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"Four District presidents were removed from office by synodical president Dr. J. A. O. Preus on April 1, 1976.

The four District leaders are Dr. Herman Frincke (Eastern), Dr. Harold Hecht (English), Rev. Rudolph P. F. Ressmeyer (Atlantic), and Dr. Robert J. Riedel (New England).

The 1975 synodical convention at Anaheim authorized Preus to vacate the office of any District president who did not comply with synodical directives on ordination and placement of improperly endorsed ministerial candidates. Preus was to vacate the offices 60 days before the District's convention."

So ran the announcement in the 12 April 1976 issue of the Reporter. The editor of The Cresset has argued before that the conflict in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is about the apostolicity of the church. The following reflections continue to pursue that theme in response to the announcement of the action of President Preus.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is a human invention, devised by the church. It is neither commanded nor forbidden by God. That makes synod, technically, an adiaphoron.

By virtue of being invented by the church, the church of sinners, the synod partakes of things sinful. It is a device made by humans who cannot shed their sin while they build an instrument to serve even the church.

**Synod is an ad hoc Committee of the Church**

THE SYNOD WAS DEVISED BY the church to serve the church. That makes the synod an ad hoc committee of the church, to do what serves the church. To begin to think of the synod as the church is to stand things on their head; it is to "wisconsinize" the synod and "papalize" the church. The synod is not the church; it can be called "church" only because the church invents, controls, and uses the synod, lives in and through it. Synod is a usurper when it conceives itself as the lord over the churches, when it construes its life as the central reality and God's congregations as extensions of synod. The synod was devised, among other things, to conserve and promote the unity of the true faith and to present a united defense against schism and sectarianism; to be an instrument wherein the churches of God could join together in common work for education, mission, publication, etc.; and to protect the pastors, teachers, and congregations in the performance of their duties.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has gone into erroneous ways by exalting human opinions about the Bible into the position of doctrine. While the church can tolerate pious opinions about matters religious, she cannot allow pious opinions to become matters of doctrine, necessary to be held for orthodoxy or unity. Nor dare she allow such opinions to become the norm and rule to judge the confession of others. In *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*, adopted by the New Orleans Convention and implemented for disciplinary power in the Anaheim Convention, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
has elevated pious opinions about the Bible and its interpretation into a new and strange judge for understanding doctrine. The opinions of men have been substituted for the doctrine of God. And then, to put the error into effect, these opinions have been used to remove from office called and elected presidents of districts. Those opinions and that action constitute an attack on the apostolicity of the church. But the synod was formed by the church to help the churches continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine.

The churches require the synod to judge all doctrine by the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. Synod's pious opinion about the Bible is not normed by what that Bible says. Boldly the slogan is repeated: all doctrine must be normed by the Scriptures and the Confessions, as if the repetition of the slogan were the same as faithfully judging the doctrine. The unity of the true faith is neither promoted nor is the apostolicity of the church conserved when human opinions about the Bible become normative for understanding doctrine and exercising discipline without themselves being normed by the very Bible being discussed.

The Authority to Ordain

ALTHOUGH THE ATTENTION has been turned now to the district presidents, the conflict is not really with them. They, like the synod, have rights to certify the ordination of candidates only on the authority of the churches; that is, on the authority that God has called these candidates to the holy ministry through his churches. God calls pastors. The authority to ordain derives from that call. Ordination is the act of God's church conjoining herself to the work and will of God in setting a pastor within the body of Christ to teach, shepherd, rebuke, discipline, comfort, and care for the whole body in that place.

The call of God through his church is the authority to ordain. When the synod or its district presidents call or certify for ordination, they do so by the will and power of the churches. But when the synod—that invention of the churches—turns against Christ's little flock in any place, refusing on grounds other than the truth of the Word of God to ordain suitable candidates, these congregations for the sake of confessing the gospel must oppose the error and resist the aggrandizement.

The district presidents could, in my opinion, conform to the demand of the Anaheim resolution; that is, they could refrain from certifying a suitable candidate for ordination. In that way they could continue in office. At the same time, in obedience to God and for the sake of the confession of the gospel, they could oppose the error and the papistical arrogance of the synod by doing what the constitution of the synod requires. They could lead, guide, and shepherd the congregations in the unity of faith; they could guard the rights of pastors, teachers, and congregations. The congregations could call the candidates. In consort with neighboring pastors and congregations, together with district presidents and circuit counselors who uphold the churchly function of the Scriptures and the constitution, they could examine the candidates. If the candidates are fit and suitable for ordination, the neighboring pastors could ordain them.

This method of examining the candidates would be more churchly and far superior to the present system where the seminaries have too exclusive a part to play in such certification. And if orthodox congregations ordain orthodox and competent pastors, and then become the objects of threats, bullying, or intimidation by the synod, it would be revealed clearly that the conflict is not with the district presidents. Not they but the churches of God are the object of attack.
not the churchly love for the sound words of sound doctrine. That is the spirit of Cain, not Christ. Such a model fits a company or a sales organization. It does not fit the model of the marriage to Christ, unless, of course, we are ready to talk about trial marriages to Christ and propriety of divorce as the way to settle problems.

We are not ready to concede such images. Nor are we ready to become a mirror image of the synodical position by emphasizing the "visible" rather than the "invisible" church. The doctrine of God can be debauched not only by replacing it with pious human opinions, but also by selling it out to an ideology of "liberation" or "freedom." The ideological slogans about liberation that serve chiefly to dissolve the bonds that have held and do hold people together do no more to guard the unity of the true faith than does emphasis which causes the church to evaporate into invisibility. Heavy breathing about "mission and ministry" that takes its energy from the enthusiasm of the times rather than from the Word of God, the administration of the Holy Sacraments, and the use of the Word to sanctify that in­visible church. Human opinion has been elevated to doctrinal and interpretative heights to furnish the basis for division. The functioning of pastors and teachers and congregations has been abridged by resolutions, pow­ers and enactments that have been turned aside from the child of Christ's bride, let us be sure that Christ has his ways to cover her with honor. It is not the honor of victory from ideological convictions ruthlessly held; it is the honor of the righteousness of his cross, preached and believed.

Synod, the ad hoc committee of the church, has erroneously used doctrines to arouse fear, make accusations, and gain control of the churches. Human opinion has been taken up with the aping of leaders who will fornicate with our souls, giving us power but leaving us barren and forsaken. Rather let us cling to that Word till he bless us and with the joy of a bride adorned to meet her husband, with the dependent trust of those sheep who hear the true voice of the true shepherd, let us adorn that trust with a life of love and good works.

If vain and empty, crafty and pow­er hungry men try to strip the clothing off Christ's bride, let us be sure that Christ has his ways to cover her with honor. It is not the honor of victory from ideological convictions ruthlessly held; it is the honor of the righteousness of his cross, preached and believed.

GOD'S CHURCH IS THE NEW Israel. We ought to learn from the first Israel. He, Jacob (as he was formerly called), was a deceiver with a guilty conscience, a man of cunning and deceit. He was justly revealed as a sinner and was about to receive his comeuppance from the brother he could see only as his enemy. At a great price he sought to make peace with his enemy-brother by first coming to terms with the God who loves truth and righteousness, and hates the lie. The Luther­an Church — Missouri Synod has come to have too many of us who hate the righteous judgment of God against our pride, our toying with doctrine, our aping the love of the truth.

The synod is the invention of the church. If the synod has turned and become the enemy of the church, we dare not become irresponsible par­ents who turn aside from the child we have brought forth into the world. Dare we now turn that deformed child loose in the world to let others suffer it and care for it? Would it not be better for us to hold to the Word of God to us, the way Jacob wrestled all night with the Angel of the Lord and would not let go until he was blessed? That Word did not disdain our deformity but came into the world as the true child of the Father to carry in his own body the hatred we have against God and each other. His death in truth has swallowed the death of our deceit, lies, and errors. Would it not be better for us to hang on to him to­gether till he bless us and remove the curse we rightly have hanging on on us? Even if we come away limping, we shall be blessed by the en­fleshed Word, the peace between us and our brothers.

In this present situation, many of us have no power legally. Hooray! We have no power politically. Let us be grateful for that. By being yoked to the light burden of the cross, let us continue the tough pity toward those who labor and are heavy laden with the endless trouble of trying to control doctrine politi­cally. We are really poor, poverty stricken, confounded, and hurt. We seem to be consumed by the lust to divide from each other or by the lust to gain power. For shame. Christ's holy bride, his little flock, always has nothing other than the Word of God. If the synod, or others among us, cannot trust the Word of God to keep us apostolic, to keep us pure before God, to keep us united in the true faith, let us not join in the lust of lovers who will fornicate with our souls, giving us power but leaving us barren and forsaken. Rather let us cling to that Word till he bless us and with the joy of a bride adorned to meet her husband, with the de­pendent trust of those sheep who hear the true voice of the true shepherd, let us adorn that trust with a life of love and good works.

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Synod, the ad hoc committee of the church, has erroneously used doctrines to arouse fear, make accusations, and gain control of the churches. Human opinion has been elevated to doctrinal and interpretative heights to furnish the basis for division. The functioning of pastors and teachers and congregations has been abridged by resolutions, powers, and enactments that have been directed to the achievement of an ideological victory, not to the furthering of the preaching of the Word of God, the administration of the Holy Sacraments, and the use of the Office of the Keys. The demand to submit to a canon law regulation that does not even carefully guard the suitability of candidates to be ordained has led to the opinion that the church exists for the synod. In the face of all this, Christ's poor little church must suffer in repentant patience. She must use the pow­er of the Word to sanctify that in­strument of her making which has befooled and distorted itself. She must not abandon in the world to perform those tasks given to her by her Lord and Lover. Like noble confessors in her holy train, the church must live where she now is, in the state of confession.

May, 1976
IN 1962, JOHN STEINBECK PUBLISHED TRAVELS with Charley. In the story of his travels across America with his dog, Steinbeck describes a visit to a New England Church on a Sunday morning. He says that he heard a glorious sermon there. It was an old-fashioned fire and brimstone sermon. The minister “spoke of hell as an expert, not the mush-mush hell of these soft days, but a well-stoked, white-hot hell.” As a result of the sermon, Steinbeck and presumably others in the congregation came to know that they were first-rate sinners who were bound for hell. The author was so impressed by this sermon that he placed five dollars in the collection plate. That John Steinbeck should contribute five dollars to organized religion, or that he should come to the end of his long and distinguished writing career with anything good or positive to say about organized religion, had to come as a major shock to seasoned Steinbeck readers. When one reads the earlier writings of this author who had complete contempt for any form of religious institutions, the mellowing and even approbation which one finds in his books written after 1950 seem strange indeed.

Regardless of what John Steinbeck’s attitudes may have been toward organized religions, many of his greatest books reflect a thorough knowledge of, and appreciation for, biblical themes. Apparently Steinbeck, at some point in his life, became thoroughly familiar with the Bible. The titles of his books such as To a God Unknown and East of Eden are taken from scripture. Many of his characters bear biblical names such as Adam, Aaron, Caleb, Samuel, Joseph, and Benjamin, and not only do they bear these names, but Steinbeck frequently causes them to act out their biblical roles. In addition to the use of these biblical names directly, Steinbeck critics can point to the names of several characters in various books in which some self-sacrificing hero is given a first and last name combination which begins with the letters J and C.1

Perhaps the most obvious and conscious use of a biblical theme in the writings of John Steinbeck is the Exodus theme which is found in The Grapes of Wrath. For many years critics have pointed out the parallels between the Okies and their journey to California in search of freedom from the drought and depression which struck the middle west in the 1930s and the Israelites and their flight from slavery through the wilderness and into Canaan. The names, the images, and even the rules of conduct which are to be observed in the camps all seem to be a rather deliberate parallel on the part of Steinbeck.

