

6-1976

The Cresset (Vol. XXXIX, No. 8)

Valparaiso University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholar.valpo.edu/cresset_archive



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#), and the [Public Affairs, Public Policy and Public Administration Commons](#)

This Full Issue is brought to you for free and open access by ValpoScholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Cresset (archived issues) by an authorized administrator of ValpoScholar. For more information, please contact a ValpoScholar staff member at scholar@valpo.edu.

VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE,
THE ARTS,
AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS
JUNE 1976

NOV. 23 1976



THE
CRESSET



- 3 IN LUCE TUA Victor F. Hoffmann, Jr. — In Memoriam, *John Strietelmeier*;
Where Have All the Voters Gone?
- 5 James A. Nuechterlein REFLECTIONS ON THE BICENTENNIAL
- 8 Walter E. Keller TEMPLE-CLEANSING
- 9 Richard Lee THE HAPPY-FAMILY AND THE SINGLE MAN
- 14 Gottfried G. Kradel WHAT'S NEW IN HISTORY, II: LUTHER BIOGRAPHY
Old Wine in New Skins (Continued from *The Cresset*, May, 1976)
- 30 Sarah de Ford VISIT WITH AN ANGLO-SAXON SCHOLAR
- 30 Walter Sorell MURDER AT LINCOLN CENTER
- 32 Dale G. Lasky FROM THE TRIVIAL TO THE ROUTINE

ALBERT G. HUEGLI, *Publisher*

KENNETH F. KORBY, *Editor*

Departmental Editors

Richard H.W. Brauer, *Visual Arts; Design Advisor*

Richard H. Luecke, *The City*

Theodore Jungkuntz, *Religious Books Reviews*

Joseph F. McCall, *Recordings*

Jill Baumgaertner, *Poetry Consultant*

Dorothy Czamanske, *Editorial Assistant*

Contributors

Walter Sorell, *Theater*

Albert Trost, *Politics*

James A. Nuechterlein, *Politics*

Editorial Board

Jack A. Hiller, Walter E. Keller, Carl H. Krekeler,

Dale G. Lasky, Dolores Ruosch,

John Strietelmeier, Sue Wienhorst

Business Managers

Wilbur H. Hutchins, *Finance*

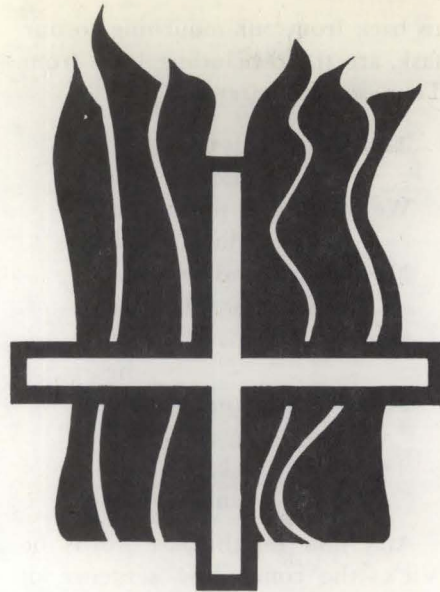
Ellen Brauer, *Administration and Circulation*

THE CRESSET is published monthly except July and August by the Valparaiso University Press, Valparaiso, Indiana 46383, as a forum for scholarly writing and informed opinion. The views expressed herein are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the preponderance of opinion of Valparaiso University or within the editorial board. Manuscripts should be addressed to the Editor and accompanied by return postage. Letters to the editor for publication are subject to editing for brevity. The *Book Review Index* lists *Cresset* reviews. Second class postage paid at Valparaiso, Indiana. Subscription rates: one year—\$3.00; two years—\$5.50; single copy—35 cents. Student rates, per year—\$1.00; single copy—15 cents. Entire contents copyrighted 1976 by the Valparaiso University Press, without whose written permission reproduction in whole or in part for any purpose whatsoever is expressly forbidden.



Cover design by Lisa Sanders, senior art major, Valparaiso University. The design features rubbings of English medieval monumental brass engravings. These rubbed impressions were recently made by Sharon Meyer while in England with her husband who was the director of Valparaiso University's overseas center in Cambridge. The identity of the subjects of the rubbings are: *Priest in Almuze*, Robert Macombleyn, 1528, Kings College, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, England; and *Bishop Thomas Goodryke*, 1554, Ely Cathedral, Ely, Cambridgeshire, England.

