teachers (wondering if they know) . . . arguing
about dancing on campus!

And more grad classes at L.A. State and at USC . .
pointing to the M.A. and beyond . . . and assemblies at
LHS where I present the Oily Scarf Wino Band Featuring
the Fetid Wind Ensemble . . . with balloons tossed

Then after four more years more at LHS I’m off to Cali-
forin Lutheran College in Thousand Oaks . . . an ALC/LCA
school (which doesn’t have the LC-MS dash) to join
the English department, and more names: Murley (enigma-
tic, pipe-smoking, honest—a rare quality—chairman),
Ted, good hiker, writer, friend . . . Kaufman and Mozart
. . . and Shirley . . . who one day disgraced himself on
my Cressets . . Swansons . . warm and talented . .
Schwarz who doesn’t like Pecan pie but who won’t be-
grudge me mine . . . Nelson . . and hard work and a
chance to see ideals fought for . . . with Lutheran and
non-Lutheran (and some say non-Christians but luckily
we don’t debate the issue) all over the place . . . learn-
ing . . wondering what LCMS means . . . chuckles over
the Preus problem . . . and asking me which school is
next . . . if they think to ask at all, which is rare . . . this
not being their fight . . . and I hear Seward is next . .
Seward with its lovely trees and ancient memories whisper-
ed in Weller Hall . . . where the gospel is growing in
every tree, breathed in each rain and snowfall . . . where
faculty, administrators, and students live the gospel as
best they can with John 3:16 as the torch (and me think-
ing that that had better be enough for all of us because
if it isn’t, then nothing else will do the job) . . . but life
at CLC in Thousand Oaks presses daily on . . . books to
read . . . papers to grade . . . poems to try to write . .
and missing the conferences where they ask questions
about what you think or don’t think about Lutheran
Teachers . . . waiting to hear maybe some good poetry
from pulpits . . . but except for something new and then
I think pulpits a wasteland as far as good poetry is con-
cerned . . . wondering whether kids in Lutheran schools
are still learning not to covet their neighbor’s ox . . . but
singing good hymns . . . and putting up stained-glass
windows in churches (have you seen Caemmerer’s beau-
tiful work?) . . . but not much poetry . .

Then off to reading engagements . . . to Valparaiso
University where I find The Cresset healthy . . . their
chapel warm during morning and evening prayers . . .
and reading at Wheaton College and Northwestern Uni-
versity where nobody asks me what a Lutheran Teacher
is . . . and back to Thousand Oaks where it is 75 and
sunny . . . to find students getting ready for finals . .
with Interim ’75 coming up . . . me turning 40 . . . and
still, after eighteen years of teaching not knowing what
a Lutheran Teacher is . . .

Maybe there is some looking forward to do . . .
GLORIA PATRI
For Richard Cammerer Sr.
on the occasion of the 47th year
of his ordination into the holy ministry

The years are not less . . .
nor are they the more
for all the gloria patris
given the finger-smoothed
texts;
the years stand like slender
Alders
sunning beside a field newly
mown
and smelling of summer;
and as the sun rolls
its heavy way
across stubble of corn
and Winter wheat,
the frost bites fingers
of small boys
fumbling pumpkins—

and the boards creek with years of feet
climbing the holy stairs
to pulpit—
and all the angels of heaven hear
the gloria patrias
and join in the praise you savor
so sweetly . . .

and years blend,
the seasons blur,
and the smooth-metalled
cross glints in
candle glow—

and the fingers, lightly
tapping
the creased forehead,
rise in air,
circle above our heads
and the gospel breaks
like fountains—

and Spring — and Christ
come to a waiting world . . .
THE SALT LICK AT DAYBREAK
Holden Village, Washington
1974

The salt block stands like a lamp —
the long tongues reach out of the trees
and caress the corners
of the salt —

the mountains move forward,
press against the thing —
the ground sucks through fern hairs
that move in blind orgiastic circles —
and low moans
escape the shards of rock and limb
that cannot come —
the feast glides on tripod feet
clicking on stars
dropping bits of salt on the mucoused-leaves —

and morning comes like sudden sparrows
to peck and scratch

and the mountains pull back,
down their glacier gulleys —
the trees bend backwards towards cool deeps —
and the long tongues slide after the deer
who move in light from bark and stone . . .

J.T. LEDBETTER
AUBADE FOR WINTER

the winter grass is dry beneath the snow
as sparrows hop on wires
or scratch the frozen pond

the marrowbone is cold
the winter numbness holds the water blue
beneath the ice

while footprints from the autumn past
fill up with slush and freeze
in place
as if giants walked that way
and still the ground held its breath
not letting go
so cold it is my soul
i hear no voices in my head
that bring me peace

i feel no blood run warmer
in my chest or arms
and only when i pass my mirror
do i see my face
as if a mask lived there
and not a face at all

Christ of the winters come
come thaw me out
let my life rush over bounds
wet my deep roots
show me your fiery eyes
and catch my soul aflame
for i am cold and life’s
the coldest dance stopped
feet held in place

while all around
a kaleidoscope throws colors
on the snow and i’m alone

oh Christ become my Christ
overpower this dull and lifeless will
o’erthrow this polished mind

and bring warm rains
consume me now Christ bring
your love again be Thou my spring

J. T. LEDBETTER
LUTHER'S OBJECTION TO A EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

Paul Rorem

IN THE LUTHERAN SERVICE BOOK AND HYMNAL and in CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP II the Words of Institution ("Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the night . . .") are enclosed within a "eucharistic prayer," a practice foreign to most Lutheran tradition. In considering such a practice Lutherans would do well to note first the strong and persuasive arguments of Martin Luther himself against enclosing the Words of Institution in a prayer. These objections grow from the heart of Luther's view of the Lord's Supper.

I. Luther's Understanding of the Lord's Supper

FOR LUTHER, THE ESSENCE OF THE LORD'S Supper or mass was based upon the simple events and words of the Last Supper.

He takes bread and wine and with the word which he speaks he makes of them his body and blood and gives it to his disciples to eat.

This mass is "Christ's testament, which he left behind him at his death to be distributed among his believers." This testament is God's promise of the forgiveness of sins as confirmed by the unrepeatable death of the Son of God. Above all, the mass is this promise; any promise made by one who is about to die is called a "testament." Expanding on the testament concept, Luther adds a testator, Christ; heirs, Christians; the seal or token, the bread and wine under which are his body and blood; the blessing, remission of sins and eternal life; and the duty, the remembrance of preaching his love and grace.

This understanding of the words of Jesus and thus of the Lord's Supper involves a translation of the Greek diatheke as "testament." This is a crucial translation for when the sacrament is understood as testament then the appropriate liturgical form of the Words of Institution is a free-standing proclamation to the worshiper, not a prayer to God. Indeed for Luther "testament" is a hinge or summary of all God's grace in the crucifixion and incarnation, for if God would make a testament He must die and if He would die He must become man.

In Kittel's THEOLOGICAL WORD-BOOK OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, Johannes Behm does not consider "testament" an exact translation of diatheke. In the midst of the many philological reasons cited by him is the theological commentary that this diatheke is not considered to be Jesus' testament even though it was he who died. Rather (as Luther also holds) it is God's testament. But

1. In Luther's early FORMULA MISSAE, the Words of Institution were not yet freed from a prayer form, while his later works and subsequent Lutheran liturgical orders (e.g. Bugenhagen) reflected his theological objections to such a form.
3. LW36, 37.

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neither, says Behm, is “covenant” an adequate translation, at least not in any sense of a mutual agreement.

The disciples were given no conditions nor did they make any commitment as part of the diatheke. Rather than either “testament” or “covenant,” diatheke is “from first to last the ‘disposition of God,’” says Behm.

Whether “testament” or “covenant” is used in translation, the nature of that disposition of God vindicates Luther’s basic idea of testament or promise. The “testament” translation might be imperfect but the unconditional gift dimension of the promise or testament idea is basically correct. Kenneth Hagen in a study of the early sixteenth century translators’ shift from “testament” to “covenant” confirms the unconditional nature of this diatheke (like the Davidic berith), “Most important . . . is Luther’s clear indication that testament—sacrament, covenant, promise—denotes a unilateral gift on God’s part.”

This unilateral gift is of course the forgiveness of sins, which affects the fellowship of believers; as confirmed by the death of Jesus this gift is the heart of the sacrament. Secondarily Luther spoke briefly about the role of the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, as discussed below.

Out of these convictions on what the mass was came firm positions on what the mass was not. Since the mass is an unconditional testament of God to men, it is certainly not a good work of men towards God by which grace is earned.

That is, it is not a sacrifice. Luther claimed that one cannot infer a sacrificial character to the mass from either the scriptural accounts of the Last Supper (Christ did not offer himself to God the Father) or a scriptural understanding of Christ’s death (Christ has sacrificed himself once; he will not be sacrificed by anyone else). For a priest to presume to sacrifice Christ is to belittle both Calvary and also the effectiveness of Christ as our mediator. Thus the notion of sacrifice in which we give to God is diametrically opposed to the idea of promise in which God gives to us.

The Words of Institution show that the sacrament is a testament and not a sacrifice, claims Luther in “The Misuse of the Mass.” “He took bread, thanked God, broke it, and gave it to his disciples.” Giving it to the disciples is certainly not the same as offering it to God; “much less can ‘take’ mean the same as ‘offer’ . . . ” Nor does the blessing indicate a sacrifice; rather, it indicates the reception of a gift. Jesus’ command was to “take” not to “offer” and to “eat and drink” not to “sacrifice”; all of which points to the reception of a gift. And conclusively,

“Which is given for you. Which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sin.” Here is indicated the promised grace—remission of sins. O what a sweet and mighty promise! It admits of no sacrifice.