Although a Steinbeck reader could spend much time pointing out the various parallels between his books and the New Testament and many portions of the Old Testament, the major concern of this paper will be to locate and comment upon the themes from the book of Genesis.

THE GARDEN OF EDEN

Perhaps the most common biblical theme which appears in the writings of Steinbeck is that of paradise or the Garden of Eden. In very general terms, this theme is found in nearly everything that he wrote. Steinbeck was a native of the rich agricultural area of the Salinas Valley of California, and his love of the beauty and fertility of that land certainly influenced his writing. His characters seem to be either in New England or in California or on their way to California. Most frequently they are born in New England and move to California. It is almost as though no other part of the United States existed. Steinbeck’s critics have pointed out that as long as he lived in California he was productive, but when he left his Eden and moved to New York, he ceased to produce his masterpieces. Regardless of Steinbeck’s personal motives, his books are full of a love of the land; his characters all seem to be seeking an edenic land. In nearly every Steinbeck book the reader finds lengthy

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Lewis Moore Hopfe, Dean of the College and Instructor in Religion at Kendall College, Evanston, Illinois, received the BA (1956) from Baylor University, the BD (1959) from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and the PhD (1965) from Boston University. Glencoe Press published his Religions of the World in January of this year.

2. Two of the more frequently noted Steinbeck heroes with these initials are Jim Casy, one of the leaders of the Okies in The Grapes of Wrath, and Juan Chicoy, the driver of The Wayward Bus.
descriptions of beautiful rich land, the trees, the rivers and springs which water the land, its flowers and grasses, and even a loving description of the stones of the land.

Again in very general terms, in several Steinbeck stories, the characters seek out their Edens and are on the verge of finding them when paradise is abruptly snatched from them by the actions of a wicked or thoughtless woman. Adam Trask in East of Eden is a wealthy man who comes to California and seeks out the best possible land. He takes note of his name and consciously plans to create an Eden for himself, his wife, and their unborn children. His wife has other ideas, and as soon as she is able to travel after the birth of their twin sons, she shoots Adam and deserts him, leaving behind the unfinished Eden. Similarly in Of Mice and Men, the two leading characters, George and Lennie, dream of a day when they will own a little piece of property. Though their dreams are modest, they are clearly seeking an Eden for themselves where they will be their own bosses, cultivate a small garden, own a few chickens and rabbits, and "live off the fat of the land." Again and again they recite the contents of this dream. One day the way is clear to the realization of this dream and it seems to be just within their reach when the sluttish wife of their boss tempts Lennie; he kills her, and then must die, and the dream of Eden is lost forever.

Occasionally a Steinbeck critic will point to one of the earlier novels, In Dubious Battle, as an attempt to present the edenic theme. The main justification for this seems to be that this is a story of a struggle between the forces of good and evil which takes place between migratory workers and their bosses in an apple orchard. This interpretation seems to be stretching the edenic theme too far. The story is actually about two Communist agitators who seek to exploit the misery and poor working conditions of the migratory workers to the benefit of their party. If one must find a biblical parallel to this story, it seems more like the stories of Paul and one of his companions setting forth on some new and dangerous missionary journey for the young Church than it is like anything from the Garden of Eden.

JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS

While the Garden of Eden theme is never clearly set forth as the major pattern in any of John Steinbeck's books and is only vaguely alluded to, the story of Joseph and his family seems to have been one of the basic motifs behind the book To a God Unknown. The biblical imagery of Joseph, his father, and his brothers is presented most clearly in the first chapter of this book. This is the story of a Vermont herdsman named Joseph Wayne in the early years of the twentieth century. Joseph's father is an aged man with a long white beard and general patriarchal features. He is the father of many sons, of whom Joseph is the favorite and the youngest of whom is named Benjamin. In chapter one, Joseph decides that the Vermont land is too crowded for him and his brothers and plans to leave and homestead in California. Before he leaves, the patriarch confers upon Joseph the family blessing and leadership in a truly biblical manner. There is conflict between the brothers and jealousy over Joseph's favored position, but there is only a hint of this in the text of the book and it never really becomes a major issue.

Joseph migrates to California and finds a beautiful and rich site upon which to build his dreams. He eventually sends for his brothers and their families to join him and the combined Wayne clan build for themselves a ranch upon which their cattle increase in number. In the following years, dreams and their interpretation play a large part in the lives of the Wayne clan. There are also several passages in which lean and fat cattle are described. When the Wayne clan begins its life in California, they come in the midst of a cycle of good years, but old settlers in the area tell them that it has not always been so and that there have been years of drought when the land dried up and could not sustain men or cattle. Joseph and his brothers refuse to believe that this can happen again, and, unlike the Biblical Joseph, they do not plan for the lean years to come. When the drought comes, the family sees their land drying up and the cattle becoming lean and dying. Finally conditions become so bad that most of the Wayne family packs up and leaves the land in a kind of Exodus. Joseph, however, refuses to go, and is left behind with his shattered dreams.

With all of the various elements of the biblical story of Joseph and his brothers, the real theme of To a God Unknown is animistic religion. Joseph Wayne truly worships his land and its fertility. He gazes admiringly at the productivity of his land and his cattle and determines that he must take a wife so that he, too, may join in the fertility of his ranch. He believes that the spirit of his dead father inhabits a massive tree which is growing on his property and thus he offers the tree blood, wine, animals, and even his own new-born son. Joseph believes that the great drought began when his brother girdled the tree and caused its death. Finally, alone on his parched land, Joseph seeks to propitiate the spirits of the land by opening his veins and allowing himself to bleed to death. As his blood runs out, the rain begins and the terrible drought is ended.

CAIN AND ABEL.

The clearest, most consistent use of a Genesis theme by John Steinbeck is found in his book East of Eden,
in which he recites again and again the various elements of the Cain and Abel story. It is said that Steinbeck began *East of Eden* with the intention of telling the story of his own family in California. While this story does appear occasionally in the book, it is apparent that the author got sidetracked into Cain and Abel and could not return to the story of his family.

Throughout the novel, Steinbeck tells the story of Cain and Abel three times. There are three sets of Cain and Abel characters, each of whom is given names which begin with the letters “C” and “A” respectively. The first telling of the tale is the simplest and clearest. The Trask family, living in New England in the days immediately following the Civil War, has two sons named Charles and Adam. The mother commits suicide when the boys are young, and thus the harsh, domineering father commands the entire attention of the children. Naturally there is a struggle between Charles and Adam for the affection of their father. The struggle appears most clearly when Charles saves his money and buys his father a knife for his birthday, while Adam gives him a mongrel puppy. Later Charles remembers that the father took little interest in his gift but dearly loved Adam’s puppy. Because of this event and others, Charles is insanely jealous of his brother’s position and on several occasions beats him severely. On another occasion he seeks to kill Adam with a gun but is unable to find him. Because of this hostility Adam leaves home. Here Steinbeck takes one of his many liberties with the biblical story. It is not the Cain figure who must leave his home and become a vagrant and a vagabond, but the Abel figure. Adam spends many years as a soldier in the Indian wars and then literally becomes a hobo for several other years before he returns home. In the meantime, Charles, the farmer, is accidentally struck on the head during his work and receives a horrible and lasting scar on his forehead. Thus Charles and Adam Trask carry out nearly every detail of the Cain and Abel story.

As Adam returns home to live with Charles, the second Cain figure emerges to trouble his life, a woman named Cathy. Although Cathy has the appearance of a sweet and innocent young woman, Steinbeck has already told his readers that she is a desperately evil person who has murdered her parents and has worked for a number of years as a whore. She enters the life of Adam Trask when her pimp has beaten her almost to death and has left her for dead near the home of the Trask brothers. The beating was so severe that it left Cathy’s face permanently scarred and thus she bears the mark of a Cain-figure almost from the first. Although Charles recognizes Cathy for what she is, Adam is completely taken in by her innocent appearance and manner. He marries her, and on their wedding night, Cathy puts sleeping medicine into Adam’s tea and slips off to sleep with Charles.

Adam sets out with Cathy to build a new life in California. The wealth which he inherited from his father allows him to seek exactly the kind of land he wishes in the rich Salinas Valley in order to build his Eden. Adam’s dreams are further enhanced when he learns that Cathy is pregnant and when she delivers fraternal twin sons, but his dreams are crushed when Cathy leaves him as soon as she is able to travel. She goes to the nearest town and eventually becomes the madam of its most wicked whorehouse.

The major Cain and Abel figures of *East of Eden* are the twin sons of Adam Trask. It is with these two that Steinbeck reveals his true fascination with the Cain and Abel story and his knowledge of it. When it comes time to name the twin brothers, Adam, his Chinese servant Lee, and his neighbor discuss the Cain and Abel passage from the Bible. Lee sought out the assistance of several Chinese scholars in determining the true meaning of the biblical story. These scholars went so far as to learn Hebrew from a rabbi in order to better understand the story. After several years of study, they came to believe that the key to understanding Gen. 4:1-16 is to be found in the last words of verse 7. In this section of the story, God has just rejected the offering of Cain and to Cain’s anger he says, according to the King James version:

**Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou dost not well, sin lieth at the door: and unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.**

The Hebrew word which is translated “thou shalt rule” is *timshol*, which Steinbeck consistently mistransliterates as *timshel*. Steinbeck, through his Chinese scholars, does not like the King James translation of this word which indicates to him a promise that Cain would conquer sin, when it says, “Thou shalt rule over him.” Nor does he like the American Standard Version’s translation, “Do thou rule over him,” because this seems to imply an order. After their years of studying the text, Lee’s Chinese sage friends decide that the true meaning of the word *timshol* should be “Thou mayest,” which indicates, not a promise, nor an order, but a choice. To Steinbeck and for the remainder of the book, the word *timshol* is the key. The Cain figures and mankind in general have a choice as to how they will react to sin. They may submit to it, or they may overcome it. While Steinbeck’s interpretation of the Cain and Abel narrative here is admirable from a humanistic point of view, and while it undoubtedly suited his own personal theology, the text simply will not bear the weight of such an interpretation. The text of Genesis 4 is corrupt and some students of the passage feel that the last phrase in verse seven may not have been a part of the original
narrative. However, even if the text were perfectly clear, the weighty interpretation which Steinbeck puts upon the imperfect construction of the verb Timshel would not work. The Hebrew imperfect verb may be translated as "you will," "you shall," "you would," "you should," "you may," "you might," etc. It could bear the implication of either a promise, a choice, or of simply an unfinished action, although it is unlikely that it would carry the message of an order or a command. One simply cannot draw the implications which Steinbeck finds in this word. It is likely that the author drew these meanings more from the subtleties of the words in English translation than from any intensive search of the Hebrew text.

While Steinbeck may be in error regarding the Hebrew and the text of the Cain and Abel story, he demonstrates again and again his familiarity with history of the interpretation of the passage. His major Cain and Abel figures, Caleb and Aron Trask, are twins. While the Bible does not say that Cain and Abel were twins, there is a tradition in biblical interpretation which goes back at least as far as John Calvin that says they were. Literalistic interpreters reason that whereas the Bible says "Eve conceived and bore Cain... And again she bore his brother Abel," it does not say that she conceived again before she bore Abel, that the brothers must have been the result of the same pregnancy and were therefore twins.