IN LUCE TUA



VICTOR F. HOFFMAN, JR. — In Memoriam

SEVEN YEARS AGO THIS month, *The Cresset* ran Vic Hoffmann's last "Editor-at-Large" column under the heading, "A Departing Note." After twenty years at Valparaiso University, Vic was moving on to new risks, new challenges, new possibilities in an urban university. Some of the things which he wrote on that occasion are worth hearing again this afternoon as we remember with gratitude the all-too-short time he was with us. Here, then, is a paragraph from that column:

By way of retrospection, I must honestly say, I did not look upon Valparaiso University at any time as an abiding city in spite of my twenty year pilgrimage. Nor do I look upon the

University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee as an abiding city. For wandering men for whom the trumpet sounds on the other side, there are on this side many times and many places. Paradoxically enough, the pilgrim who has been writing this column is looking, looking, for that one place where he does abide forever and forever.

To be speaking a eulogy of this great, warm, lovable roistering man seems almost surrealistic. How can we imagine him dead from whom we drew such life? And yet, those of us who were privileged to know him well remember the stream of longing, of *Heimweh*, that flowed through his thought and often surfaced in his speech. He belonged to many of us in a thousand profoundly meaningful ways, and yet he did not belong finally to any of us. He was at home wherever the sun descended on his labors and travels, and yet he had here no continuing city. He was forever seeking one to come. And we are bold to say, in the faith which we shared with him, that he has at last found it.

Victor Frederick Hoffmann, Jr., died on 28 June 1976. A memorial service was held in the Chapel of the Resurrection at Valparaiso University. Dr. John Strietelmeier, Vice-President for Academic Affairs at the University, delivered the memorial homily we herewith share with readers of The Cresset.

He was a strange, volatile mixture of the Irish romantic and the methodical German scholar. It was always amusing to watch him at meetings, fidgeting through some long-winded speaker's banalities, but faithfully taking them down on the 3 x 5 note cards which he must have bought by the thousands. Sometimes he would show me his notes—the beautiful, almost feminine handwriting, the terse summaries of what was said, and Vic's own running commentary which was likely to consist of such brevities as "Nuts!" "What does this mean?" (all in capital letters), or perhaps just a series of exclamation marks.

Vic got himself into a lot of trouble by speaking as frankly as he wrote. Our Lord's description of Nathanael would just as aptly have fit Vic: "An Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile." Few there were, whether friend or foe, who did not at some time feel the lash of his absolute honesty. In some it aroused a passionate hatred. But for many of us the rare sight of an utterly honest man—while it did not perhaps provoke us to imitation—was a delight. Indeed, when I think of Vic the two words which come simultaneously to my mind are "honest" and "delightful"—two words which, I think, seldom go agreeably together.

His students loved him, although (or perhaps because) he was unremitting in his demands upon them. His colleagues revealed much about themselves by their response to him; to some he was an inspiration, to others a threat. The poor, particularly in the campus neighborhood, looked to him for help, and were never refused. The needy never found him too busy to listen and to respond. When he died he had compressed at least ninety years of living, learning, helping, and loving into his sixty calendar years.

Vic—who in his lifetime had many careers as pastor, professor, editor, writer, labor negotiator, politician, and administrator—once told an interviewer that he considered himself essentially a reconciler. He believed, with passionate intensity, that the Church as the Body of Christ is anointed in every generation “to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” And with Vic there was never any wide gap between the conviction and the act. His life and work were a living out of that mission and we may thus dare to call it redemptive.

Now Vic is gone. And in his going there is a solemn, startling warning to all of us who loved him that time is running out for that exuberant generation which came to this University in the Forties and early Fifties with no more modest intentions than to build here the great Lutheran University in America. He was not the first to go, and assuredly he will not be the last. And with the passing of each of these dear friends and comrades we who survive become the custodians of another fund of hopes and promises and dreams which must be forever frustrated unless we make it our business of love to see them through to reality.

Vic and I shared a love of the Victorian poets. I think his favorite poem was Browning’s “Soliloquy in a Spanish Cloister.” More appropriate this afternoon, because they point

us back from our mourning to our task, are the concluding lines from Tennyson’s *Ulysses*:

Though much is taken, much
 abides; and though
We are not now that strength
 which in old days
Moved earth and heaven,
 that which we are, we are —
One equal temper of heroic
 hearts,
Made weak by time and fate,
 but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find,
 and not to yield.

And now let the last words be Vic’s—the concluding sentence of his last “Editor-at-Large” column: “And so, peace and hope, for all saints and sinners the while we long for one another.”

JOHN STRIETELMEIER



WHERE HAVE ALL THE VOTERS GONE?

IF THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE who vote gives a sign of the health of a democracy, the condition of the United States of America calls for a good examination and a regimen of serious therapy. Since 1951 the percentage of the civilian population of voting ages that voted has declined from 63.3 percent in presidential elections and 42.2 percent (in 1954) for congressional elections to 55.7 percent and 38.0 percent in 1971 and 1974.