II. Luther’s Critique of the “Eucharistic Prayer” of the Sixteenth Century

FROM THIS FOUNDATION, LUTHER launched his critique of the “eucharistic prayer” (the canon of the mass) then in use. Apart from its saturation with phrases hinting sacrifice, it was blatantly illogical and presumptuous enough to suggest that Christ was unclean and needed the prayers of the priest to be rendered pleasing to God.

Within his phrase-by-phrase commentary on the canon in the “Abomination of the Secret Mass” lie many issues beyond sacrifice. The most penetrating of these criticisms are here presented in capsule form. The Te Igitur paragraph contains the blasphemy that unconsecrated bread and wine are offered as holy, unblemished gifts. In the Memento, the sacrifice is made for the faithful who, Luther observes, surely do not need any such offering if they are indeed faithful. The Communicantes prayer includes a blatant reference to some of the saints as our mediators instead of Christ. In the Hanc Igitur paragraph, the papists are still referring to bread and wine and yet presume that it is efficacious. The Quam Oblationem paragraph reveals the inconsistency that


6. Kenneth Hagen, “From Testament to Covenant in the Early Sixteenth Century,” The Sixteenth Century Journal, III (April, 1972), 10. Hagen notes that Melanchthon’s emphasis on faith in the promise as correlative with the promise effected a shift from “testament” to “covenant.” “For Luther man’s response is not a condition for God’s unilateral testament, because man’s response is contained in the gift (the ex opere operato of the Word).” Hagen, p. 22.
they would consider the bread and wine pure and unblemished in the opening paragraph and yet here ask for it to be approved. Or, if the body and blood is the referent, what audacity to ask for a blessing and cleansing of Christ's blood when it is by that blood that we ourselves are cleansed. As to the Qui Pridie section, Luther, using his own composite version of the Verba, objects to the insistence upon the non-biblical enim and to the omission of the crucial "which is given for you."

In the Unde et memores prayer, Christ is offered up again contrary to the scriptures, by which they (the papists) deny that Christ has washed sin away and has died and risen again. As the height of arrogance the Supra Quae Propitio paragraph indicates that man is the mediator between God and the gift ("O what an abomination!") as if Christ's flesh and blood are unclean and need the prayers of man. In the Supplices te Rogamus, Luther interprets "altar on high" spatially and wonders at the illogical way they maintain that Christ is raised to heaven and yet is eaten by the priest. The concluding paragraphs, Memento etiam and Nobis Quoque Peccatoribus, repeated some of these objectionable features.

Since Luther held up the gospel above all else and perceived that co-existence of the gospel and the sacrifice of the mass was out of the question, the sacrifice of the mass and any manifestation of it must be eliminated. In explaining the Formula Missae, he says,

Let us, therefore, repudiate everything that smacks of sacrifice, together with the entire canon and retain only that which is pure and holy, and so order our mass.

The canon was rejected as an enemy to the gospel.

III. Luther's Objection to the Idea of a "Eucharistic Prayer"

LUTHERANS HAVE RECENTLY ASKED "Could the prayer be rewritten so as to avoid the sacrificial language and thus satisfy Luther's objections?" It is often held that Luther's omission of the canon prayer was due only to the sacrificial language. On the contrary, in addition to objecting to the sacrificial contents of the sixteenth century "eucharistic prayer," Luther raised some serious objections to the very idea of a "eucharistic prayer" enclosing the Words of Institution. The Words of Institution are not our words of prayer to God but rather God's words of grace to His people. Thus whenever the Words of Institution are enclosed in a prayer the essence of the sacrament, the forgiveness of sin, is obscured.

The starting point for this position is the insistent sola scriptura regarding the primacy of the Words of Institution. Everything depends upon these words of life and salvation in which is the whole power of the mass, said Luther. In these words reside the power, nature, and whole substance of the mass, truly the mass itself. Here is the whole mass, its nature, work, profit, and benefit, for nothing is omitted. Indeed, Luther believed that the Words of Institution are the sum and substance of the whole gospel which bring with them everything of which they speak.

Accordingly the Words of Institution as the words of Christ must be distinguished from the prayers of the church. That is, they must be distinguished with respect to source. This source distinction became known as the "direction of movement" distinction. To whom are these words addressed?

The prayers are our address to God and the Words of Institution are God's address to us. Again and again Luther speaks of this crucial distinction. First in the Treatise on the New Testament, That Is, the Holy Mass: "But this work and prayer are quite another from the testament and sacrament, which no one can offer or give either to God or to man." Again in the Babylonian Captivity: "these two things—mass and prayer, sacrament and work, testament and sacrifice—must not be confused."

How then can the primacy of the Words of Institution and the impact of God's promise to us be clearly asserted in a liturgical order? The first step was to put the Words of Institution in the vernacular. Luther said that the words were being hidden and should be open. Brilioth holds that Luther's change to the vernacular was sufficient apart from the question of the direction of movement. "The only necessary requirement was that the
verba testamenti should be audible." It seems that Brilioth overlooked the more subtle distinction between "hearing" the Words of Institution proclaimed to oneself and "overhearing" them as the priest prays to God.

Accordingly, the transition to the audible vernacular was just the first step towards maximizing the impact of the promise declaration. The second and currently significant step was the liberation of the Words of Institution from the prayer form so that they were clearly understood by the worshipers to be God's proclamation to each worshiper and not their prayer to God. This is Luther's enduring and persuasive criticism of any "eucharistic prayer."

Though Luther does not explicitly develop a sharp polarity between proclamation to the people and praise to God in precisely those terms, his repeated position is that the Words of Institution are meant to be proclaimed to the people. They are to be set before us; we are to meditate upon and ponder these words. "Nothing is more important for those who go to hear mass than to ponder these words diligently and in full faith."

This insistence rests on Luther's well-documented belief that proclaimed in the Words of Institution is forgiveness of sins, the treasure bequeathed in the testament. It bears repeating that for Luther, the forgiveness of sins is not just one item among others; it is the sum of what God gives us. The gospel is the good news of the forgiveness of sins. This primary gift, the forgiveness of sins, leads to the communion of the worshipers, a secondary gift.

Clearly Luther held that the gospel-laden Words of Institution are meant to be read to the worshipers because of this simple axiom: God's good news of the forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed to His people.

IV. Mixed Movement: The Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving

THE QUESTION THEN BECOMES, "CAN THE Words of Institution fully proclaim God's promise to His people while contained in a prayer of praise to God?" That is, can there be movement in both directions at the same time? Luther's discussion of movement in the Babylonian Captivity seems to exclude this combination of direction (from us to God and from God to us),

... for the one (the Words of Institution) comes from God to us through the ministrations of the priest and demands our faith, the other (the prayer) proceeds from our faith to God through the priest and demands His hearing. The former descends, the latter ascends. 14

Just as one reads and does not pray the epistle lesson, so one should not pray the Words of Institution but rather proclaim them to the people. Put simply a prayer, especially of praise and thanksgiving, is our offering to God. The Gospel is God's proclamation to us. The Words of Institution are Gospel. Therefore they are to be proclaimed to the people and not to be prayed to God.

However, the mention of praise at this point prompts consideration of another variable in Luther's view of the Lord's Supper: the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Though Luther never emphasized any sacrificial terminology but only conceded it as a possibility with careful restrictions, he did affirm the offering of our bodies and our praise and thanksgiving as the appropriate spiritual sacrifices. Might then a "eucharistic prayer" be justified as part of the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. The answer must be negative, for while Luther had no objections to some prayers of praise and thanksgiving, when the Words of Institution are involved, he was firm. He clearly stated that the Words of Institution as God's proclaimed promise are primary and that any human prayers of praise are secondary and are not the essence of the mass. Such a sacrifice of praise "does not necessarily and essentially belong to the mass." 15

The sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving does occur within the order, but as part of the remembrance and not as part of the sacrament itself, as Luther says in the Admonition Concerning the Sacrament (1590),

For Christ completely separates the two matters, sacrament and remembrance, when he says, "Do this in remembrance of me." The sacrament is one

13. LW 36, 43.
14. LW 36, 56.
15. LW 35, 98.
matter, the remembrance is another matter. He says that we should use and practice the sacrament and in addition remember him, that is, teach, believe, and give thanks. The remembrance is indeed supposed to be a sacrifice of thanksgiving; but the sacrament itself should not be a sacrifice but a gift of God which he has given to us and which we should take and receive with thanks.\(^\text{16}\)

(It is incorrect therefore to call the sacrament by that name which denotes only the remembrance, “eucharist.”)

Thus the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving is held to be secondary and therefore subordinate to the essence of the sacrament, God’s gift of grace. The sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving cannot justify a “eucharistic prayer” which enshrouds the bearer of that essence, the Words of Institution. It is possible however that Luther would not be in opposition to a prayer similar to current “eucharistic prayers” as long as the Words of Institution are proclaimed outside of such a prayer. A prayer could survey salvation history in praise and thanksgiving to God (as the Jewish berakah), while the Words of Institution would remain independently proclaimed to the worshipers as words which promise blessing and interpret the bread and wine (as the haggadah).

Before concluding with an application to our current liturgical disputes, mention must be made of the optional “Prayer of Thanksgiving” in the Service Book and Hymnal. The sudden appearance, a departure from Lutheran consensus, was surely the result of the influence of Luther Reed.