Steinbeck further demonstrates his knowledge of the history of the interpretation of the Cain and Abel story in the manner in which the Trask twins are conceived. On her wedding night Cathy deceives Adam and has intercourse with his brother. The book is never clear as to how receptive Cathy was to the advances of her husband in the period between the wedding and the birth of the twins, but one assumes that they had intercourse at least once, since Adam was willing to believe that he had caused his wife's pregnancy. However, it may have been that Cathy was pregnant by Charles rather than Adam. Several ancient interpretations of the Cain and Abel story run along similar lines. They say that when God cast Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden he forbade them to have sexual relations. But Satan, again in the guise of the serpent, approached Eve and tempted her once more. The fruit of the union between Eve and Satan was Cain.

After a long discussion of the Cain and Abel narrative, Adam Trask and his friends decide not to name his twin sons Cain and Abel, but rather choose other biblical names for them: Caleb and Aron.

As the Trask twins mature, Caleb develops into a likeable, reasonable young man with a tiny mean streak in him, while Aron emerges as a detestable goody-goody whose goal in life is to become an Episcopal priest. The brothers are told that their mother died soon after they were born and is buried somewhere in the East. Caleb eventually learns the truth about his mother and visits her at her place of business. Because he is worldly wise, Caleb seems to take the knowledge about his mother in stride.

Because Caleb genuinely loves his brother and his father, he encourages Aron to graduate from high school early and enter Stanford University so that he may complete his studies more quickly. Caleb stays at home with his father and enters a business agreement in which he quickly earns $15,000 by buying and selling bean futures to British agents as supplies for their troops during World War I. Caleb wants to make this money to repay his father for the fortune he lost in an early experiment in freezing vegetables. Caleb prepares the money as a gift to his father, but Adam angrily rejects it as blood money and says that Caleb should be more like his brother, who is doing so well in college. Naturally this crushes Caleb, and he carefully burns each of the fifteen one-thousand-dollar bills. Furthermore, he takes Aron to Cathy's brothel and introduces him to his true mother. In despair, Aron joins the army the next morning and is sent to France, where he is killed in action. When word of Aron's death comes, Adam is struck down by the news and, as the book ends, he lies paralyzed on his death bed. Caleb confesses that it was he who destroyed his brother and begs his father's forgiveness. Adam struggles to make a response and the word which he finally forms for his son is, of course, Timshel.

It may be surprising to a reader to find so much of biblical themes, particularly those arising from the book of Genesis, in a writer who was so generally reputed to be opposed to organized religion as was John Steinbeck. However, one must remember that this has occurred in the writings of many authors, particularly American authors. Apparently these writers have at one time or another in their lives been heavily exposed to biblical themes and since these themes deal with the universal issues and problems which beset mankind, they find their way into their writings. The universality of the Genesis stories clearly pushes its way to attention.
WHAT'S NEW IN HISTORY, II: LUTHER BIOGRAPHY

OLD WINE IN NEW SKINS

YOUNG MAN LUTHER. A Study in Psychoanalysis and History.

LUTHER.

WILL THE REAL LUTHER STAND UP, PLEASE!

IN THE 1520s SEVERAL WOODCUTS APPEARED which tried to show who Luther "really" was. One depicts Luther quite faithfully, though in cartoon fashion; if one turns the picture upside-down one sees a fool with Luther's features. The other woodcut depicts Luther as a seven-headed monster. This latter woodcut is obviously an effort to cast Luther in the role of the seven-headed beast of Revelation, chapter 13. Rising out of the sea, the monster utters great blasphemies against God, seduces the saints or makes war against them, and triumphs for forty-two months.

The artists' intentions in creating these woodcuts must have been clear even to the uneducated. But to make quite sure that everyone caught the message of these pictures, verses and explanatory captions were added, and all this adds up to the following:

Illustration #1

Illustration #2

Gottfried G. Krodel, Professor of Church History and History at Valparaiso University, received his D. Theol. from Friedrich Alexander University, Erlangen, Germany (1955). In addition to contributing articles to learned journals, he has just recently completed the work of translating and editing Luther's Letters, Volumes 48, 49, and 50 of the American Edition of Luther's Works, published as a joint project by Fortress Press, Philadelphia and Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.
Luther is a fool because he is a theological ignoramus. He is not only a fool who entertains, but he is a dangerous fool because he has the extraordinary gift of fooling other people, i.e., seducing them, so that they listen to him and follow him to his and their damnation. Luther is an apocalyptic monster in the service of Antichrist and will eventually be destroyed, but not until such time as he has destroyed many people. Luther is a split personality: to his followers he is a man of God, the preacher and teacher of God's Word, while in reality he is at best a person of dubious qualities, an entertaining fool, at worst a demonic, apocalyptic monster.

We may consider this satire or cheap propaganda. Yet we have no choice but to be absolutely certain that people living in the sixteenth century, an age in which one was accustomed to being surrounded by demons and monsters and was tensely awaiting all the apocalyptic events recorded in Revelation including the second coming of Christ, were deeply impressed by these interpretations of Luther's personality and work, and that these woodcuts did little good for Luther's image.

About the same time, the German artist Hans Holbein the Younger issued a woodcut depicting Luther as Hercules. Here Luther was made into a mythological figure who, with superhuman strength, burning with wrath which flashed like lightning from his eyes, and swinging a club, attacked and destroyed his enemies. Luther was shown as the superman, the right man to rid the earth of the forces of Antichrist prior to the coming of Christ.

Holbein did not intend to show that something was wrong with Luther. His intention was to show that everything with Luther was right, so right, in fact, that Luther could not be explained in human categories. He could be explained only in superhuman categories, i.e., as God's specially endowed messenger. That Holbein, one of the outstanding Renaissance artists north of the Alps, should have drawn Luther in terms of classical mythology simply demonstrates that he was indeed a man of his time.

The intentions of the artists of the first two woodcuts discussed above become even clearer in the literary productivity of Johann Cochlaeus (1479-1552), one of Luther's most bitter enemies. In 1549 he published what must be considered the first full-length biography of Luther.

1. It is commonly assumed that Holbein created this woodcut and there is evidence available to support this assumption.
Luther, entitled *Commentary on the Acts and Writings of Martin Luther*. The various prefaces praise this book as history written by someone who had firsthand knowledge. In view of this praise one may expect that Cochlaeus' "scholarly" work dominated the Roman Catholic view of Luther—and in fact it did this down to the fourth decade of our century. To the credit of Roman Catholic historical scholarship it must be underscored, however, that it was a Roman Catholic church historian, Adolf Herte (born 1887), who, in the 1950s discredited Cochlaeus' work as a combination of facts, half-truths, outright lies, wishful thinking, and plain slander. Cochlaeus and those who throughout the centuries have followed his line of argument interpret Luther as a demon-possessed monk, as an oversexed priest who could not control his desires and maintain the vow of celibacy, as a drunk who refused or was unable to do his academic or priestly work, as an egomaniac who tried to hide his intellectual, theological incompetence behind loud rudeness, as one who, with the help of demonic forces, set out to manipulate people and succeeded at it, and, finally, as a person who, because of all this, was driven by guilt with which he could not cope. In order to rid himself of this guilt, Luther attacked and destroyed the authority which constantly reminded him of this guilt, Mother Church. Clearly, then, in this Luther portrait everything is wrong: spirit, intellect, emotions, morals.

Looking at these efforts to show who or what Luther really was—both ill-meaning efforts and well-meaning ones—one cannot help but ask the question: Will the real Luther stand up, please!

Throughout the last several centuries the biographers of Luther have tried to answer this question, and today our bookshelves are filled with the results of their efforts, both friendly and hostile. The turn of the century saw Luther biography at the height of its creative productivity. Since then the scholarly biography has been almost totally replaced by presentations of Luther's life which are either edifying or slanderous in tone, or by highly detailed studies of single issues in Luther's life and thought. Gerhard Ritter's small, one-volume work of 1943 is the exception. After World War II the situation changed very slowly. Yet except for a few books that either break new ground or give new insights, the majority of Luther biographies published with increasing frequency since the beginning of the sixties draw on the biographical masterpieces published at the turn of the century and simply retell the story. One biographical study of the young Luther by Erik H. Erikson and one biography by Richard Marius are to be discussed below for they seem to be of major significance among the more recent efforts in the area of Luther biography.

### The Books

ERIKSON PRESENTS US WITH A STUDY IN Psychoanalysis and History, of 288 pages entitled Young Man Luther. He concentrates on the young Luther, though he does not clearly define this period. It is fair to suggest, however, that about 1510 may be considered the terminal point for Erikson's young man Luther; at least the majority of the material used by the author falls into the period prior to this date, and the weight of Erikson's interest is placed on Luther's childhood and adolescence.

The book is scholarly in appearance; i.e., the book provides us with notes so that we can verify the author's arguments and conclusions, and the author engages in scholarly dialogue in an effort to secure his position over against that of others. While the radius of this dialogue is extremely narrow, the dialogue is always conducted with decorum, though by no means listlessly. Even though the book is somewhat dry it reads well—in a sense the book makes fascinating reading—and one is grateful to the author for avoiding the temptation to drown us in the technicalities of psychoanalysis or its jargon.

The goals of the author are not clearly announced; yet the title and subtitle give us sufficient hints as to what to expect. Further, in his opening remarks the author makes clear that it is his intention to look at the personality of the young Luther. While this book is not a full-fledged biography but "only" a biographical study, it is nevertheless a contribution, even a significant one, to the age-old question: Will the real Luther stand up, please!

Richard Marius, too, tries to answer this question. He presents to us a Luther biography of 269 pages—and no table of contents. While the author numbered his chapters, he did not title them. Apparently the author did not wish to be bothered with establishing such niceties as overarching themes or periods of time which could become titles of chapters. Or perhaps this lack of titles is to be a convenient device to force the reader, who is interested only in a particular period, issue, or

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2. Cochlaeus did this not only in his *Commentary* but also in the many pamphlets he wrote against Luther. The second of the woodcuts discussed above, *The Sevenheaded Luther*, was the frontispiece of one of Cochlaeus' pamphlets.

3. E.g., the one volume biographies by Bain ton (1950), Schwiebert (1950), and Lau (2nd ed., 1966; English translation, 1963), and Iserloh's contribution to Jedin's *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte*, Vol. 4 (1967).
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The book has been praised for its style. Walter Kaufmann (p. 10), the editor of the series in which the book has been published, tells us that Marius loves language and is sensitive to its power. Alfred C. Ames (Chicago Tribune, Nov. 24, 1974) has hailed the author as one of the few who can write very well, and who can make remote and abstract subjects appear clear and intriguing. Again, someone else has pointed out that readers may be drawn to the book by the author’s “rapid and racy prose” (Lutheran Council in the U.S.A., News release, Nov. 1974). Indeed, a certain excitement stirs when one begins to read this book; and when one puts it aside it is quite clear that this book is not one of those “dreadfully dull” and “tiresome tomes” (p. 258) that in the past have been written about Luther. Something else has also become clear, however: the author is a master of the overworked word or phrase, the generalization, the ambiguity, the oversimplification, the exaggeration. The author’s admitted “temptation to verbal exuberance” (p. 13) is not just a temptation, but a reality which has resulted in a poorly written work. The author is so verbose that one suspects him of “pulling one’s leg.”