In 1972 the *Washington Post* lamented, “Why did 39 million Americans who could have registered not do so; why did an additional 24 mil-

lion Americans register but fail to vote?”

Of all the democracies evaluated in a report in *The Christian Science Monitor*, Richard L. Strout showed that America has by far the worst voting record. The same correspondent reported that of the 146.8 million Americans of voting age (18 years old and over), about 88 million are currently registered to vote. He also noted that the average American voter is about 45 years old, and voter participation rises with age.

According to the United States Bureau of the Census, in the so-called “50,000 Household Survey” report of 1972, 26 percent of the people who were not registered to vote in November 1972, were not registered for “legal reasons”; that is: they were unable to register; they were not citizens; or they had not met the residence requirement. The same report indicates that 72 percent did not register for psychological reasons; that is: they were not interested; they disliked politics; they had other nonlegal reasons; or they did not remember.

The reasons for not voting, the legal and the psychological, do not seem to have disappeared nor to have been overcome in the primary elections. While some candidates appear to have won the primaries by large margins, the relation of the number of those voting to the total number of registered voters, or worse still, to the number of eligible voters, is getting smaller.

It seems the federal government has no problem finding the taxpayers with the income tax form. Is it so hard to find the eligible voters with a registration form?

But apart from those who fail to register and to vote for legal reasons, what of that far larger number who fails to engage in this aspect of the democratic process? Since the psychological reasons are affective and not rational, the treatment ought to be geared accordingly. One way would be to levy a fine against every eligible voter who did not register and vote in the elections. The problem with that treatment is

REFLECTIONS ON THE BICENTENNIAL

the complexity and the cost of enforcement.

A better form of motivation would be to link registering and voting to a system of profit sharing. Instead of (or perhaps along with) the income tax rebate, there could be a share of the country's income returned to every voting participant in the country's life. Certification of the voter's activity in registration and voting could be presented—along with the income tax return—for the shareholder's part in the country's production.

The idea abroad that participating citizens should share in the profits of the country should furnish motivation for active voting that persuasion, scolding, and national loyalty do not now seem to provide. And if the profit sharing amount should come to be anywhere near the \$750.00 per citizen that the proposals include, it is hard to imagine that the voter apathy would be what it is.



NOW
REPRINTS AVAILABLE

Warren Rubel's

"PATHOS AND POLEMIC
IN MISSOURI:
TACIT DIMENSIONS"

From THE CRESSET, April 1976

Single copy: 25¢
In multiples of 10: 20¢ each
In multiples of 100: 15¢ each

Postage will be paid
if payment accompanies the order

i

HISTORY IS NEVER NEUTRAL and is wonderfully protean. We constantly recreate our past to serve our shifting contemporary purposes. Although politicians and scholars alike habitually invoke the "lessons of the past" as if history had an agreed-upon, self-revelatory meaning, the dream of an objective and unitary rendering of previous experience remains a contemporary equivalent of the medieval search for the philosopher's stone. (This is not to deny the value of the ideal of historical objectivity; many unattainable ideals are useful and even necessary.)

Because history is always partisan, it follows that historical celebrations—like our current revolutionary bicentennial—are inevitably ideological occasions. We reconstruct not *the* Revolution, but *our* Revolution; the lessons we learn are those we choose to learn. In that sense, the past is always a usable past.

It may be that the American Revolution particularly lends itself to this variability of interpretation: it was, after all, an ambiguous sort of affair. If one imagines George Washington and John Adams as representative leaders of the revolutionary generation, he gets a rather different picture of the era than if he concentrates on, say, Thomas Paine or Samuel Adams. In the same way, it is one thing to compare the American Revolution with the French and thus decide that what happened in North America was

of a rather sober and conservative nature; it is quite another to recall how very radical the republican ideology was for its time and how elemental, wrenching, and altogether cataclysmic an event the Revolution was for so many, Loyalist and Patriot, who lived through it.

Given, then, the differing ways in which groups choose to interpret the revolutionary heritage—ways ranging from those of the Daughters of the American Revolution to those of the Peoples Bicentennial Commission—and given as well the genuine ambiguity of the event itself, it is not surprising that so wide a spectrum of people can find ideological aid and comfort in the events of 1776 and that ours remains a revolution for almost all persuasions and seasons.