In his book The Lutheran Liturgy, Reed bemoaned the isolation of the Lutheran churches in excluding the Words of Institution from prayer form. He studiously avoids Luther’s objection to the mixture of prayer and the Words of Institution in the Babylonian Captivity and even incorrectly implies that Luther might have agreed to a replacement of the canon by an evangelical “eucharistic prayer.”\(^\text{17}\) Reed aptly expresses the religious need to sacrifice something of oneself by repeatedly pointing to the lack of warmth or spiritual satisfactions in Luther’s isolated Words of Institution. He longs for something warmer, emotionally more expressive and richer. Perhaps the satisfaction in question is of the human need to sacrifice as allowed for in the famous Council of Trent statement, “as the nature of man demands.” Reed is clearest on this urge when he says,

> Our spirit of devotion longs to incorporate these divine words in some expression of our own which might reveal the gratitude, love, sense of fellowship and self-dedication which they inspire.\(^\text{18}\)

Indeed Luther would agree with Reed that our part is faith, obedience, and thanksgiving; but as stated, our part is not central to the mass but secondary as a response to the primary element: God’s gracious forgiveness.

V. Conclusion

**FINALLY, IT MUST BE NOTED THAT WHILE**
Luther found need to concentrate upon the man-directed movement of proclamation, we must today also emphasize what Luther took for granted, the God-directed movement of prayer. That is, to consider a “eucharistic prayer” as in fact a proclamation to those who may overhear the prayer is to seriously damage the integrity of prayer. When something is “prayed” for the purpose of informing those whose prayer it supposedly is, then prayer as gift and privilege is abused.

In the current and continuing crises of secularism, civil religion, and legalism, surely Luther’s rediscovery of the Pauline justification by grace through faith is still our clearest window on God’s love in Christ. Wherever Lutherans appreciate this confessional stance, they will also affirm Luther’s insistence that the words which above all others bear that grace, the Words of Institution, are not to be engulfed within a manmade prayer, but rather are to stand free and proclaim to all believers, “given for you, for the remission of sins.”

\(^{16}\) LW 38. 122.


\(^{18}\) Ibid. p. 350.
ISHMAEL

with an everlasting itch
for things remote

perplexed by awe of fateful ocean
filled with many a Moby Dick
swimming malignant seething sea
breathing cunning, wild ferocity

survived

sustained by coffin on the deep
and dirge-like main—
an orphan when he sailed,
more orphan still when he survived.

ELMER F. SUDERMAN

SMOKE

From trains, I used to see New Jersey grey—
All swampy pools and level, stubbled fields,
smokestacks in every distance, and a smell
like a fog around Secaucus. They do say
New Jersey has its trees, even its hills,
hidden away, sweet and vestigial.
And yet New Jersey to my mind is grey.

And more and more children move doggedly
uncertain, as through fog. Their voices run
down in low whines, as if they have not known
anything to be spoken with surprise
or asked with urgency. I think, each time
I see their eyes, of distant smoke. They come
from Newark, Jersey City, Paterson,
Englewood, Summit, Clifton, Little Ferry,
or further out, where you can't even see
the grey at all, it's such a thin film.

HELEN J. WILLIAMS
"He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life. . . . For my flesh is food indeed and my blood is drink indeed. . . . He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him" (John 6:54-56).

So speaks the feeding God to the eating and drinking man.

As intimately as the eating and drinking man takes the life of his food into the life of his body so does the feeding God bring him into the life of Christ.

Flesh and blood mean participation in the life of Jesus Christ, and his life enters our flesh and blood lives and we enter a flesh and blood life like his, not some dream beyond our physical and temporal existence.

The feeding God always comes to eating and drinking man in the things of his world. In the man, Jesus. In the bread and wine of the mystery. In the hunger and thirst of our neighbors. In thingable, touchable nature and tickable, tockable time.

Which is to remind us that every carelessness with nature and every deaf ear and blind eye turned to the hungry and thirsty is an evasion of the place where the feeding God meets us.

The feeding God gives us freely all that we need to
live in a physical world and all that we need to come alive to the physical world in which we live. He comes in the flesh and blood Jesus that we might come alive to our own full manhood. He comes in the ground grain of the bread and the pressed grapes of the wine that we might come alive to the mutual labors of men, upon whom our lives depend, and to the care for us all that God has hidden in nature. He comes in the hunger and thirst of our neighbor that we might come alive to one another as caring brothers and to Christ among us. The feeding God gives not only the gifts of physical life but also the gift of himself that we may come alive to that life.

Only at our peril do we seek a kind of life beyond the limits of physical life. And only at our peril do we fill ourselves up with mere physical life. Eve in the garden was tempted to evade the limits of physical life in her desire to be a god. And we all know what happened to her. She started eating what she shouldn’t. Whatever the forbidden fruit of the story may mean it was not food given or blessed by the feeding God. It was food condemned to be communion with itself alone. It was food which leaves eating and drinking man eating and drinking just one damn thing after another. (Or the same damn thing over and over—After the fall life is one long leftover.)

All of us are tempted like Eve. Each of us is tempted to evade the limits of physical and temporal life as if there were no promise of God in it. Like the student who crams six weeks of work on a term paper into one godlike all-nighter—and then wonders why he didn’t learn very much and why his studies are so, well, unfulfilling. Or like a dreaming nation ready to destroy any who would threaten its godlike waste of food and fuel and who might remind that dreaming nation it lives in a finite world and others do too.

Against every temptation to evade the limits of physical existence for some dream comes the word we see in the flesh and blood Jesus Christ. Life is to be lived in the limits of the physical. And that’s all right, that’s good. For God himself comes to us in the physical and enlivens us to all its joy and responsibilities, all its happy capacities to bind us to one another and to him. Then nothing is merely physical. Rather men are holy for God himself dwells in a man for all men. Nature is holy for God chooses its fruits to give himself to us. The hungry and thirsty are holy for we are amazingly promised that sharing food and drink with them is sharing with Christ himself.

“He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him.” The life of Christ is as close to eating and drinking man as his hunger and thirst, and far more basic to his needs and desire. That offer of Christ, I should think, is food for thought. (Before the feeding God, you are what you eat.)
CURRENT BIBLICAL PICTURES

Biblical pictures can do more than depict elementary Biblical facts for the illiterate. For, when Biblical pictures are created and contemplated as aesthetic, poetic expressions, they have power to engage a person’s whole being, his senses, thought, and feelings, and so expand his awareness of the Biblical and religious realities being expressed.

Biblical realities are bound to both the temporal and the transcendent. In the days of Michelangelo and of Rembrandt, Biblical pictures portrayed various aspects of the literal, temporal appearance of their subjects. Such subjects as Adam and Eve, Moses, Mary, and Christ were depicted as temporal, naturalistic human volumes set in an illusion of naturalistic space, time, and light. Today, instead of using illusionist volumes and spaces, Biblical pictures use the subject’s points, lines, and planes in an expressive organization on the flat space of the picture plane. Such picturing serves especially the search for increased awareness of transcendent, conceptual, and emotional religious realities.

For instance, the figures of Job and His Wife have been reduced to relatively compact, rounded planes, lines, and points that are sharply black or white and are set in a very shallow space. The organization is one of rough bilateral symmetry. The center is not stressed, and neither side has dominance over the other, resulting in an overall unity achieved only through a restless left and right comparison by the beholder. To Western eyes at least, the identity of the figures seems to be that of highly generalized common-average types; the figures are so generalized that few distinctions seem to be made between male and female.

Job has lost his wealth, children, and health. He is shown sitting fragmented on an ash heap holding a potsherd to scrape his ashen skin. His wife, untouched in a whole, fruitful world seems alarmed and reproachful. Her advice to Job is that he should “curse God, and die.” In this image the artist has tried to make visible the concept of two alternate responses to misfortune this part of the story of Job offers.

The paintings by Johannes Grüger reproduced in this issue have a strong, story-telling quality. The planes of fingers, hands, arms, and bodies are natural in shape and in their relationships. Outlines are definite. Surface textures are present along with steps of grey and color. The setting
suggests some depth and recognizable features of place and time. The figures are generalized, common-average types distinguishable from each other mainly in terms of major stages of age. The clear forms, patterns, and deliberate gestures, along with the relatively anonymous clothing and setting, gives the effect of a somewhat timeless, culture-free ritual or ceremony. The pictures are winning images of ordinary people performing solemn acts.

Of course, the disadvantage of a timeless effect is that it often seems outside of immediate experience. Lars-Birger Sponberg, in his painting based on the Good Samaritan parable, minimizes the timeless and instead creates the sense of an instantaneous present with sidewalk, street, automobile, bicycle, business suits, crowded indistinct people all in flux in a momentary flicker of light. Yet even here are stabilizing, encircling arms.

The telling close-up, and the fragment of form that summarizes the action or the meaning, these are the devices film and TV, especially TV commercials, use and have developed into high effectiveness. To accompany the story of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac read in the 1974 Advent-Christmas Vesper in Valparaiso University's Chapel of the Resurrection, Alice Kern created four images for projection against the Chapel walls, to serve as keys to the action of the story. The first is of a scarlet sacrificial victim seen against the blue lines of hills; next the white hand of the messenger of God prevents the blue earthly hand from using the scarlet dagger; the scarlet ram is next seen held before the white bramble branches; and finally God's Messianic promise to Abraham is seen as a sky filled with cross-like stars.

Ultimately, of course, Biblical and religious realities contain a radical, fearsome mystery. Hubert Distler's barren, bleak, artlessly expressionist Good Friday suggests something of the forbidding otherness of this mystery. Included also, however, in his image are indications of glimmering hope seen, for instance, in the delicate shower of light drifting down from the black eclipsed sun.