His presentation is a string of unsubstantiated value-judgments and generalities which the author easily can afford to make since he does not grant us a look at the foundation of his statements. In some cases the author jeopardizes his generalizations by setting forth other generalizations, while in other cases he

7. See also below, the analysis of Marius’ book. The following notes are intended to call the reader’s attention to some additional rather striking material.

8. At the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century was the emperor really a “laughingstock” among the Italian ambassadors “who sometimes visited” the Imperial Court? (P. 17) What emperor? What ambassadors? All the time? Are “indulgences” and “papal power” today dead issues for “most of us”? (P. 69) What is the “good Western fashion” in which a distinction is being made between a man and his job? (P. 122) Did Luther and his movement ever have the potential of becoming an “international movement,” so that this potential could be wasted? (P. 171) Did Luther ever “stake . . . the life of Europe” on the validity of his own faith? (P. 254, italics mine.) How does the author know that Cardinal Cajetan was “a short man with a short man’s aggressive and uncompromising confidence in himself”? (P. 80) Or that Clement VII “was probably the most inept pope since Celestine V”? (P. 217) Or that the Marburg Castle of Philip of Hesse was drafty? (P. 219)

9. On pp. 33 f., the author characterizes Luther as a boorish provincial, and wishes that while in Rome Luther would have “mingled . . . with cultivated Italians and learned something from them about manners,” i.e., learned some “urbanity.” He does not tell us who these cultivated Italians were, but he describes with much gusto those “fabulously corrupt popes of the Renaissance” (p. 61), “those murderous Roman families who ruled the cardinals” (p. 63), and the “indulged” members of the Medici family (p. 64) — obviously all cultivated, urbane Italians from whom apparently Luther should have learned something.

Should he have learned from them the Borgia technique of murder? (P. 199) Or that Clement VII “was probably the most inept pope since Celestine V”? (P. 217) Or that the Marburg Castle of Philip of Hesse was drafty? (P. 219)

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Review Essay

Review Essay gives us a picture which is fuzzy or even wrong. It might be assuring to the reader to be informed that Luther's furious energy was at work — no energy crisis here — and such a statement might convey excellently one of Luther's characteristics if used sparingly; yet the repetition of this phrase and similar others rapidly palls.

Not only is the book poorly written, in some sections it is also poorly organized. The author has a tendency to interrupt the flow of his sentences and of the narrative with long-winded paragraphs, or short parenthetical statements or qualifiers. In these he explains and explains, and qualifies and qualifies, sometimes by the use of forced comparisons, sometimes by what is supposed to be humor, but what turns out to be a lack of taste — most of the time by an overflow of "seems," "apparently," "might," etc. The way in which the author writes suggests that he, bedazzled by the mere verbiage, is incapable of differentiating between reality and fantasy. What should the point of all this be? Merely to "entertain" the reader? Or could it be an arrogant underestimation of the reader's intelligence? As a result of all this the book creates the impression of being one long tirade by means of which the audience is to be thoroughly lectured.

So much for the "externals" of the two efforts to find an answer to the question: Will the real Luther stand up, please! In turning to the "internals," we shall first concentrate on Erikson's book.

PSYCHOANALYSIS TO THE RESCUE — OR, A NEW SKIN

TURNING TO ERIKSON'S INTERPRETATION of Luther, one has to underscore that Erikson’s intention is not to demonstrate that something, or everything, is wrong with Luther. His intention is to develop a clinical evaluation of the personality of the young man Luther. This is certainly new, if we compare Erikson's intention with that of Cochlaeus. One has to go so far as to affirm that Erikson is not only sympathetic to his object of diagnosis, but that he even admires Luther.

Erikson sees a certain greatness in Luther, though he has difficulty clearly communicating this admiration for Luther or demonstrating the greatness of Luther. On the one hand, Erikson underscores that Luther was able to master the id eruption rather than letting it destroy him by either excessive eros or self-destructive actions. On the other hand, Erikson quite emphatically points out that the motivating force in Luther, was an endless identity crisis which was solved by transference of fear and hate to an earthly father (hence Luther's resentment of his father) or to a heavenly father (hence Luther's experience of a wrathful God).

Further, one would have to say that Erikson does not come to the conclusion that something is wrong with Luther as we generally understand this term, i.e., as a negative value-judgment. To be sure, given different circumstances, especially a different father, Luther would or could have developed differently. But Luther's development itself, from one crisis to the next, is "normal" and neutral in terms of good or bad. The psychic conflict and the resulting solutions, though they do present problems for the clinician to handle, cannot be labeled good or bad.

Finally, and probably most obviously, Erikson operates as a twentieth century scientist and not as a sixteenth century polemicist or propagandist. What this statement means in terms of psychoanalysis and the psychoanalytic method of the clinician who studies individual cases and then draws conclusions, I am not qualified to state. For an understanding of Erikson's Luther portrait it is unnecessary, however, to deal with the technicalities of psychoanalysis. Suffice it then to state that, in comparison with Cochlaeus and the woodcuts discussed above, Erikson's book is indeed something different and new. But it is only a new skin, the wine is old. Why?

THE NEW SKIN AND THE OLD WINE — OR, BIOGRAPHY AND PSYCHOHISTORY

ON PAGE 249, ERIKSON STATES: "... I HAVE charted the decline of a youth and not the ascendance of a man" (italics mine). This is the final result of Erikson's work: a declining youth, the disintegration of the personality of a young man. It seems to me that Erikson himself confirms here the suspicion with which one puts his book aside: something in the makeup of this young man is, after all, wrong; wrong not in the "peripheral" terms of a moral good or bad, but wrong in existential terms of the total personality. It is not just that, given other circumstances, Luther's youth could have developed in a different way. But it is precisely the way in which Luther did develop where some-
thing is wrong. The Luther whom Erikson portrays cannot be considered a healthy, wholesome personality. And so the demons and devils of the sixteenth century are replaced for Erikson by Luther's stubborn defiance of his father, even by hatred. The identity crises of the young man are solved in a negative way (running away from home and going into the monastery; defying parental authority), or by projecting fear and hate of parental authority into God and thus absolutizing them. There is an inability to integrate life's experiences into a resulting wholesomeness. The inner driving force of this young man is a negative one, just as the outer driving forces (parents) are.

Erikson's book is one of the great contributions to Luther biography. How significant Erikson's book is can be seen from the fact that it has become a classic of a movement in historiography which like to be known as "Psychohistory" and which has made inroads into "traditional" historical scholarship.14 The book has opened a new way of probing Luther's psyche, and makes Luther human in a way in which he has never before been made human. If scholarly study of history means the debunking of history then, indeed, Erikson has succeeded and is a master at that task. Having said this, one would have to admit also that Cochlaeus was a master at debunking. He, too, tried to show the "real," "human" Luther, and Erikson does not go beyond Cochlaeus, though he does use a scientific method. I do not quarrel with Erikson the psychoanalyst, even though some questions have been raised on that score (if I see correctly); I am not qualified to do so. My quarrel—and a spirited one it is—is with Erikson the historian, or more precisely the psychohistorian, as Erikson and many who are eager to adopt Erikson's method like to be known. In my opinion (and I am not alone) Erikson is a poor historian (just as Cochlaeus was a poor historian) and biographer.

This argument has nothing to do with the often much maligned haughtiness or self-sufficiency of the historian who, on the basis of some manuscript dug up in a musty basement, supposedly is always convinced that he, and he alone, can tell how it really was. In his search for finding out how things were, in his probing of human actions, and in his efforts to reconstruct the past, the historian worthy of his craft has tried to penetrate externals. In a sense he has been aware of the necessity of the "deepening of our historical understanding through exploitation (and one might add application) of the concepts and findings of modern psychology"—or more precisely, psychoanalysis—to use the words of William Langer's presidential address to the 1957 annual convention of the American Historical Association.15 In fact, since the days of classical Greek historiography historians have searched for motives and motivations and have gone beyond simply listing obvious data.16 Far be it then from the historian to snub his nose at the personality sciences or reject them as auxiliary disciplines in his task. It may take a generation or two for historians to master psychoanalysis as an auxiliary discipline in addition to all the other auxiliary disciplines which he must master. But to use psychoanalysis as an auxiliary discipline is quite different from pretending to create a new type of history, namely psychohistory. Jacques Barzun has convincingly demonstrated that psychohistory is what the Germans call ein Un­ding.17 The statement that Erikson is a poor historian, and the necessary consequence that Young Man Luther is a poor biography, has nothing to do with the haughtiness or self-sufficiency of the historian but rather has everything to do with methods and sources.

The Question of Methods

APOLLINARIUS OF LAODICEA (CA. 310-390), one of the brilliant though heretical theologians of the early church, argued that in any merger there must be and will be a dominant element.

Applied to psychohistory in general, this argument raises the question, what is the dominant method? That of psychology or psychoanalysis, or that of history? If we ask the question in the light of Erikson's book, which has the very dramatic subtitle, "A Study in Psychoanalysis and History,"18 then the methodological absurdity of psychohistory becomes clear. For the presuppositions of the psychoanalytic method and of the historical method (whatever this term suggests) are mutually exclusive, and consequently the methods themselves are incompatible.

Psychoanalysis depends on living dialogue, on observation, on the process of constantly refining diagnoses in the light of newly made observations and qualifications; it depends on the individual case and on its actual development, and it depends on a comparison of this case with other cases. That is, it depends on the availability of numbers with which to work; it depends on configurational analysis, ideography, and nomothetic controls.

By contrast, the historian does not have these luxuries. Not only can he not engage in a living dialogue with the object of his interest, but he must first create that object. He must first fashion the object, before he


16. See Barzun, op. cit., pp. 9 f.

17. Ibid., passim.

18. Italics mine.
can refine his judgment by way of observation or comparison, and that object must be reconstructed from the sources. Furthermore, for this process of reconstructing he depends on whatever remnants he is able to find. And each remnant pertains to the unique situation which cannot be duplicated "clinically." The historian does not have the luxury of the scientist working in the laboratory or the consultation room; i.e., he cannot repeat performances so that he could compare, evaluate, and, finally, after many hours of clinical studies, come up with a diagnosis. The historian works with a unique situation which cannot be repeated and of which in many cases he does not even have complete knowledge.

Consequently psychohistory is something that has no clear method. One method will finally dominate—either the psychoanalytic method—and then a study in psychoanalysis and history will be a study of psychoanalysis into which some historical data are sprinkled; or the historical method—and then a study in psychoanalysis and history will be an investigation of the unique historical situation which is reconstructed from the sources and which demonstrates sensitivity to psychic elements. What Erikson attempted to do, write "a book about all human beings as well as about a single great man," to use the words of one of Erikson's admirers, is impossible for the historian; perhaps it is even impossible for the clinician. As a biography of the young Luther, as an effort to probe the depths of Luther, Erikson's book is a failure because it is poor history. This argument will be further substantiated by looking at the sources Erikson uses and the way in which he uses them. Thus we move from the general to the particular. Roland Bainton, Henrich Bornkamm, and, more recently, Lewis Spitz Jr. have presented data drawn from the sources which demonstrate that many of Erikson's conclusions cannot be affirmed by a historian who knows his craft.

The Sources

FIRST, SOME GENERAL REMARKS. IN READING Erikson's book even a novice realizes that Erikson's knowledge of Luther is spotty, to say the least. I doubt that the author has studied any one of Luther's writings from start to finish in order to get an impression of the man's literary productivity at any one particular point—though it is dubious that the author would admit this. The most important source for anyone writing a biography of a person who has not left us a diary are the person's letters. This source is so totally neglected by Erikson that one has to say that Erikson is unfamiliar with the wealth of information that he could have drawn from that source.