The comments that follow need to be read in light of the fore-going. They are not at all meant to constitute a scholarly disquisition on the events of the eighteenth century. Their point of departure is not the Revolution but the present, and they make no claim to be purely disinterested. They extract from the Revolution perspectives and meanings that, while hopefully not simply arbitrary or capricious, do remain selective and particular.

ii

REVOLUTIONS ARE THINGS of terror. Any serious view of history or politics must acknowledge that; yet it is striking how seldom the American Revolution is thought of that way. Compared to its French

or Russian counterparts, the American upheaval seems somehow sedate and painless; and of course in that sort of comparative context it *does* take on a conservative coloration. Yet, as Robert R. Palmer and many others have long noted, there was a real revolution in America, one that exacted real costs and produced real pain. Those who doubt this would do well to consider carefully the Loyalist experience: the losers knew an actual revolution had occurred.

As Palmer suggests, the Revolution was less thoroughgoing than some others mainly because its opposition was less entrenched and powerful than elsewhere. The forces of aristocratic conservatism had been so weakened in the course of colonial evolution and were so easily overturned once the fighting started that the revolutionary forces were not driven to the reactive excesses that most revolutions produce. (There is, of course, the additional complicating factor that the American experience was more a war for independence than it was an internal revolution; nonetheless, both factors were to some extent present from the outset and in the course of the struggle the internal aspects took on gradually increasing significance.)

The comparative mildness of the Revolution was a great national blessing in that it allowed for the rapid restoration of national unity and the creation of a genuine political and social consensus. Yet in another way America's relatively easy revolution has acted as a national ideological blinder. We have as a people ever since assumed that things in the political world are easier than they really are. The word revolution holds no terror for us and neither do the consequences it connotes. As James Truslow Adams once remarked, "America is a child that has never gazed on the face of death."

The Revolution contributed in no small part to that broad and seductive sense of innocence—at once ingenuous and arrogant—that

has so characterized American political thought. Thomas Jefferson could speak of America as the new paradise and the American as a new Adam; such imagery permeated early American self-perception. The United States, so it was imagined, was free from ancient traditions, ancient institutions, ancient superstitions; it was, in the broadest sense, free from the burdens and limits of the past. Illimitable freedom was the American promise. The dreams and illusions of an unconstrained innocence have ever since been among the most fundamental—and often disastrous—assumptions of American domestic and foreign policy.

Yet that is not the whole story of our revolutionary heritage. If one thinks of the period not merely in terms of 1776 and its immediate preoccupations but in the broader context of the entire revolutionary generation (from, say, 1763 to 1788) then one takes in, along with the wider time frame, a far more complex, diverse, and ambiguous range of political and social thought.

It used to be argued that the framing of the Constitution marked a conservative, Thermidorian reaction against the idealistic impulses of the Revolution, a counterrevolutionary turn from the rights of men to the rights of property. Modern scholars have tended to discount this and have seen the 1770s and 1780s as more of a piece, with the Constitution as the consolidation, not the repudiation, of the Revolution.

A good case can be made for this latter view (the revolutionists were deeply and fundamentally concerned with the protection of property and the Constitution-writers were not at all oblivious to human rights) but that should not obscure the plain fact of some differing emphases in the two experiences, differences that in large part emerged out of the events of the years separating the Revolution from the Constitution. The weakness of government under the Articles of Confederation—a weakness that raised in

alarmist circles fears of a descent into anarchy—served to shift immediate attention somewhat away from inalienable and self-evident rights toward the stability and order necessary "to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity." That shift in emphasis was not counterrevolutionary, but it did tend in a conservative direction.

The men who wrote the Constitution combined in ingenious and profound fashion their enlightenment hopes with their Calvinist fears (as, for that matter—though in somewhat less obvious ways—had the men of the Revolution). They continued to believe in progress and even in a genuine science of government, but they rooted their progressive hopes in a skeptical and unillusioned view of human nature. Progress would spring not out of human goodness but out of a delicately contrived system of government that would check power against power and would counterpoise vice with vice. The unpromising stuff of human nature could, properly balanced, produce a sturdy and beneficent structure of government.

From our perspective, the men of that generation appear more solid and rooted in political reality in their constitutional than in their revolutionary guises; James Madison is altogether a more profound and convincing thinker than Tom Paine. Thomas Jefferson reflects better than most the variability and ambiguity of the era's thought: as abstract theorist, he was capable of frighteningly dogmatic, jejune, and sanguinary effusions on the benefits of revolution, yet as American statesman and man of power he was restrained, moderate, and thoroughly unradical. Like his great antagonist, Alexander Hamilton, Jefferson was at his best when he was being least ideological. Fortunately, that was his more characteristic style. Something of a true believer in his study, Jefferson through most of his long career in public life was an operational pragmatist.