Mankind's experience with Biblical and religious realities is a growing, changing one and he needs the artist's images to probe, clarify, and enlarge these experiences.
ARE POLITICAL POWER AND Christian principles compatible? This is a burning issue in America today. But when we project our problems today upon the historical past, we gain a new sense of perspective as we see that men have always struggled with the question of the relationship of politics to morality. Some thinkers have insisted that the leader must be free to follow whatever course is politically most expedient, while others have maintained that there is no excuse for abandoning Christian principles in government. The two most famous representatives of these two views were Niccolò Machiavelli and Martin Luther, and, strikingly, Machiavelli's The Prince and Luther's Address to the Christian Nobility were both written within a time span of less than ten years. Machiavelli advised the prince to learn how not to be good, whereas Luther appealed to the prince to think of himself as a member of the royal priesthood of believers through Baptism and to do nothing contrary to the teachings of Christ.

“Ernest the Pious,” born eighty-one years after the publication of Luther’s book, a great-grandson of Luther’s prince, John Frederick the Magnanimous, denounced Machiavellianism and advocated the principles of the Address to the Christian Nobility. March 26, 1975, marked the three-hundredth anniversary of the death of Duke Ernest I. It is fitting that we commemorate him as one of the great laymen in church history. We shall take note of his efforts to govern according to Christian principles, of his energetic promotion of sound churchmanship, and of his undying accomplishments in furthering schools, education, and culture. As the founder of universal education, with seven years of school attendance required of all boys and girls, Ernest the Pious deserves to be better known in the English-speaking world, and especially among Lutherans. It is well that we offer this piece as a tribute on the tricentennial of his death.1

1. There is no significant work on Ernest the Pious in English, and most of the studies in German are old. Indispensable are the following books: Johann Heinrich Gelbke, Herzog Ernst der Erste genannt der Fromme zu Gotha als Mensch und Regent, 3 vols. in 1 (Gotha: Justus Perthes, 1810); Vol. III consists of sources such as letters and documents; August Beck, Ernst der Fromme, Herzog zu Sachsen-Gotha und Altenburg. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des siebenzehnten Jahrhunderts, 2 vols. in 1 (Weimar: Hermann Bohlau, 1865); Vol. II is largely sources such as letters and documents; Woldemar Boehne, Die Pädagogischen Bestrebungen Ernst des Frommen von Gotha (Gotha: E. F. Thienemann, 1888).

rich country at the point of bankruptcy; Ernest restored a war-torn economy and left his poor Thuringian land with a substantial balance in its treasury. Louis followed the suggestion of his advisors who felt that the lower classes should not be educated lest it make them dissatisfied with their lot; Ernest labored in a successful movement to eradicate illiteracy in his realm. The French king and his court established the fashion of easy morals and neglected his own family, whereas the Thuringian prince gave his offspring an example of chaste living and tended carefully to their education according to Christian principles.

Of course, their are points at which the modern thinker will criticize Ernest. He had a high sense of his calling as a divine vocation, and he sometimes seems to have tended distinctly toward absolutism. His firm control of the state-church may have been largely beneficial during his lifetime, but he established precedents of princely involvement which were harmful under several of his descendants. In his attempt to enforce religion, morality, and public education, he at times resorted to means which appear to the man of the twentieth century as an infringement of personal liberty and the invasion of privacy. These were perhaps blemishes. However, his reign as a whole was marked by an exceptionally high level of both good intention and solid achievement.

BORN AT ALTENBURG ON Christmas Day, 1601, and reared mainly at Weimar, Ernest as a younger son did not acquire his own realm until he was thirty-nine years old. Meanwhile he assisted his older brothers in government, fought with distinction under King Gustavus Adolphus and others in the Thirty Years War, and for less than two years governed the ill-fated Protestant Duchy of Franconia which he administered out of Wurzburg (1633-34). After his marriage in 1636, Ernest, his wife, and their children lived in the “Garden House” or “French Palace” at Weimar which was given to Goethe in the following century.

In February, 1640, the land of Thuringia was divided among his relatives, with Ernest receiving a new duchy centered in the old town of Gotha. The following October he and his family were ceremoniously welcomed into the new capital as they established their residence in Gotha. During the remaining thirty-five years of his life, the duke reigned in such a manner that he lifted his land out of the incredible decline caused by the war, brought it a new prosperity, won a reputation for himself for his innovative reforms in social and economic matters, developed the first educational program requiring both children and adults to acquire a minimal schooling, became one of the most respected princes of Central Europe, and was subsequently booked by many a historian as the greatest of all the Saxon princes.

Duke Ernest expressed his political philosophy in his Testament of 1654, from which we cite the following lines:

> The office of the prince does not consist in great pomp and external arrangements, but rather in an orderly direction of the government and an industrious and fair supervision. This means to see that in every part of the land things proceed rightly in religious as well as in secular matters, the honor of God is advanced, that equal and impartial justice is extended to everyone, that protection is afforded, that good is rewarded and evil punished, and that everything which has been promised is fulfilled in a princely manner. If these things are always kept in mind, then reputation and honor, which depend upon them and are their blessing, cannot fail.

Already in 1640 Ernest sent out official visitors provided with a list of fifty-five questions which they were to raise in order to bring back the true conditions in his new duchy. A glance at several of the questions will provide us with insights into life in war-torn Thuringia, the projected program of the duke, and his method of procedure. A number of questions sought to find out about religious and moral conditions in church and state. The duke demanded to know concerning possible offenders: (2) Who are such sinners? (3) Are they being punished? (4) Were there previous infractions which were not punished? who was responsible for such neglect? (6) Are there officials who are neglecting their work and who are said to live off of stealing, robbery, and other abuses? It is said that Ernest also checked up on his officials by travelling about his state incognito, and thereby learned to know the needs of his people as well. Aware that some judges were rendering injustice or even taking bribes, and also that honest judges had reason to fear reprisals from rough persons, the duke set out to reform the legal system. Although seventeenth-century courts were usually harsh, so that stealing was commonly punished elsewhere by hanging, not a single man was hanged for theft during the thirty-five years of his reign at Gotha.

German states of his time often had representative bodies, much like a parliament or congress, called diets of the estates (Landtag). Although one might not expect it of a seventeenth-century prince, Duke Ernest showed a genuine respect for his diets. The estates of his tiny duchy consisted of two counts, the knights, and the cities. They had the

3. Duke Ernest I was the founder of the house of Saxe-Gotha which played a major role in the European monarchies of the past two centuries. Queen Victoria of England, for example, was descended from Ernest the Pious through both her parents, and married Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha in 1840; thus, her many prominent descendants were continuations of that line. Other representatives of the house of Gotha were the kings of Belgium, Portugal, and Bulgaria.


right to speak out on matters of state, to vote on taxes and other levies, and to intercede for the rights of the citizens whom they represented. These representatives employed two tax officials, a business manager (Syndicus) and a cashier, in their diminutive government. The diets met at times in full sessions; on occasion, however, only a smaller committee convened. This parliamentary body was convoked fifty-two times during the reign of the duke. 6

Ernest began his rule in a land seriously harmed by the Thirty Years' War, which at that time (1640) was to drag out for eight more years. During those last years of the war, some parts of his realm suffered more than earlier; too often, the first attempts at reconstruction were wiped out by soldiers from either side. It was only after the Peace of Westphalia of 1648 that the scars of the war could really begin to heal. The duke was especially concerned with economic recovery. Steps to improve agriculture included laws enabling the resettlement of abandoned farm lands, a program of adult education imparting practical information for farmers, measures to help replace livestock lost in the war, and attention to travel, transportation, and marketing. Manufacture and commerce also received due consideration. Among the duke's more grandiose schemes was an ill-fated plan for a canal and river system providing a waterway to the great seaports. This program, which was centuries before its time, could not be implemented because of the individual interest of the small particularistic states which refused to permit Duke Ernest's ships to navigate their waters. Only the nationalist movement of the nineteenth century would be able to surmount such barriers. In order to provide security for widows and orphans, the duke also worked out pension systems; he sought to open homes for needy persons; he endeavored to work for the improvement of church and school, and to make a minimal education available for all.

II. Duke Ernest as a Devout Layman and Supporter of the Lutheran Church

HISTORY HAS GIVEN HIM the honorific title of Ernst der Fromme, which would perhaps better translated "Ernest the Devout" rather than "the Pious," especially considering that he was not really a "pietist." His devotion to Christianity appeared as early as the age of four; when, having just learned to read, he requested a Bible for Christmas. At the age of eleven he asked to be allowed to receive Holy Communon. What was his religious background? His father, Johann, who died in 1605 when the boy was only four years of age, came from the strict Gnesio-Lutheran background of the Ernestine branch of the Wettin family; his mother was Dorothea Maria, whose father, Joachim Ernst of Anhalt-Coten, had rejected the Formula of Concord, while her brother, Johann Georg, had introduced the Reformed Church, patterned after the teachings of John Calvin, just shortly before the birth of Ernest. In spite of the Calvinism on his mother's side, the young prince was given a strict Lutheran upbringing and remained strongly confessiona in outlook and practice all his life. However, he deplored the violence of the theological controversies of his time, and in his ironic attitude sought to mediate among the opposing factions.

His widowed mother was evidently a highly intellectual woman. She saw to it that her sons were surrounded by leading men. A glance at some of the names among whom Ernest moved will provide clues to his development. It is not surprising to note the duke's interest in church music, hymnody, and liturgics when one recalls that the distinguished composer Melchior Vulpius was municipal cantor at Weimar and that the great Johann Hermann Schein was musical director at court.