In the case of the portrait of Luther's father, Erikson apparently does not consult the extant records in the archives of Mansfield, records which were published in 1906. For Erikson this material simply does not exist. Insofar as the foundation is concerned, Erikson's book is a scissors-and-paste job of snippets of information, taken from secondary literature, and unfortunately not even from all the important secondary literature that is available. Consequently Erikson gives us a picture of Luther's father as an economically ambitious, hard-working, and thrifty man, a stern, self-righteous, domineering disciplinarian with a towering ego and temper, etc. That this picture does not fit at all what Luther has to say about his father is of little concern to Erikson. For him all hard-working fathers are thrifty and economically ambitious (and if they happen to be Germans then they must be domineering and disciplinarians!). It apparently does not occur to Erikson that someone may be thrifty and hard-working simply because he wants to survive.

Further, according to Erikson, Luther's father was impulsive, felt "threatened by something (maybe even [a past case of] murder) . . . and by a feeling close to murder which he always carried inside"; in addition, Luther's father was "often" an alcoholic (pp. 66, 57). As Spitz has demonstrated, the facts available are different: It was not Luther's father who imbibed, but Luther's uncle. And it was that same uncle of whom the murder incident is reported—reported by one of Luther's enemies as if Luther's father had been the culprit. It cannot be established that even this uncle actually did commit murder; the incident was, apparently, something along the line of a threat ("I could wring this guy's neck"), or an action of intent (pulling a knife). In any case, no records are extant that suggest that the uncle was prosecuted, nor, and this is more important, was the uncle forced to leave the territory in a hurry in order to avoid prosecution. Had Erikson been more concerned for the sources, his portrait of Luther's father would have been more truthful.

Let us now look at the way in which Erikson deals with two specific incidents which must be considered


22. Ibid., pp. 193 f.

23. It must be pointed out that Erikson is aware of the fact that it was the uncle who had the notoriety attached to his name: nevertheless Erikson simply proceeds to argue as if the father had been the one referred to as a murderer.
Martin, even when mortally afraid, could not really hate his father, he could only be sad; and Hans, while he could not let the boy come close, and was murderously angry at times, could not let him go for long. They had a mutual and deep investment in each other which neither of them could or would abandon, although neither of them was able to bring it to any kind of fruition. . . . I know this kind of parent-child relationship all too well from my young patients. In the America of today it is usually the mother whose all-pervasive presence and brutal decisiveness of judgment — although her means may be the sweetest — precipitate the child into a fatal struggle for his own identity: the child wants to be blessed. . . . for what he is. . . . The parent. . . . has selected this one child. . . . as the. . . child who must justify the parent. . . . It is my contention that Luther's father played this role in Martin's life. . . . (Italics by the author). [Martin's reaction was hate for the father proven from delayed actions of rebellion, defiance, and hate, and also from inability to love and forgive.]

All this sounds very learned. We only wish that Erikson would have been less of a twentieth century psychoanalyst and more of a historian. First of all, there is a basic problem of translation involved here: Erikson and Bainton crossed swords on the translation of the phrase that is rendered above with “felt ugly.” While Bainton's suggestion (“I felt ugly toward him”) may not be the best from an aesthetic-linguistic point of view, it is more appropriate than Erikson's interpretive “sadly resentful,” a phrase, so Erikson argues, more in keeping with the original. Had Erikson consulted the proper dictionaries and not been so quick to hear Luther say what he, the twentieth century psychoanalyst, thinks that Luther says, he could have done more justice to this passage.

Secondly, and of greater significance for illustrating the work of the historian Erikson, is the fact that Erikson operates with the “wrong” text. This table talk is extant in two versions. One is recorded by the “eye witness,” a man by the name of Schlaginhaufen who as a student was a member of Luther's round table; and one can be found in an edited version of the table talks of 1566, the Aurifaber edition. Since the Aurifaber edition is a second degree source, and in addition is known for its editorial license, it must be handled extremely carefully, and this especially if one builds a whole case on a quotation taken from this edition, or if there is a discrepancy between the Aurifaber text and some other text. This is precisely the situation in the table talk under discussion. The Schlaginhaufen text reads in translation as follows:

One should thrash children not too hard for my father thrashed me once [or: at one time; or: only once] so hard that I avoided him and that he became anxious [or: scared; of what is not stated] until he again re-acquainted me to himself [or: won me to (or: for) himself again]. I, too, would not like to thrash my [son] John hard for he would become afraid and hostile [so literally; perhaps: resentful, or: angry] toward me, so that I would know of no bigger grief.

The following observations and inferences may be drawn from this passage: According to the “eye witness,” Luther, on the basis of a personal experience, urges that children be punished not too severely, for otherwise the parent-child relationship can become strained, a fact which in the case of his own son would be the highest grief for Luther. In the description of the personal experience it is the father who underwent the trauma of being anxious and worried about the son — a fact which is taken up in the last sentence, in the reference to Luther's own possible grief — and not the son who experiences the trauma of being “sadly resentful” of the father — as in the Erikson interpretation, which is based on the secondary Aurifaber text. In Luther's description one can almost detect a humorous quality: Martin, having been whipped, sulks — Spitz poignantly calls him “the hold-out” — and the father, worried that he might have done some damage, tries to figure out how to patch things up. Regardless of what the psychoanalyst does with this passage, it is clear that Erikson may not build his case on the Aurifaber text, which is contradicted in the Schlaginhaufen text, which, in addition, is the “more original” text. Had Erikson bothered to use the proper edition of Luther's table talks (in which both versions are printed in sequence), and had he been a critically working historian and not someone who

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24. For both versions, see D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe: Tischreden 1 (Weimar, 1912), xi ff.; 2 (Weimar, 1913), 134.
simple collects snippets from secondary sources, the picture he presents would not only be more believable, but also perhaps different.

The second incident on which Erikson relies heavily is the “fit in the choir.” While at one time Luther, the monk, attended Mass and listened to the Gospel of the young demon-possessed deaf and dumb man (Mark 9:17 ff.), he fell to the floor of the choir and “roared with the voice of a bull”: “I am not, I am not.”26 Erikson uses this incident (pp. 23 ff.) to substantiate his argument that Luther experienced “a most severe identity crisis—a crisis in which the young monk felt obliged to protest what he was not (possessed, sick, sinful) perhaps in order to break through to what he was or was to be [i.e., God’s spokesman]” (pp. 36, 47; italics by the author).

How anyone who knows anything about historical method can use this incident as a central point for building a case is difficult to understand. The incident is reported by Cochlaeus only for the purpose of showing that Luther was demon-possessed. By the time Cochlaeus recorded the incident in his Commentary the chain of tradition to the sources could hardly be established any longer or the witnesses be held accountable in a possible insanity hearing, because of demon-posses­sion, in a court of law. In addition, Cochlaeus received his information from Luther’s foes. While these facts by themselves do not require us to consider the story to be untrue, they do make the incident sufficiently problematic that it becomes dubious whether one may rely upon it as heavily as Erikson does; this is especially the case in light of Herte’s scholarship pertaining to Coch­laeus with which Erikson does not seem to be familiar. I am not arguing that the story is untrue simply because we have evidence for it only from Luther’s foes; but I am arguing that for the historian the evidence is so problematic that it may not be used as a basis for making matter-of-fact-statements to the effect that Luther had an identity crisis.

And further, even if the incident were historically verifiable one would have to say that Erikson totally misreads it because he takes the twentieth century clinical term “identity crisis” and without any qualification uses it in the framework of the sixteenth century to ex­plain an sixteenth century phenomenon. Luther, and I dare say the man of the sixteenth century, at least in Luther’s environment, could not have had what the twentieth century personality scientist calls an identity crisis. He could not have grasped what an identity crisis is, nor could he have experienced one, even subconsciously.

If, as Erikson argues, identity crisis means the inability, on the basis of id or libido, to live within one set of ego categories, even to defy them, and success­fully or unsuccessfully to search for another set of ego categories, then the man of the sixteenth century does not have that luxury—or curse—of the man of the twentieth century to search for identity and to reject or defy identity. For him God is not an option that can provide a set of ego categories which man, in turn, may accept or reject. God is not a superego to which I may adjust my ego or to which I may transfer the problems which I have with the id, or which I may, on the other hand, also reject as superego. God is the given, the absolute, the precondition of being. And it is that God who identi­fies and defines who and what man is. Consequently man’s identity is a given and not something for which he could search, or against which he could protest, or which he could reject. To defy this God-given identity, or consciously search for a new identity, would be blas­phemy, because it would be a rebellion against God; Luther swiftly discovers this, as his monastic struggle demonstrates.

And, further, the confessional practice of Luther’s day makes quite sure that man is at all times aware even of the possibility of a subconsciously executed defiance of the God-given identity. That is to say, if one may use twentieth century terms, for the man of the sixteenth century the id was just as much under God’s absolute sovereignty as the ego. Concupiscencia and sin are not only libido or id manifestations in man, but they are cosmic, trans-ego forces; the id not only attacks man and squeezes him against the superego, but the id also attacks God; it challenges God as the one who sets identity for all. And for Luther and many of his contem­poraries this identity-setting role of God is summarized in the commandment to love the Lord and to love the neighbor, in the expectation that man will be judged accordingly.

Only if this reality of the absoluteness of God as the identity-setting agent to which man is accountable is removed from man’s awareness can a search for new identity begin; only if this reality of God is no longer taken for granted as a reality which encompasses the conscious as well as the subconscious can one rebel against one’s identity. Young Luther was too deeply grounded in the faith of his church to rebel consciously and willingly against his God-given identity. And he was too deeply aware of the possibilities of a subcon­scious defiance of his God-given identity ever to have granted even the possibility that this might not happen; his own confessional practice makes this clear beyond a doubt, little evidence though we have of it. Entering the monastery has absolutely nothing to do with an identity crisis. But it definitely has something to do with affirming the God-given identity by finding a way of expressing this God-given identity in a better and more perfect way. The fit in the choir—if it actually happened, and let us assume for the moment that it did happen—is an affirmation of identity, notwithstanding the actual, and also the subconsciously possible,
rebellion against this identity in the form of real or imagined sin. It is an affirmation of identity as over against the experienced possibility of denial of identity and as over against the admission of being demon-possessed, i.e., being a total sinner. Whether or not this interpretation would fall in the realm of psychopathology would be another matter. Had Erikson given his full attention to the sixteenth century religious mind, he could have seen that twentieth century psychoanalytic findings may not justifiably be used as controlling agents for an explanation of a sixteenth century phenomenon in its sixteenth century setting. This is precisely the crux of his book — Erikson is interested not in history but in psychoanalysis.

THE CRUX OF PSYCHOHISTORY AND YOUNG MAN LUTHER — OR THE DEMYTHOLOGIZED AND REMYTHOLOGIZED LUTHER.

REGARDING THE FIT IN THE CHOIR, ERIKSON is aware of the problems created by the evidence; but he is not interested in using this awareness as a controlling factor for his analysis. Why? Two answers seem to be in order. Erikson writes (p. 37):

Judging from an undisputed series of extreme mental states which attacked Luther throughout his life, leading to weeping, sweating, and fainting,27 the fit in the choir could well have happened; . . . If some of it is legend, so be it; the making of legend is as much part of the scholarly rewriting of history as it is part of the original facts used in the work of scholars. We are thus obliged to accept half-legend as half-history, provided only that a reported episode does not contradict other well-established facts; persists in having a ring of truth; and yields a meaning consistent with psychological theory.

In light of this quotation a less pretentious subtitle for Erikson's book would read: "A Study in Psychoanalysis and Legends of the Past." In any case, the historian is not obliged to accept half-legends as truth — he dare not do this; and how well established Erikson's facts are can be seen from the way in which he dealt with the spanning incident. The last provision, "the meaning consistent with psychological theory," is the key to Erikson's method and thus to the crux of his book. Psychoanalysis is the agent which controls the writing of history, or more precisely of biography, even at the risk of half-truths (if not to say untruth), but certainly at the risk of putting the truth on a very shaky foundation. Erikson is interested not in historical factuality ex-

27. "Weeping, sweating, and fainting" in the life of the monk Luther — what little we know of it — had nothing to do with "extreme mental states." but with Luther's strict asceticism and its impact on his health. At best one may explain these phenomena psychosomatically, but even for such an explanation the evidence is undeniably skimpy.

Review Essay

plained with the help of psychoanalysis but in psychoanalysis confirmed by whatever may lend itself to this task. He is interested in the personality trends and paradigms with which the behavioral scientist evaluates his object. Whatever historical material does not fit these trends or paradigms is lightly glossed over. As Erikson writes:

A clinician's training permits, and in fact forces him to recognize major trends even where the facts are not all available [or, we might add, are on an extremely shaky foundation]; at any point in treatment he can and must be able to make meaningful predictions as to what will prove to have happened and he must be able to sift even questionable sources in such a way that a predictive hypothesis emerges. In the dialogue of the analysis the clinician can, of course, verify his hypothesis, if necessary modify it, and even discard it, luxuries not available to the historian! In Biography, the validity of any relevant theme [i.e., a psychoanalytic hypothesis] can only lie in its crucial recurrence in a man's development, and in its relevance to the balance sheet of his victories and defeats.28

While one is tempted to ask what this balance sheet in the case of the young man Luther is, one must concentrate on the more fundamental issue.

Since the historian does not have the luxury of the behavioral scientist of observing, comparing, and supporting his hypothesis on the basis of numbers, but deals with unique situations which he first must reconstruct on the basis of an adequate reading of the sources, the trend which the psychohistorian wishes to establish is always less than a clinically established hypothesis, provided, of course, that the unique situations have been properly reconstructed in the first place—an area where Erikson's work exhibits major deficiencies, as hopefully has become clear from our observations above. At best the trend can lead to a suggestion, if that; but it can never lead to a matter-of-fact diagnostic hypothesis, because the uniqueness of the situation, even if its identical recurrence could be established from the sources, involves factors and elements which are not covered and which cannot be covered by one trend, one hypothesis. To wit:

It is Erikson's diagnostic hypothesis that Luther entered the monastery as a result of an act of defiance of his domineering father in a crisis brought about by the young man's search for his identity as a separate entity, independent from parental dominance. Let us assume that Luther indeed entered the monastery in an act of defiance. We ask now: is this the only possible hypothesis

for an explanation of this event? Our answer can only be no. For Luther himself gives a different picture; while this observation may be beside the point, it must be made. Further, one can argue that Luther entered the monastery in obedience to the religious training received from his parents according to which a pledge made to a saint must be kept. Luther's father did not like this development, it is true. Perhaps Luther's father was furious at his son because he was compensating for his realization that he had too thoroughly indoctrinated his son. Martin became aware of these feelings on his father's part; consequently he had second thoughts for his son. Martin became aware of these feelings on his father's part; consequently he had second thoughts for which he, in turn, tried to compensate by being the best possible monk. All this would simply be the logical result of the original decision. Thus we would have a diagnostic hypothesis which is totally different from that of Erikson. Defiance of parental authority and identity crisis would be replaced by compliance and identity affirmation. Suffice it to say that Erikson's hypothesis does not cover all the possibilities of explaining the historical uniqueness of this event.

Let us now ask whether Erikson's hypothesis is the best possible one from a historical point of view. Our answer again has to be no. It does not do justice to the uniqueness of the event. It also does not do justice to the matrix of this event, because it does not take into consideration and properly weigh the socio-religious dimension of this event.

This becomes apparent if we ask the following question: Thousands of young men and women prior to, contemporary with, and after Luther, entered monastic life. Why? Some entered perhaps to gain economic security, some perhaps in defiance of parental dominance, some perhaps solely for religion's sake. Erikson hardly would wish to suggest that everyone who went into the monastery did so in defiance of his parents. But he does suggest this for Luther's case because in his analysis he totally ignores the possibility of the validity of any other motivation, or any combination of motives. Notwithstanding the emphasis on socio-political elements to which he pays lip service, Erikson is basically interested not in history or in Luther's biography, but in psychoanalysis.

With this statement we have the second answer to the question why Erikson makes matter-of-fact statements about Luther, even though he is aware of the dubiousness of the sources from which the events on which he bases his observations are reconstructed. Erikson takes his clinical findings of identity crisis and of defiance of parental authority and ransacks the Luther literature until he finds material that he thinks could match these findings, even if this material is not solid. In clinical work he found that thrifty, hard-working people are generally economically ambitious, and if they are parents they are domineering and determined to use the child as means of justifying the self, facts which in turn result in defiance and identity crises on the child's part. Thus Erikson has found a paradigm and a point of departure; no historical problem could prevent him from constructing the "Decline of Young Man Luther," a clinical case like any of the hundreds of clinical cases on which his findings were based in the first place. Consequently what is one of the important tasks of historical scholarship in general, biography in particular, namely, to probe the depth of an epoch or a hero, turns out to be a study in psychoanalysis with some historical data mixed into it.

A Look Back

ERICSON'S BOOK IS A FASCINATING BOOK to read for anyone interested in psychoanalysis. It is a poor book insofar as biography is concerned because it does not do justice to the principles of historical research and thus does not do justice to Luther. Were Erikson to speak in terms of possibilities and suggestions, one could perhaps buy some of his observations precisely as that—possibilities. But he speaks in terms of clinical matters-of-fact and presents his views in the scientific drappings admired by so many. Therefore, if pontification be permitted for a moment, I think this book is dangerous, because it is pretentious, and because it does not help us to come to grips with the phenomenon "Luther." To the contrary, the book contributes to the Luther myth, just as Cochlaeus and the woodcuts discussed above have done; it is old wine in a new skin, and laying the book aside one is once more left with the question: Will the real Luther stand up, please!—How does Marius 29 answer this question?

29. See note 5.

(To be concluded in the next issue)
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The Sioux

Memorial Feast

A SIOUX MEMORIAL FEAST on the Rosebud Indian Reservation is a unique experience. It is an old Sioux custom to celebrate with an elaborate feast a year after a family member died, on the exact date of the death. Each Sioux will tell about its significance in a different way.

This feast is to be a joyous occasion, I was told. The happiness of the participants is to symbolize the happy relationship which they had with the deceased during his lifetime. One commemorates the joy which the individual brought to the family by actually being happy. The hard work and cost involved in preparing an elaborate celebration is intended to be proportionate to the love one had for the departed.

A widow, her children, and other close relatives spend the entire year following a death by preparing and saving for the feast. Most of this preparation is for the “give-away.” At the memorial feast the family gives presents to friends and relatives of the deceased and to any people who were especially kind and helped the family during their early bereavement.

MY FIRST PERSONAL EXPERIENCE began with a written invitation from one of our hospital cooks to the feast in memory of her father, Kenneth Jones. He had died in the hospital after several years of periodic admissions to the intensive care unit for a severe heart condition. Since his doctors always prescribed a modified diet it was important for me to see him often.

A dietitian becomes accustomed to listening for long periods to the patient before the factors of food can be effectively discussed. It often seems more therapeutic to allow the conversation to drift into refreshing, enjoyable topics than to burden a critically ill patient with scientific details about diet and his disease. I knew Kenneth had many personal problems.

With considerable pride, Kenneth told me about his brother who was an ordained Episcopal priest. I then asked him if he was acquainted with Deaconess King, who I knew had worked for years with Sioux all over South Dakota, including the Rosebud and Pine Ridge reservations. He knew this deaconess well and was amazed to learn that her family had lived across the street from my childhood home in a suburb of Chicago. It was this mentioning of Deaconess King which helped me establish a therapeutic rapport with Kenneth.

When he died the personnel in the dietary department tried to help our bereaved cook, Yvonne. Her mother had been a chronic invalid and needed all the help her large family could give her. During the following year Yvonne told of shopping trips to Sioux Falls on her days off. The other cooks told me she was purchasing gifts for her father’s memorial feast “give-away.”

Our head cook, who crocheted skillfully, brought Yvonne some of her work for the “give-away.”

Since it was winter, the feast was to take place in Clark Hall. This was the parish hall of the Episcopal congregation at Rosebud. The hall had been named for the first missionary priest who worked in South Dakota, and specifically at Rosebud. As the parish church was small, Clark Hall had been used for Kenneth’s funeral.

Some time before Kenneth died, his brother had been appointed by his church as bishop of the western area of South Dakota. The Sioux all over the state were proud of the first Indian bishop. Kenneth was especially proud. He would have rejoiced to know that Bishop Jones had been preacher at his funeral.

Since this feast was a new experience for me, Ollie, our head cook, and I went together. As for any church supper, long tables were set up in the hall. When people arrived, they simply sat down at some place setting. Ollie selected a place for us where I could get a view of the entire hall. Mrs. Jones sat at the head table with the Bishop and his wife. I was interested in learning that the Rev. Vine Deloria, Sr. and his wife were also honored guests with a number of other friends and guests of the family.

Now recorded music was played. Someone said it had been taped at Kenneth’s funeral and would recall memories suitable for this occasion. Bishop Jones then gave a short talk and asked a blessing on the meal as well as on the entire celebration.

The grown Jones grandchildren and their mothers began to serve an elaborate white man’s turkey...
dinner with “all the trimmings.” Since our hospital cook was in charge of the food preparation, I was proud to see how well it was served and how delicious it tasted. There was pie for dessert. A large cake decorated with iced roses and the inscription “In memory of Kenneth Jones,” was on display.

I was expecting to leave when the family started serving an Indian dinner of soup, frybread, and wojapi. Even in the most Americanized groups the Sioux Indian dinner must be served. This nutritionist groaned inwardly and began surveying the large crowd, picking out all the patients and remembering their diet prescriptions.

The daughters walked through the room distributing gifts. It was impossible for me to see all the items but I did notice a great variety: patchwork quilts, cooking utensils, costume jewelry of Indian bead work, and lace doilies. I was amazed when one of Yvonne’s sisters laid a huge package in front of me saying, “For you, Miss Wuerffel.” It contained a large woolen blanket in white with pink roses. To it was fastened another package with a delicate green scarf.

A few days later, when Yvonne came back to work, I thanked her. “I was very much surprised,” I said. “Just why I qualify for a family give-away, I do not understand.” Yvonne promptly replied, “Don’t you remember how you spoke to my father about Deaconess King?”

WHEN MEMORIAL FEASTS were celebrated during warm weather, they were usually out in the open like an Indian pow-wow. Sioux feel free to join any group, so the crowd at these out-of-doors feasts were enormous.