Hymnwriters associated with him in various ways included Georg Neumark who was a student in the gymnasium at Gotha when Ernest began his reign of Saxe-Gotha, Johann Matthaeus Meyfart who dedicated a book to him, and Caspar Neumann and Georg Michael Pfefferkorn, both of whom tutored his sons. His later support of the study and teaching of history is not strange in view of the fact that one of his earliest teachers was the noted historian of the Schmalkald War, Friedrich Hortleder. His absorbing interest in education and the schools might have been stimulated by his instruction under the innovative educator, Wolfgang Ratke, even though the latter's eccentricities seem also to have repelled the young boy.

As a young man his associates included the archtheologian of the Lutheran Church, Johann Gerhard, who edited his Weimar Bible, and Georg Calixtus, who, during his short regency at Wurzburg, advised him on religious and educational matters, such as setting up unprecedented simultaneous schools for Catholic and Protestant children. Other theologians and pastors of note with whom he worked included Salomon Glass, Johann Major, Johann Michael Dilherr, Johann Musaeus, and Johann Saubert. He carried on correspondence with such widely-contrasted persons as Abraham Calovius, Johann Valentin Andreae, and Philipp Jakob Spener. His protege, Ludwig Veit von Seckendorff, was a noted historian and political scientist. Never mentioned, however, was the name of Gerhard's friend, Johann Arnd, famous religious leader and author of True Christianity; after all, it had been his mother's brother who had expelled Arnd from Anhalt during the conversion from the Lutheran to the Reformed confession.

6 A list of the estates in Saxe-Gotha is given in Document No. 58, Beck, Vol. II, pp. 193 ff., preceded and followed by other pertinent records. This is discussed in Beck, Vol. I, pp. 351-390, with a discussion of each diet.
One of the duke's most noteworthy accomplishments was the publication of the Weimar Bible, also called the Nürnberg Bible from its place of publication, or the Electors' Bible because of the many princes' portraits which it contained. During the sixteenth century, in spite of the large number of Bibles printed and distributed, there was still a shortage of the sacred books. The Thirty Years' War had caused the destruction of many copies, so that even many parish churches lacked the complete Bible. Ernest's project produced what we should call a "study Bible," rich in helps of various kinds. Besides annotations interpreting nearly every verse of the canonical Scriptures as well as the Apocrypha, written by Johann Gerhard and his associates, the large volume included some of Luther's Confessions. He required his pastors, teachers, church musicians, and government employees, as well as the professors at the University of Jena, of which he was partial owner, to subscribe the entire Book of Concord. In his Testament of 1654 he offered the prayer:

I beseech Thee to keep me faithful to the pure doctrine until my blessed end. Most graciously protect me from all error and false doctrine, especially of the Papists, the Calvinists, Photinians, Anabaptists, Schwenkfeldians, Weigelians, Enthusiasts, and whatever other heresies and swarmerisms there may be. These sentiments were in a prayer addressed to God. In his pronouncements addressed to men, however, he showed an irenic spirit. He was especially concerned about bitter theological controversies. Following the proposal of Nikolaus Hunnius he tried to found a "Collegium Hunessianum" composed of representative theologians who would adjudicate disputes; although the generous duke himself promised 200,000 Thalers (perhaps a purchase value of $10,000,000 in today's money), he found that theologians were not willing to entrust their writings to such a "supreme court" and that princes were not willing to invest so generously in a project to solve religious controversies. The project was not viable.

In the famous Calixtian controversy, George Calixtus of Helmstedt University had sought to provide a formula by which Lutherans could lead a reunion of western Christendom by reducing the issues to conform with the Consensus Quinque-saecularis, that is, the consensus of the early Christian church. Rather than bringing about a reconciliation among Lutherans, Calvinists, and Roman Catholics, Calixtus opened up a heated controversy among the Lutherans. Duke Ernest and his theologians at Jena manifested their sympathy for Calixtus and his endeavors, but found themselves attacked in return by some of the strict Lutherans. Meanwhile it became clear that Calixtus' "syncretism" would lead to wider division rather than reconciliation, and that a reunion of the western denominations was not feasible at that time.

In some respects Ernest seems like a modern churchman because of his interest in ecumenical concerns and in foreign missions. In 1652 he met a scholar from Ethiopia, Abba Gregorius, and conceived the plan of establishing relations with the black scholar's homeland, both to become acquainted with the Christian Church there, the monarchy of Ethiopia, and the possibilities for propagating the Gospel in Africa. This imaginative plan was brought to naught, however, by the unreliability of the duke's emissary, Johann Michael Wansleben.

Another direction on Ernest's horizon was the Lutheran Church in Russia. The duke carried on correspondence with the diaspora Christians there under which he provided them financial assistance; the duke also became a correspondent of Csar Alex Michael, who came to admire the Thuringian prince very strongly.

Duke Ernest also addressed himself to the problems of the Dutch Lutherans. Unlike several other religious bodies, they did not enjoy the favor of the Calvinist authorities. By the end of the sixteenth century they had won the right to organize a congregation in Amsterdam, and in 1633 they were allowed to dedicate their own church building, as opposition from the Calvinists became less severe. By 1800 Lutherans were even permitted to enter the Dutch civil service. It was during the lifetime of Ernest the Pious that the Lutherans in the Netherlands were beginning to achieve religious freedom, and the duke lent them his diplomatic and financial support.

DUKE ERNEST WAS STRONGLY committed to the Lutheran Confessions. He required his pastors, teachers, church musicians, and government employees, as well as the professors at the University of Jena, of which he was partial owner, to subscribe the entire Book of Concord. In his Testament of 1654 he offered the prayer:

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When Lutherans in London were able to build a new church, they also appealed to Ernest for help. The duke, who was highly respected by the Habsburg emperor, also did his best to procure toleration for Protestants in Austrian territory after the Peace of Westphalia, but with little success. For "reasons of state" he did not approve of mixed marriages between Catholics and Protestants, and helped to prevent a marriage between the Hessian princess Louise Christine and Prince Carl of Poland, "since the differences in religion would play a role, and one should look not only at the high prestige but also at the great danger to souls which would be placed into these innocent hearts." 11

In his own court, Duke Ernest placed a strong emphasis upon the religious life of his family, the nobility, and the servants. When he built the new residence at Gotha, called Friedenstein, a roomy chapel was provided in which a full schedule of services was held on Sundays and festivals as well as daily services. Everyone at court was expected to attend chapel services for morning and evening devotions as well as the other occasions. Courtiers were also admonished to say their private prayers in the morning upon arising and in the evening before going to bed. Servants were to avoid work schedules which might keep them away from the chapel services, and their overseers were exhorted to arrange the work as far as possible to permit such attendance. Not only were they to appear in the chapel regularly, but also "they should participate with deep devotion, pray, sing, and listen to the sermon...," according to the "Order of Duke Ernest for the Servants of the Court." Ernest wanted his servants "to be devoted to God-blessedness and all the Christian virtues in every respect, not merely for outward appearances, but from the bottom of their hearts and in deed and truth. Thereby they might know how they should conduct themselves before God and to experience and feel powerfully his blessings in their offices and in their own affairs. Also they should always be prepared when God might call them out of their service here into his Kingdom (which often takes place sooner than a person has imagined)." 12

The interest which he manifested in the services in the court chapel also was extended to the state-church of his realm. As territorial prince he took seriously his role of the summepiscopate, which was based—perhaps erroneously—upon Luther's Address to the Christian Nobility (1520). He provided new editions of the Bible, the hymnbook, and the Catechism. Convinced that pastors were underpaid, he took large sums from his personal wealth to increase their salaries. Since many of his parishioners during his early reign were illiterate, he arranged for the reading of continuous Biblical lections in the services and also compulsory programs of adult education. His church became famous for its order, piety, and productiveness.

III. The Contributions of Duke Ernest to Education

HISTORICAL LITERATURE

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On Ernest the Pious in the English language is limited largely to studies in the history of education, where his importance is most widely recognized. Here his fame lies in several areas. (1) Following the destruction of the Thirty Years' War, Duke Ernest worked in various ways to restore the schools in his realm. (2) He provided a number of important innovations in education which eventually were adopted nearly everywhere. (3) He established and enforced laws sending every boy and girl to school during the ages 5-12, and instituted compulsory adult education facilities. These were of great significance in the history of the drive to eradicate illiteracy, in the history of women in society, and in the field of continuing education. Let us examine these accomplishments further.

When Ernest founded his house of Saxe-Gotha in 1640, the schools in his new state were suffering from the frequent invasions which had devastated Thuringia. Many schoolhouses had been destroyed, there was a serious lack of teachers, and wartime conditions had scattered or killed the school children. The education of large numbers of the youth and adults had been neglected, so that illiterates abounded. With characteristic energy and thoroughness, the new ruler initiated visitations which assessed him of the extent of damage to the educational system. Then he introduced various measures to restore the schools—in this context, the reconstruction of ruined buildings and the recruitment of teachers. He sought to encourage worthy young people to prepare themselves as teachers, sometimes paying for their education out of his own pocket. He made the calling more attractive by increasing the salaries, so that by the year 1650 the minimum salary in his land had risen to 50 florins per year (about $2,000 in 1959 standards) plus 8 Malters of grain (about 20 bushels), besides a rent-free dwelling with garden, free wood, and immunity from taxation on beverages. The duke also created a pension-fund for widows and orphans of teachers and gave generously to those in need. 13

The educational policies which previously prevailed had been largely formulated by Melanchthon a century before, with a strong emphasis upon Latin and the other classical languages. Under the advice of educators such as Ratke, Reyher, Evenius, Comenius, and Andrea, Ernest, without abolishing classical studies, limited their control over the schools. Himself a member of the "Fruit-Bearing Society," a literary group emphasizing the use of the vernacular German, Ernest

called for the use of the German language for instruction in the schools, in place of Latin, which had previously been employed in teaching all courses. Without abandoning the Latin classics, Ernest and his educators gave increasing attention to instruction in the natural sciences and in practical subjects. New textbooks in which the revised curricula were taught were issued and provided free of charge. These included such practical matters as instruction in personal health and hygiene, the improvement of house management, and homely advice on how to load a cart starting at the middle so it would not capsize, or how to measure a field of rye. Ernest favored textbooks which were attractively illustrated, especially for the small children. He took energetic measures against schoolmasters who practiced excessive cruelty in punishing the children, and urged positive rather than negative means of dealing with offenders.