The widow of one of the dental assistants was having a memorial feast at Ghost Hawk Park. She told us she had bought a cow which relatives were butchering for her. Parts of it were being roasted for her by friends and relatives. The rest of the meat was to be cooked out in the open by the older women. She had given flour to relatives who were making stacks of frybread. She had frozen wild choke-cherries for wojapi. Large sacks of potatoes had been distributed to people who were making potato salad. Many cakes and pies were being baked. When Anna Rose LaPointe suggested I come too, I asked her what I could bring. After some urging, she allowed me to bring cookies. She was planning to set up a table with hot dogs, koolade, and cookies for the children. At another section she planned to serve the Indian dinner and also have a white man’s table with roast beef, ham, and potato salad. It was to begin at two o’clock on Saturday.

When I arrived at Ghost Hawk Park at two o’clock that sunny June day, the LaPointe people and friends were still getting things ready. Anna Rose and her sister-in-law had stretched a wash line from tree to tree. They were hanging up one beautiful colored patch-work quilt after another; many had elaborate Sioux star designs. I counted eighteen quilts in all. One lovely quilt was spread over a picnic table. On it was standing a picture of the deceased Buzzy LaPointe. Buzzy had been a member of the tribal council, so there was another framed picture of him in which he stood between a fellow councilman and the tribal president.

A large pick-up truck arrived. The driver unloaded another stack of gifts. There were boxes and bags, suitcases, and a trunk. The widow and sister were busy sorting out the gifts.

Someone explained, “Those suitcases and the truck are also new. They will be gifts. Anna Rose will really be broke for a long time. She must have spent three thousand dollars for her “give-away.” Each of those quilts cost at least thirty dollars. This “give-away” for Buzzy is really great.”

I FIRST MET BUZZY SHORT-ly before he died. He was at a meeting in Ring Thunder. The tribal councilman at Ring Thunder had asked for a Public Health speaker for his regular community meeting. I was to show the film strip we made at the hospital explaining our prenatal program. Ring Thunder was reached by a mud road off the highway. The road curved up and down for some miles among the grassy hills. The meeting was to be in a Roman Catholic parish hall. Church and hall were tucked away in the “draw” among the hills near the cottonwoods along a creek.

When I arrived at the appointed time, few people were there. One by one or in family groups the Sioux wandered in from over the hills or across the creek. A number of men from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Buzzy LaPointe arrived too.

The Ring Thunder councilman asked me to speak. Since it was a bright June evening, the sun was shining into the room. I suggested that since I had a film strip to show I would wait until it grew dark. So the men from BIA and Buzzy had a long discussion with the people about their housing shortage. It was eleven o’clock before I finished my talk and was ready to leave. The men from Rosebud had left as soon as their business was over, except for Buzzy LaPointe. By this time the lonely countryside was in absolute darkness. Quietly Buzzy suggested that I drive on and he would follow me. As I drove in black darkness with only my car lights illuminating an uncertain mud road, the lights behind me seemed a protecting halo. I drove slowly but the car behind followed patiently. When I finally reached the hospital compound and was ready to turn in, the car behind me flickered a good night and drove on at accelerated speed.

That was Thursday night. When I came to the hospital on the next Monday morning I was told, “Anna Rose’s husband, Buzzy, is dead.” He had gone to Rapid City on tribal business and stayed in a motel over night. He apparently had a heart attack for he was found dead on Saturday in his motel room.
my lunch hour that Monday, I took two tea rings from my freezer to Anna Rose.

Now a year had passed since Anna Rose received that tragic shock. Ghost Hawk Park was filled with Sioux of all ages. The Jesuit priest, Father Jones, had arrived from Saint Francis and was tapping a glass for attention. Father began the feast with prayer.

People began to line up with bowl and cup at each of the three long tables. Many children were munching on hot dogs while also eating large chunks of frybread. The adults carried their loaded plates to vacant picnic tables or sat on the ground.

At length a councilman, Ike Bear Shield, called for attention. He gave a long, long talk in the Dakota language. Some days later I said to Ike, “I could not understand you, of course, but I gathered you were reminding people of Buzzy’s contributions to the tribe as a councilman.” Ike nodded and seemed pleased that I had caught the gist of his speech.

Anna Rose and a sister began distributing the gifts. Quietly, they laid a blanket or some other gift into the laps of individuals. With expressionless faces but quiet respect each person took his gift. Sioux do not say “Thank you,” but remember for all time to come the gift and what it stood for. Everyone was very still. It was a quiet peace which prevailed during that hour in Ghost Hawk Park.

Another councilman picked up Buzzy’s picture and carried it around. He spent the hours of the “give-away” showing Buzzy’s picture to every person present. When he held the picture up before me he murmured, “This is Buzzy LaPointe, did you know him?”

When darkness settled on this June night, Buzzy LaPointe’s spirit had truly been laid to rest. The widow recognized now that her husband was no longer with her in spirit, any more than he was present in body. It would be respectable for her to marry again if she chose to do so. The memorial feast is truly a significant event among the Sioux people.

On returning to Chicago, I found much emphasis being placed, and a few workshops being held, on death and dying. It is always a temptation to get up and tell people how wholesomely the Sioux handle their bereavement and the problems of death and dying.

Another actor in the same part may enter and, if he stood on his head, it would make little difference: we would hardly take particular notice of him. You may speak of stage magnetism or that very plus hidden in the personality of the actor that endows and endears him with a shade of fascination.

Some people have charisma and others don’t. You can learn many magic tricks in life, but you cannot learn how to have magic. It is a kind of otherness which the actor shows involuntarily even when not on stage. These people translate the simile of the world being a stage into their daily idiomatic language. Katherine Hepburn is such a person. I remember having met her in Hollywood the days when they shot The Philadelphia Story. I happened to call for Vivien Leigh on that day—I apologize for dropping names—and when we all wanted to get into the only car available at that moment, we were one too many. It was Katherine Hepburn who, before anyone could think of another solution, sat on the floor of the car in her white evening dress at the feet of Vivien Leigh. One could think of a studied mannerism or a show-off impulse in such a case. But it seemed to have been a spontaneous reaction of someone who shows little concern with what is proper or “what is done.”

I am culling from one of many interviews a thought she expressed: “I was brought up not to be dominated by the popular opinion of the time. I was never afraid to make my own judgments and to estimate the situation from my own point of view.” Being different is part of her way of being, and one can sense it when she is on stage or on the screen: there is that touch of being different that makes her being so very much herself.

This is particularly the case in her part of an old, peculiar lady in Enid Bagnold’s A Matter of Gravity. I have always been fond of Miss Bagnold’s plays set in an eccentric ambiance of a typically British decedent environment. With her polished
scintillating dialogues she often made me think of how Oscar Wilde might have written today. I am not quite so sure of how important it is to be earnest about *A Matter of Gravity* since, in fact, this play is not quite a grave matter. It has a few wonderful lines. It takes place in today's world of strident dissonances. Britain's decaying high society is symbolized by a huge mansion inhabited by an old lady expecting and defying death. She is pitted against a motley crowd of young lesbians, homosexuals, and revolutionaries of sorts, against a Trinidadian black girl who wants to move into this mansion, even at the price of marrying the old lady's grandson whom she does not love. How more symbolic can you get? But the events in this play, the entrances and exits seem contrived. It may easily have been a play doomed to fail, if it had not been for Katherine Hepburn as the old lady.

"You can't pattern successes," Miss Hepburn said in an interview. "You have to do things that really interest you and not because you think it's going to be successful." She sensed that this was a part in which she could triumph, and triumph she did. It has always seemed to me that behind her ostentatious artlessness was a great deal of sincerity, but that, with the years, it all had become routine and that the routine had too often frozen into mannerism. What was sheer liveness in the days of *The Philadelphia Story* turned into a conscious gesture, particularly in her films, but that now the glaze of genteel mellowness began to cover the past of this sixty-six-year-old actress, as if she had found a back road to simplicity. There was a fine economy in the words she uttered with just the right emphases and pauses. Her short laughs were built into her lines, and her surprised glances bespoke the sadness of the old lady she portrayed.

A young actor sat next to me. He had come from Hollywood to New York to test his acting talent and to challenge his luck. He had seen Katherine Hepburn only in the movies, admitted, and was anxious to find out what she was like on stage. He left during the first intermission. The audience gave Katherine Hepburn a standing ovation, as all audiences did, I was told. In the main, these were middle-aged, middle-class people who seemed to thank her for her past accomplishments and for being Katherine Hepburn. I wonder whether the people noticed that, with this part, she had made that tiny step leading her far beyond the Katherine Hepburn we took for granted.

*Since the days I saw and read* Tom Stoppard's *Rosenkranz and Guildenstern are Dead* I was convinced that he was one of our cleverest contemporary playwrights, a bit loquacious and not always striking deep enough. But he has a wonderful way with words and a knack for turning a crazy idea into a theatrical gold mine. Having missed his latest play, *Travesties*, in London I tried to read it and found it of little interest. I started to read it three times and could never finish it. Now having seen it on Broadway I understood what happened to me or rather to Tom Stoppard.

*Travesties* is an actor's play with the help of a great director. It is a travesty of a play that only makes sense when it comes alive on stage. And it only comes alive through the acting which must create the most whimsical ambiance of a literary cabaret with vaudevillean touches throughout. Peter Wood, the director of the Royal Shakespeare Company, found the right gimmick with which to bamboozle the audience. *Travesties* is, and is not, a kind of documentary in which the play on and with words becomes glorified theatricality. The wit appears to me that behind her ostentatious artlessness was a great deal of sincerity, but that, with the years, it all had become routine and that the routine had too often frozen into mannerism. What was sheer liveness in the days of *The Philadelphia Story* turned into a conscious gesture, particularly in her films, but that now the glaze of gentle mellowness began to cover the past of this sixty-six-year-old actress, as if she had found a back road to simplicity. There was a fine economy in the words she uttered with just the right emphases and pauses. Her short laughs were built into her lines, and her surprised glances bespoke the sadness of the old lady she portrayed.

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*Since the days I saw and read* Tom Stoppard's *Rosenkranz and Guildenstern are Dead* I was convinced that he was one of our cleverest contemporary playwrights, a bit loquacious and not always striking deep enough. But he has a wonderful way with words and a knack for turning a crazy idea into a theatrical gold mine. Having missed his latest play, *Travesties*, in London I tried to read it and found it of little interest. I started to read it three times and could never finish it. Now having seen it on Broadway I understood what happened to me or rather to Tom Stoppard.

*Travesties* is an actor's play with the help of a great director. It is a travesty of a play that only makes sense when it comes alive on stage. And it only comes alive through the acting which must create the most whimsical ambiance of a literary cabaret with vaudevillean touches throughout. Peter Wood, the director of the Royal Shakespeare Company, found the right gimmick with which to bamboozle the audience. *Travesties* is, and is not, a kind of documentary in which the play on and with words becomes glorified theatricality. The wit appears to me that behind her ostentatious artlessness was a great deal of sincerity, but that, with the years, it all had become routine and that the routine had too often frozen into mannerism. What was sheer liveness in the days of *The Philadelphia Story* turned into a conscious gesture, particularly in her films, but that now the glaze of gentle mellowness began to cover the past of this sixty-six-year-old actress, as if she had found a back road to simplicity. There was a fine economy in the words she uttered with just the right emphases and pauses. Her short laughs were built into her lines, and her surprised glances bespoke the sadness of the old lady she portrayed.