If Ernest deserved to be remembered for no other reason, it would be sufficient fame to point out the beginnings of modern universal education in his School Law (Schulmethodus) of 1642ff. The duke was convinced that selfish adults who hindered children from getting a basic education were harming the lives of the youth, and that the state should step in with a law which required school attendance. His was the first known law for an entire state providing for compulsory education of children. What is even more noteworthy is that girls as well as boys were to be sent to school between the ages of 5 and 12. Pastors were required to keep lists of children on the basis of the Church Records to ascertain which children were of school age. Parents who withheld their children from school were admonished, then fined, and finally summoned before the Consistory, if they persisted in such non-compliance. Through these measures, nearly all the children in Ernest’s lands had the opportunity of getting at least a minimal education. His initiation of compulsory education soon spread to other German territories—to Württemberg in 1648, to Saxe-Weimar in 1670 (?), and to Brandenburg shortly after 1700. In spite of the skepticism of some historians, it seems obvious that illiteracy was overcome earliest in the small German states, and that this was during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Universal education did not reach France until the latter part of the nineteenth century; it appeared in Britain in the early twentieth century. Much of the credit for this development must be given to Ernest the Pious and his imaginative and energetic program to improve the schools and make the advantages of an education available to all.

For the benefit of adults who grew up during the war years and missed the opportunity of getting a schooling, Duke Ernest instituted a compulsory program of adult education. Here the principle emphasis was instruction in religion. He also provided instruction in practical subjects in order to help his people to work more effectively and to better their station in life. Three handbooks were printed and distributed among his citizens, one of which was also used as a textbook in natural science for the elementary grades in the schools. These books provided instruction on political organization from the emperor to the village magistrate, geography, public and private property, fire protection, on guarding one’s self against robbery, on various kinds of handwork and crafts, on the schools system, and on legal matters. Advice was given on housekeeping, on child rearing, on the care of the fields, and on matters of medicine and health. On various occasions, learning opportunities were given grown men and women to increase their knowledge on such practical matters. 14

In this year of the three-hundredth anniversary of the death of Ernest the Pious, we do well to pause and reflect concerning the benefits of such a man in government. After years of education in which moral and religious values have been treated lightly in the public schools, colleges, and universities of our land, we have reaped the harvest in the traumatic experience of the Watergate affair. “Political realists” have condemned the principles of Machiavellianism and ridiculed the “naïveté” of the Christian ideals of a Martin Luther or of an Ernest the Pious. As one scholar recently noted, nearly all the men involved in the Watergate transgressions had been educated in colleges which regarded the impartation of moral values as peripheral. 15 The American people desire a change in the attention given to values both in higher education and on the political scene. We could stand to learn much from Duke Ernest I, founder of the house of Saxe-Gotha.

15. Roy Carroll of Appalachian State University recently addressed the North Carolina Council for the Social Studies at Charlotte on the subject, “What About the Campuses?” In his address, Carroll went into the problem of values in higher education, finding them woefully absent. He referred to the series edited by Benjamin S. Bloom and others, Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, and noted how the series bogged down when the studies were to move on to moral problems. Carroll stated: “It was hoped that ways could be found to redress the obvious erosion in the meaning and substance of affective objectives which had resulted from the greater emphasis upon cognitive objectives. In the introductory portion of that volume, which came out in 1964, one finds the startling statement (p. 13) that ‘few of the examiners at the college level were convinced that the development of the affective domain would make much difference in their work or that they would find great use for it, when completed.’ In the eight years that it took to complete that work, Jeb Stuart Magruder, John W. Dean, III, Egil Krogh, Jr., and Charles Colson graduated,” Carroll concluded, page 2.

His reference was to Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals. Handbook II: Affective Domain, eds. David R. Krathwohl, Benjamin S. Bloom, and Bertram B. Masia (New York, 1956). Carroll’s address will appear in the October 1975 issue of The High School Journal, which is published at Chapel Hill. One recalls in this connection that President Gerald Ford in an early speech at Ohio State University stated that he felt that liberal studies were no longer viable.
RIDING THE MINNEAPOLIS FREEWAY UNDER THE PLACE WHERE ONCE STOOD TRINITY LUTHERAN FREE CHURCH SITE OF MANY WOMEN'S MISSIONARY FEDERATION ANNUAL MEETINGS (1919-1962)

(Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry? Luke 23: 28-30)

A glass garden floats above me
terrarium of green air
I breathe through a thin hose
and in the garden ladies stand
in cool convention dresses
and white hats
shaking hands and reading name tags
over their bifocals
and cream and coffee breath

Sister Milla home on furlough
blinks in the lemon sunshine
she has just come out from telling
of dim huts in Madagascar
where demons howl in the bodies of dark men
until the name of Jesus drives
the devils out into the shining air

in the steep vestibule they look
at maps laced with yarn
(red for Jesus' blood) and pictures
of their missionaries for a day
sunsets on the Malagasy Sea
an outdoor clinic in Taiwan
and Santal converts by a sacred cow

the ladies stand beside the church
in perfect balance with the sun
over a concrete cloverleaf

inside the church Jesus stands
in the desert praying, the sun
breaks through the darkness
behind him, ladies bloom
about him, iris and lilac
rustling in summer dresses,
rooted in stained glass light

(color I covet from a dead land).

where ladies, Jesus bless them,
stand on green ground
sweat shining under their powder
odors of musk and lily of the valley
rising from firm foundations

though caterpillars furrow the ground
and engines whine at their open toes

keep them, Jesus, when their children
dangle from needles in dark rooms
to feel the god rush in their veins

take your hands and cover hell
(I can no longer)
keep them when the demons
Sister Milla prophesied
come true
and young men stagger dance
to strange gods flowering in their heads

take the globe I struggle to give over
hold it in a pearl of color
take the ladies, Jesus, in your arms
they must not know what rushes
in the dark beneath them

keep the green world blossoming above me
the lifelines running
pure and sweet with holy air

and I will weep for them
and for their children
and the green tree
out of Lebanon I will kneel
the burning sand all cool
of lamentation

if you will take Love’s Working Arm
and plant before me in the city
a vision of the green tree
growing from a mustard seed of ladies
a tree all dazzle in the sunshine
mother-of-pearl and white rags
blossoming light (let it shine)
let it shine) a green hope
springing from beautiful seeds
from the sweet faith of ladies

who fretted uneasily about the demon
who prayed in the green world to be kept
from prophecy, who prayed Have Mercy On Us
and Thy Will Be Done
who blossom, Jesus,
in the shining sun.

GRACIA GRINDAL
GRACE
(for Beth and Dennis Jones)

I

Cliff swallows swoop the quiet river thrush
scold us away from their nests toward the dark
tapping of woodpeckers we walk where deer
have delicately foraged pine needles
and step like Natty Bumpo careful not
to snap twigs the owl and woodchuck perk
their soft ears to listen water rushes
over Lower Dam
we unfold canvas stools
and sitting down to talk watch Dennis fish
from a rock beneath the concrete spillway
off in the silver evening his line bends
we grow quiet and struggle with the fish

II

A dull sheen hangs from Dennis' hand he walks
toward us up the steep bank the catch coming
clearer a tail slapping he is holding
a catfish whiskers twitching hooked to air
we ride home in rain-colored light and head
for the garden pick lettuce, spinach, dill
and radishes while Dennis kills the fish
and cleans it in the house he cuts it down
to size blood oozes from the pearly bone

III

We use the common service home-made bread
and wine new place mats hand woven by Beth
Come Lord Jesus
in our language we will bless the Lord
of Hosts banquet on gifts our hands have served
pick at tiny bones for flavor marvel
at leaves we tended from earth and seeds lean
back in our chairs smiling Bless the Lord O
my soul and all that is within me bless

GRACIA GRINDAL
SUDDEN DAWN

in the evening after all the world’s children
bent and folded rest as they did in the womb
awaiting then living and
seeing another day another sunrise.

where there is no time and no space in the black
black zones of the inner world brain thought
not yet conceived molten burns a touring flame
surface in the eye of eye and sleeping awakes.

startled awake this one someone would say tasted
the sour bud of the lowest vine living nightmare
yet yet a new and thought not before awakes
few believe or wish to old men bow low though.

whimsically the shadowed alive and no one
not even no not even the soul answers
whom the caller the unsought unknown
no not a soul never knew or thought.

burdened suchly the youth stalked the earth
looking and no one wait a few
did some followed and so he spoke words
Words confused some ran other believed.

in the deepest deception all mankind heard
factually Word about and then forbidden
struck down by those who shouted mercilessly demanded He fell at the feet.

crying tears of blood some of lust
confusion struck and they who loved
longed but watched barren attached
nailed high and stuck in the side there He died.

torn and bloodied gently they lowered
into the grave the sun stood still
as He met the resting place
days later He denied the Earth and left.

JAMES T. SANTOR
WHEN I SAW PETER USTINOV's play *Who's Who in Hell*, a satire on our time—or so it seemed—I had quite a few thoughts about our time which obviously would cry out for satire. But, strangely enough, there isn't any around, and Ustinov's play is not quite what it should be. This reminded me of a literary idol of my youth (often compared with Mencke), the Viennese satirist Karl Kraus, who wrote some of the most savage political satires in history. But in 1934, after Hitler's seizure of power, Kraus came to the conclusion that the daily events were their own greatest satire; nothing satirical occurred to him with which to satirize such satire come to life. Certainly nothing really satirical occurred to Ustinov, a very clever and slick writer. In his case Bernard Shaw comes to mind. What Shaw would have done with the same material! Very likely he would not have dramatized it at all; surely not in the way Ustinov did. Shaw would have realized that he could not employ a scenic device used by Jean-Paul Sartre in his one-acter *No Exit* and turn it into a three-act idea.

The opening of the first act was quite promising. An American President, whose resemblance to Nixon was striking, enters the facsimile of Purgatory, nicely furnished. He is followed by a figure reminiscent of Khrushchev and a nice, somewhat confused American boy, who shot both politicians before being shot by Secret Service men. The fact that this heroic action took place in Disneyland characterizes the level and levity of Ustinov's wit. As soon as the facts of death and identity are established, the dramatic situation runs into the obvious and it runs downhill. Nothing much happens after the first twenty minutes or so. Except talk. Shaw was a master of such talk with which he could whip into dramatic shape whatever message he had in mind.

No doubt Ustinov has the kind of facile wit which keeps you smiling, but the constant confrontation of the two politicians with their past images and reality does not lend itself to any satire in depth. When finally the three main characters are joined by the assassin's girl friend, a suicidal case, and the two lovers are dispatched to heaven through a trick by the Russian diplomat, we have reached a soap opera ending of a one-act television idea. The acting was superb, and so was Ustinov's Russian accent. Ustinov has to blame himself for having concocted a satiric souffle when the dramatists will now claim that he is a better actor than playwright.

MUCH HAS BEEN WRITTEN about the euphoric state of this season on Broadway. But this theater-oriented mood has a touch of the desperate gaiety of a fin de siecle or "before us the deluge." If, as estimates maintain, we shall have seen one third more shows than last year by the end of this season, we will have to credit despair and depression, British imports and American rivals for this upsurge. Among the outstanding imports is Peter Shaffer's *Equus*, about which I reported some time ago. Close to
USTINOV's failure is Terence Rattigan's play In Praise of Love. Although Rattigan writes with great elegance and urbane grace, the author of Separate Tables did not come up with an interesting story nor with believable characters in his latest effort. A writer's wife has a fatal disease. Knowledge of the disease is kept from her while a rich American friend drops in on this English couple to take her to Monte Carlo for a few days. All this is written and plotted with such delicacy that we do not even find out whether the two are lovers. Even though this play is not a play, theater is still theater, and who can resist such a trio as Rex Harrison, Julie Harris, and Martin Gabel?

TIME IS A RELENTLESS TASKMASTER. It never stops teaching us a great deal about the past. The didactic play in Bertolt Brecht's alienation technique had an urgency about it: characters addressing the audience; posters bellowing social legends; plots creating a courtroom ambiance with the public cast as jurors, even to sending them out into the streets with their verdicts and charged to change the wrongs in our social structure. After World War I, Brecht was the great fashion in Germany and after World War II everywhere else, particularly in the United States (thanks to Eric Bentley). Now, with all the revolutions lost, including those that were won, nothing has changed in front of and behind all curtains. Brecht's plays have become period pieces, as the production of Mother, brought to New York by the San Francisco Mime Theatre, proved.

When you push Brechtian concepts into the avenues of improvisation, adding a touch of bizarreness, (as we find it in Genet), with enough untheatricality turned into superrealism onstage, it may somehow work. Strangely enough, it works in an emotional as well as a didactic way. Athol Fugard, famous white playwright fighting for the human rights of the blacks in South Africa, is the author of two plays that came to us from London's Royal Court Theatre: Sizwe Banzi Is Dead and The Island.

The former reminds us of Brecht's Man Is Man. A black man in need of work and facing arrest finds the passport of another black who has been stabbed to death. He changes Banzi's photograph with his, and with a new identity is free and able to work. The Island is a tormenting tale of prison life in South Africa, with the ironic twist of a play within a play: two prisoners acting out Antigone—dealing, as it does, with the question of the rights of the state and those of man—before their masters. These two-character plays, with the two black actors John Kani and Winston Nishona, create an immediacy and a feeling of impending social change.

THE IBSENITE ARTHUR Miller drama, All My Sons, is one of the many revivals of American plays. It is dated in a Brechtian way, with a black and white vision of the world, with a wicked manufacturer causing the death of a number of airmen by selling defective aircraft parts, and with his son Chris playing the avenging angel for a new world to come. It was Miller's first play successfully produced. Even though the play was awarded a prize in 1947, Miller has in the meanwhile written so many important plays that one wonders about the wisdom of the choice to revive this play.

OLDER BY TEN YEARS IS John Steinbeck's Of Mice and Men. It fared much better in its Broadway revival. It is an American classic, slightly flawed through its melodramatic touch. Two creatures, Lenny, the mentally retarded giant, and George, his emotionally retarded protector, dream of a tiny piece of land they can call their own. Their failure is heartbreaking because of man's deep solitude and Steinbeck's skill in creating a beautiful relationship between the two solitudes. Steinbeck would have been happy to see Lenny come alive in James Earl Jones and George in Kevin Conway.

AND YET, ALL REVIVALS pale in comparison to Tennessee Williams' Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, now twenty years old. Even in his most magnificent failures, he has always been a poetic dramatist. He can shape a fictitious world in colorful clouds of reality. He can create characters whose hearts visibly tremble. They can be mean and kind; they can cry and laugh. The players' isolation from one another—out of different motivations—is perfect. Most of Williams' figures run around in their dream world with damaged souls, searching for their identity, for the meaning of their existence. But their search is always stopped short by their flight from themselves.

Brick, the favorite son of Big Daddy, escapes into alcohol to drown his own insecurity about having homosexual feelings for his friend Skipper, cries out that his friendship was "real, real, deep, deep" and that it was "a true, clean thing" between them. He does not want to have it be true; he cannot face the truth of his own being and is a failure in his marriage with Maggie, the "cat." Williams created one of the great scenes between a father and a son. There is the intimidating, roaring voice of Big Daddy, who wants a grandson, and there is the gentle, self-deceptive lie of Maggie, assuring him that she and Brick are about to give him a grandchild—knowing that Big Daddy is dying of cancer. How complex are man's feelings in their subtleties, in the truth of their lies, in the lies of their truths!

The staging as well as the cast of this play, as directed by Michael Kahn at the Anta Theatre, are perfect. Elizabeth Ashley has been praised, and rightly so, for being a most captivating Maggie. None of the acting falls off, even though the chorus of the minor roles is a bit melodramatic. But nothing could prevent those privileged to witness the revival of this play—which is not even the best of his plays—from recognizing the singular dramatic power of Tennessee Williams, poet of the theater.
In spite of a rush of recent critical articles and books, a first-rate book on C.S. Lewis is still a thing of the future. I think Corbin Scott Carnell's *Bright Shadow of Reality* is one of the best so far—especially for those who are interested in Lewis's concept of the numinous. Carnell's book, however, is not without its shortcomings: it offers only a pretense of an explication of Narnia and the space trilogy, and, at best, only a lopsided discussion of the metaphysical features of romantic sensibility.

The main idea in *Bright Shadow of Reality* is that the quest in Lewis is generally ontological in nature and purpose. By this Carnell means that the quest functions not only as a structural device, but also as a metaphor for man's search for something mystical or visionary; ultimately, it expresses his otherwise unidentifiable desire for a kind of supernatural encounter with Christ. Moreover, he infers, the quest in Lewis has an eschatological element because it reveals itself as an unfulfilled consummation in historical time. Thus, Lewis's search for God takes the form of a desirable paradox: the joy of the quest is proportional to a sense of loss. In fantasy Lewis uses the quest ritual to develop a primal joy-melancholy feeling. This Christ-paradox results in a catharsis of indeterminate longing and causeless nostalgia.

Carnell identifies this archetypal wish in Lewis as the *Sehnsucht* motif. It represents the coexistence of feelings of unity with and separation from the numinous. Lewis, he contends, orchestrates this paradox on allegorical, mythological, and spiritual levels. Such a dialectic of desire forms the structure of the quest and serves as the unifying principle in his ontology. This is the whole point of *Bright Shadow of Reality*: that Lewis's work is primarily a mystical and esthetic vision of the theological implications of *Sehnsucht*.

**THOMAS G. HALL**

*A SOVIET HERETIC: ESSAYS BY YEVENGY ZAMYATIN.*


Yevegeny Zamyatin is remembered most frequently by those acquainted with Russian literature for his contributions to early Soviet fiction. Yet, as Alex M. Shane points out, Zamyatin’s critical prose, although inaccessible to most American readers prior to the present collection of translated essays, is often fully equal in style and vividness to his fictional works. Furthermore, the author’s characteristic frank, witty irony shines through all the more clearly in these revealing essays. Here, at last, the author is free to remove the fictional mask of the storyteller and speak to us directly concerning his fascinating craft.