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By now my readers will be sufficiently confused and mystified to be told what the play is all about. In the playbill Tom Stoppard tries to give the spectator a hint at what he has to expect: "*Travesties* is a work of fiction which makes use, and misuse, of history. Scenes which are self-evidently documentary mingle with others which are just as evidently fantastical." There are the days of 1917 in Zurich now as an English amateur group enacted Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*. A man from the British Consulate in Zürich played the part of Algernon. Joyce had a lot to do with putting on this play. These are the facts out of which the fevered imagination of Tom Stoppard concocted—in the truest sense of the word—a play whose first and longer part is fascinating and the second part boring proof that a gimmick is a gimmick. The acting makes this play. And among a number of good actors the one who enacts Henry Carr (the man who remembers these turbulent days of 1917 in Zürich now as an old man writing his memoirs) carries the show. John Wood, as well as his substitute David Dukes, brought the creative genius of a clown to this part. Some people thought that no one could ever reach John Wood's crazy enactment.
of Henry Carr, with his idiosyncratic mimicry and gesture pattern. David Dukes made this part fit to his own measure, and I liked him not a bit less than John Wood. The play *Travesties* is a rather poor script only coming really to life when acted with the brilliance of some of these British actors.

THEY NEED NOT NECESSARILY be British actors in order to shine onstage, although their acting tradition has proved to be dependable. I am thinking of an American actor, Joseph Wiseman, who is now in a play by Elie Wiesel on Broadway and who was seen in the same play at the Arena Stage in Washington last year and on television. I saw Joseph Wiseman as Oppenheimer in Heinar Kipphardt's *In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer* and in Arthur Miller's *Incident at Vichy*. I have always had the impression that Mr. Wiseman does not act but lives his parts. His metamorphoses are total and convincing and yet in no role was he more total and convincing than in Elie Wiesel's *Zalmen or the Madness of God*.

The dramatized event never took place—as is stressed in the play—but it could have happened that the rabbi of a small Jewish community in a small Russian town breaks out of his silence and cries out in his sermon on the eve of Yom Kipur, shouting against the oppression and injustice his people suffer. The time is 1950. The rabbi is a gentle person, conversing only with God. A small company of foreign actors from somewhere in the West come to this little town, some of them Jews, some Christians, but they all want to be present in the synagogue during the Yom Kipur service. To please the authorities, the community agrees that none of the Jews will talk to the strangers.

Elie Wiesel introduces two different dramatic elements. The rabbi's daughter and son-in-law are ardent Communists and will have nothing to do with their old faith and family ties, but the rabbi's little grandson loves the old man who fears to lose him to the world of Communism and atheism. The rabbi is also pressured by the caretaker of the synagogue who is possessed by a holy madness. Had it not been for the visit of his little grandson the old rabbi would have withheld the prompting of the mad caretaker. But the rabbi's fear for the future of the Jews, who may be totally wiped out after three millennia of stubborn survival, makes him speak out the truth in front of the foreign actors in a moment of anger, frustration, and madness.

The second act dramatizes the search of the authorities for the rabbi's possible accomplices. However, the commissar's final decision is that this event did not take place at all, that it can be dismissed. It may have happened only in the crazed mind of the caretaker and in the tortured mind of the silent rabbi. At the end of the play the fairy tale begins and weakens the drama. The appearance of a group of foreign actors seems very much contrived. Why should they be stranded in this hidden town? Is it not unlikely that no punishment would be meted out?

I have accepted all improbabilities of this flawed play. After all, the greatest Shakespearean plays are full of improbabilities (even though Wiesel is no Shakespeare). But I am grateful that this play was put on because I could see Joseph Wiseman as the rabbi. Never before have I seen the century-old suffering of the Jews concentrated in such tortured expression: the stooped, beaten posture of his body, the resigned gestures of his hands, the anguished, already otherworldly look in his weak, pained eyes; his articulate silence; the prophetic ecstasy in the litany of his sermon. It was an unforgettable experience. Together with some other rightful images of tortured men in this age of anxiety and confusion, the image of this rabbi will haunt me to the day I will face my Maker and, trying to break the barriers of His great silence, will ask: Why, oh why hast Thou forsaken us?

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**CORRECTION**


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**BOOKS**

**ECOLOGY AND CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY.**

Compiled and edited by Eloise E. Lester, London: Published by The Community of the Cross of Nails, Coventry Cathedral, 1976.

IN THIS TECHNOLOGICAL world of so many unusual human benefits and elusive, poorly defined human risks, how concerned are you as a Christian about God's relationships to the Creation and man's stewardship of this Creation?

Out of the rubble resulting from the Nazi bombing of Coventry and its cathedral in 1940 came the Community of the Cross of Nails, an international community of Christians dedicated to the reconciliation of God and man and man to man.
Since the establishment of the Community in 1958, various acts of reconciliation have been initiated. This small paperback book is a report of a conference held in Sewanee, Tennessee, in 1975, and is addressed to “the mounting concern for our ecological predicament and the need for reconciliation with God's creation.” The seven papers included in this report are of considerable diversity in content and of variable lengths.

After a brief explanatory introduction by H. C. N. Williams, the Provost of Coventry Cathedral, Kenyon Wright presents a paper entitled “The Human Predicament Today.” He examines what are considered “the crises of our time”: 1) the increasing gap between rich and poor nations and their peoples; 2) the population explosion; 3) the environmental problem of over-exploitation of the natural system; and 4) a crisis of institutions expected to respond to these three problems. After considering the various alternatives, Mr. Wright states that we need a Theology of Creation which emphasizes man's harmony with God's gift of creation.

This theology embraces a community of men bound by hope, forgiveness, personal discipline, and social creativity to guide mankind to an equilibrium society. James Gallagher writes on “Technology and the Quality of Life,” in which he gives technology credit for a multitude of benefits for improving the life of human beings on this planet. Then he examines what technology has done to us—those costs of pollution, urbanization, the impersonal purposeless life, and a “degrading feast of materialism.” He then sketches out ten reconciling parameters of human action based on Christ's message of charity which also “changed the course of human events and improved the quality of life on Earth.”

William Griffin's paper entitled “On Creation—an Analysis of the Biblical Revelation of a Theology of Creation” is the longest in this book and confronts man's repeated questions to God “Who are you?” He traces man's developing understanding of God through much of the old Testament: God as the Creator, man created and subservient to God's direction, man responsible for man and accountable to his Creator, man fallen from God's favor and the need for the New Creation of His Son as the Redeemer to “unite all things to Him, things in heaven and things on earth.”

The next paper is entitled “An Examination of a Contemporary Theology of Creation” and is written by Charles Winters. Mr. Winters explores the fundamental mindsets (myths) as common sense concepts, which man at various times accepts and which explain his relationships to God and to this Earth. In this past century the mindset of modern man is one of scientific theory and the common sense of a mechanistic world view in which “the use or non-use of the category of God makes no difference.” He then deals with the question of what one can do about a mindset which does not allow the notion of Creation by a divine being to have any credibility. Roger Smith and Eloise Lester each write briefly on “The Pastoral Implications of the Impact of the Ecological Crisis in Christian Ministry.” Smith states that man is free to shed materialism, free from the greed associated with exploitation of this Earth when he becomes totally fulfilled by the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist. Lester explains the void of modern living as losses of community feelings and of a society bounded by its beliefs.

Finally, there is a summary of the conference by Dean David Collins of the Cathedral of St. Philip in Atlanta and by Dean Horace Dammers of Bristol Cathedral in Bristol, England. Dean Collins warns against finding cheap and easy answers to the world situation of today, so he outlines several ways we may go from here, including “My job is to repent, to change from an old over-consummptive life style.” Dean Dammers addresses his summarization to how the common discipline of the Community of the Cross of Nails should be involved in our ecological situation, and includes practical ways of maintaining a life-style consistent with Christian responsibility.

**THIS LITTLE BOOK IS ONLY**

102 pages in length and can be, perhaps should be, read through in a quiet evening of thought and reflection. The book suffers a bit from the unevenness of flow of the theme from one paper to the next, which is not uncommon in reports written from presented papers without discussion among the participants, but this does not diminish the focus which is the acceptance of God as the Creator and our responsibility to this Creation. The book has its scholarly parts, its controversial parts, and its challenging parts. Some of the thoughts are properly disturbing to me and may well be to you. I can't avoid a feeling of futility as I consider any significant number of people in America choosing to practice anti-materialism and diminishing their human greed when our media are totally dominated by the smothering commercialism of over-consumption. These economics are the only life-style we know. Then there is the promise that if we share the wealth of God's gifts of nature and of our personal labors with the underdeveloped third world, these people will live more decently—or will they use this largess as the free base to travel the roads of materialism, consumption, and bureaucracy? They have already chosen militarism. There are more disturbing suggestions, but these papers are directed to where it counts in this polluted, wasteful world. These authors furnish a challenging platform based on Christian faith and action for the only long-term solution to ecological problems, that is, a way to change human life styles away from the mindsets of materialism and greed to responsible stewardship of God's Creation.

ROBERT HANSEN

May, 1976
THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD

AMERICANS HAVE LONG prided themselves on possessing and protecting the freedom of speech. Few things provoke a more belligerent response than the feeling that someone wants to deprive us of the right to have our say. Yet the exercise of this freedom proves a frustrating experience when we sense that no one is listening. Many a citizen has lapsed into silence because he is convinced that no one hears him anyway. How do we grant the right of a person to be heard?

In the intimate spheres of life we take for granted the right to be heard. Friendship lives on the readiness of two people to hear one another and to struggle to understand each other. It is the essence of the sharing of life. The close relationships of the family lose their meaning when parents and children can no longer hear one another. Experience has taught us the wisdom of Goethe's lines:

What is more glorious than gold? Light.
What is more enlivening than light? Conversation!

Being heard goes with living closely with another.

A university community lives from people talking to one another and hearing with understanding. Its members seek to develop that skill through sensitivity and insight. But the explosion of knowledge and the resulting need for specialization have taught us not to expect all to grant us the right to be heard. The continuing pursuit of interdisciplinary work and general studies seeks to uncover what has a right to be heard by the many members of the academic community.

THE ART OF SPEAKING AND hearing becomes primary in our lives as citizens. As citizens we share with one another a concern for the common good of society. That common concern depends on hearing the insights and the needs of one another. But we soon learn that not everything spoken deserves our attention. We recognize then a speaker is only spouting the party line, or when no more is being said than office and position require. It is when we recognize that the fellow citizen is speaking clearly from conviction and experience that the question arises. How do we know that we are listening?

The simplest check may be to inquire whether we have really heard. Does the speaker recognize the thoughts and ideas when we repeat them anew? Most of us have listened to two people in a conversation where it became quickly evident that each was talking with someone not present. What started as a conversation ended as an argument which frustrated both parties, and neither had been heard.

Hearing requires more than the ability to repeat the words and thoughts of another. Hearing entails the use of the imagination, which perceives the problems and questions to which the thoughts are related. The topic of conversation may be the protection of the environment — protecting air, water, and nature, and sharing our natural resources. But the questions are different for the person without work and the person who has a secure job and wants to commune with nature.

Our imagination has to travel yet one step further into the situation of the person speaking. For the problem perceived depends on the place where he or she stands. How difficult whites have found it to hear their black neighbors, even when they understood the words and thought that they were dealing with the same issues. How hard it is for some males to hear what is being said by women struggling to attain their rights.

The locales where such listening is learned are many. We may enjoy learning the art during the morning coffee break or over the lunch table. More difficult practice happens in the variety of citizen committees and political groups of a community. Many of us sense the need to renew this art in the community of the church. Here again we are in need to learn not only to let others have their say, but to learn to grant them the right to be heard.

True hearing plays the ultimate compliment to another's words by entering into vital conversation. Citizen engages citizen, person engages person. And we make the strange discovery that no one has the last word, because the final word emerges from our interaction.

By the way, thanks for hearing me out.