Although Zamyatin’s first true efforts in the domain of fiction date back to the publication, in *Obrazovaniye*, of a story entitled “Alone” (1908), his critical works first began to appear in 1914 in Mirolyubov’s *Yezhemesyachniy Zhurnal* (*Monthly Journal*). These contributions, one of which is included in the present collection, begin to define his critical style and reveal Zamyatin’s earliest opinions of some of his contemporaries, such as Sologub, Remizov, and Andrey Bely.

In the face of growing repression of creative intellectual expression following the Russian Revolution, Zamyatin vehemently defended the writer’s privilege of constant experimentation in art. A bizarre childhood incident related in two of the author’s autobiographical essays (1922 and 1929) reveals this love of experimentation in its embryonic form. He writes that one spring, while in the seventh grade, he was bitten by a mad dog. Having read in a textbook that the first symptoms of rabies usually take two weeks to appear, he promptly decided to wait and see if he would go mad or not, thereby testing, as he put it, both himself and fate. Fortunately for posterity, the young Zamyatin survived this foolhardy experiment, but in his adult years the author never lost his taste for experimenting with new and hitherto untried ideas.

During the twenties, Soviet critics committed to the party line directed increasingly harsh attacks against Zamyatin in view of his refusal to “politicize” his writings and serve the government ideology. Ginsburg’s collection includes several essays from this difficult period as well as the text of Zamyatin’s letter of resignation from the Soviet Writers’ Union, written at the peak of communist critical attacks against him. Two years after his resignation from the Writers’ Union, Zamyatin left the Soviet Union for the West, where he resided in Paris until his death in 1937.

Structurally, the present collection divides Zamyatin’s essays into four major groups: autobiographical essays; essays on the state of Russian literature from 1914 to 1933; observations on the craft of writing (including the genial and intriguing essay “Backstage,” in which Zamyatin sums up his ideas on the creative process); and essays on specific writers and painters.
Mirra Ginsburg's translation and selection of essays of this embattled Soviet non-conformist are superbly readable and highly enjoyable. This volume is a must for anyone who wishes to gain important insights into the critical opinions of Zamyatin the essayist, a major facet of this noted Russian literary personality, who is most aptly characterized from the standpoint of literary ideology as a Soviet heretic.

STEVEN T. BRENT

THE NEW GENETICS AND THE FUTURE OF MAN.


Some may contend that the emergence of gripping problems of food and energy scarcity, both with immediate potential for social catastrophe, has permanently shifted society’s concern away from the knotty problems addressed in this book. For these, the request for voluntary renunciation of experimentation on certain types of DNA recombinations until the risks can be adequately assessed (made by prestigious members of the National Academy of Sciences) underscores the fact that genetic research is at the threshold of discoveries of immense technological power and unknown risk.

Produced through the co-operation of several religious groups, The New Genetics addresses three general problems: new beginnings in life; genetic therapy; and pollution and health. In each section a prominent scientist sets out the current state of knowledge on the topic, suggests trends, and addresses moral and social problems arising from the growing knowledge. These essays were each sent to professionals in three different disciplines for critical response. At its best (as in the first section) this procedure brings different viewpoints into sharply focused dialogue. While not quite so closely dialogued, the other two sections still retain topical unity.

In the first essay Leon Kass argues with surprising passion against almost all technological innovation that does not have clearly defined and benign uses. New technical advances by scientists have been encouraged, he says, by “that curious new breed of technotheologians who, having pronounced God dead, disclose that God’s dying command was that mankind should undertake its limitless, no-holds-barred self-modification.” Since almost all the new technologies have possibly harmful effects, they should be proscribed by the ethical maxim “Do no harm.” Responses to Kass by Joseph Fletcher and Daniel Callahan suggest a more complex ethical decision making process allowing for growth in knowledge through experimentation, with the hope that abuses can be minimized by careful ethical decisions in particular cases. Frank Grad sketches the legal aspects of fetal research and related problems. Kass’s position seems to have gained political currency with the enactment of a Massachusetts law proscribing many lines of fetal research. Apparently the law has been effective in halting much of this research. Translated into political terms, the views of Fletcher and Callahan would permit research to continue but with carefully drawn societal controls.

Regarding genetic therapy W. French Anderson takes a rather optimistic view of the possibilities for treating genetic diseases. Although he recognizes potential social abuses, he would prefer to gain sufficient technical expertise to practice genetic therapy rather than to rely on eugenic measures to alleviate genetic disease. Arno Motulsky is not so sanguine about the technical possibility of genetic therapy. Ethicist Paul Ramsey distinguishes sharply between therapy and experiment, arguing for different moral stances toward each. While a scientific ethic, according to Ramsey, often assumes that only man’s mind, will, or freedom can be violated, a Biblical view suggests that man’s flesh too is part of his humanity and can be violated, especially by experimental manipulation disguised as therapy (or by abortion as a “treatment” for genetic disease).

In the third section of the book Samuel Epstein shows that current testing of chemical compounds cannot fully screen out all potentially harmful substances. Julius Johnson, an industrial chemist, argues that industrial innovation could hardly take place under the kind of strict independent pretesting of all chemical compounds that Epstein prefers. Additional articles outline the scope of government regulation in the matter and raise the question of where responsibility for the safety of the public really lies.

Taken as a whole the discussions in this book reflect the fundamental uneasiness over scientific progress that has been increasingly apparent since the Manhattan Project. Knowledge is power (this book suggests), and scientific power, like any other, corrupts. Now we need a new ideal of society to direct choices of the paths of scientific innovation we choose to explore.

JOHN C. GJENAPP

"Where is it written. . . . (from page 36)"

The church has a role in helping people assess priorities in facing life’s problems. Sending mother to work is never easy, and is often unacceptable. But if husband and wife have honestly considered their family’s needs and have decided on that course, does it not behoove the rest of us to offer support rather than disapproval?

March, 1975
WHERE IS IT WRITTEN

"THOU SHALT SCRUB THINE OWN FLOORS"?

Life's middle years are sometimes referred to as second adolescence. It is a time for self-examination, for the eternal "Who am I? Why am I here? How shall I spend my life?" It is time to inspect original goals, measure achievements, re-set priorities.

The woman of 1975 cannot evaluate her situation without at least a glance towards the women's rights question. Those strident, attention-seeking Libbers may evoke amusement and contempt, but they have undeniably altered our social climate. Far more women now explore personal Liberation, a certain Fellow Traveler-ism sometimes arises as we view others. We are not equally blessed. Not everyone could exclaim "Never!" as I did recently when a questionnaire asked whether I had ever felt discriminated against on the basis of sex. Not everyone has always been encouraged to do her best, or has escaped the insinuation that something may be beyond her capabilities simply because of her gender. Not everyone has both father and husband who have always seemed delighted that she was a girl, while never prefacing the term with "mere."

But despite one's personal good fortune, inequality, unfairness, exists. As a counselor I have seen the struggles of young women crippled in coping with "Who am I?" because they know they are valued less highly than had they been born male. I have seen the frustrations typified by the personnel expert subtly forced to exchange her meaningful career for the pretense of businessman's social-butterfly-wife. I know of the despair of the able, alert person passed over for promotion, the position squandered on a lazy fellow whose lone asset was the ability to project a Male Image.

Mostly, though, my concern is the disservice done to many women by the church. (No, this is not another plea for suffrage. I belong to a Lutheran body which for decades has not only permitted voting, but entreats us to take our turn as president and chairman as well as secretary and committee-member. It seems such a natural way to administer the Body's temporal affairs I tend to forget the practice isn't universal.)

I speak of the working mother. Does anyone recognize how schizoid is the church's message to women? For about twenty years we are beseeched to be "Good Stewards of Time, Talents, and Treasures." Then suddenly we find ourselves smack up against the Eleventh Commandment: "Woman's place is in the home." Stewardship becomes a money-only proposition; time and talents no longer matter, except insofar as we volunteer them to the local parish. Every female over age five is indoctrinated with the notion that once a mother she really should spend years playing ever-present Mommy. (The exceptions are widows or other unfortunates who must support families or the Clearly Superior Woman, like the lady physician.)

It is unfair, wrong, for the church to paint us all alike and try to heap bogus guilt on those who don't conform. The assumption generally is that the working mother sacrifices her children for material gain. Baloney. She sacrifices, all right, but not her children — her leisure, her beauty, sleep, social life, housekeeping standards, hobbies, other expenditures.

Studies indicate that emotionally healthy, secure children need some exclusive attention from, and an intensive relationship with, a loving adult, but that a hovering presence can be detrimental to growth. The working mothers I know seem to not only spend as much time as possible with their children, but to make that time as precious as possible. For relationships do depend on time spent together: not the number of hours alone, but their content.

As a former probation officer I can cite case histories from every social class where there are at-home mothers and delinquent juveniles. I recall my freshman dormitory, where the two girls least prepared for responsibility — for life — had Mamas who had always been there. I am presently unemployed, but despite the relaxed pace I am not magically sweeter of temper nor more overflowing in patience. And how the time fills itself! The at-home mother doesn't necessarily spend more hours relating personally to each child than does her employed counterpart. The motivation to work is not always economic either. That R.N. on the night shift knows her child doesn't need her while he sleeps, but the old gentleman in 306 does. That woman with three toddlers writes her newspaper column to balance her perspective and to keep in touch with the greater world. That college grad in social services feels she is helping tackle some of her community's problems which may benefit her own family as well.

(Concluded on page 35.)