He was also, and not incidentally, an American exceptionalist: Europe, buried in the follies of the past, might require cataclysmic purging, but America, born free and innocent, could escape the past's errors and thus its terrible judgments. (One can see here how the sense of innocence had, for all its costs, some occasional benefits for American thought and action.)

Along with their judicious mixture of idealism and realism—the perception that any hope for human progress must be based on the most severe acknowledgment of human limitation—the men of the revolutionary era may offer us at least one other fundamental lesson: a sense of limits. Limited government meant for eighteenth century republicans not simply a government that acted within certain constitutional limitations; it meant as well a government restricted in scope and ambition. Government must be restrained because of its tendency to tyranny, and also because of the limits of its capabilities. America's founders wanted a government at once energetic and circumscribed, one that would commit itself to stability, national honor, and general prosperity, but that would at the same time not extend itself beyond the proper limits set by human fallibility and the right of individual self-fulfillment.

We can of course recreate neither an eighteenth-century world nor an eighteenth-century polity. Things have in the meantime grown enormously large and out of control and government has in significant part *had* to grow in order to keep pace. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. had it basically right almost thirty years ago when he noted that the modern age *forces* us to organize beyond our moral and emotional capacities.

Still, a healthy sense of the limits of any given institution should encourage us to decentralize wherever possible and, beyond that, to promote as extensive a pluralistic system of control over people and situations as can possibly be achieved,

even, where necessary, at some cost of efficiency and coherent planning. (In any case, pluralism and individual initiative are not necessarily less efficient than overhead planning; Adam Smith's theories have their definite limits in an oligopolistic world, but they are not entirely wrong.)

We will in general be better off if government does fewer things, and does them well, than if it continues to try to do too much and so blunders everywhere. In terms of helping those who cannot fully help themselves, this would seem to indicate a general emphasis on overall economic growth (by which all benefit) and, where more specific help is required, a preference for direct income supplements rather than an extensive range of services.

iii

IT IS AN ODD TIME FOR America to be holding a national celebration. Probably never in our history has the national mood been more uneasy, the national temper more edgy, than in recent years. America has lost its self-confidence and with that, to some extent, its will. If the revolutionary generation occasionally showed a tendency to cosmic optimism, our current temptation is to cosmic pessimism.

The significant point about the state of the national temper at any time is that it is never determined simply by the objective national condition. Estimates of the state of the nation are always filtered through the subjective perceptions of the public. Depending upon what the observer chooses to record as noteworthy, almost any given moment can be seen as the best of times, the worst of times, or anything in-between. There is no objective method for drawing up a national balance sheet. Our expectations, our sense of the possible, determine at any time our reaction to the world of events.

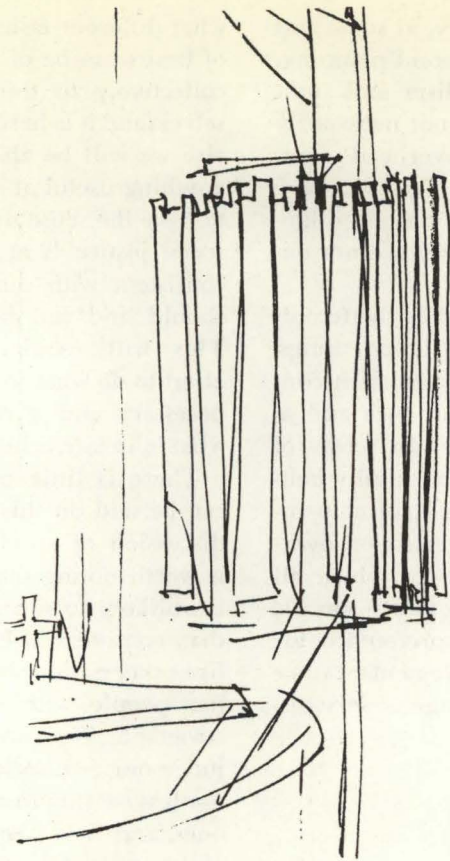
It is here again, though in a some-

what different fashion, that a sense of limits can be of value. If we are collectively to think well of ourselves (and it is hard to imagine how else we will be able to accomplish anything useful at all) we will have to have the sense that our record of social justice is at least minimally consistent with our sense of what should and can be accomplished. This will require both genuine effort to do what we think right and necessary and a realistic sense of what is, in fact, achievable.

There is little more useful that can be said on this point except in discussion of specific cases, but it is worth noting that moral realism is unlikely to develop in a society that considers itself not a nation like other nations but rather a peculiar people with a special moral covenant. We ought to learn to judge our own society neither more nor less harshly than we judge other ones, and it is simply an inversion of the myth of innocence to suppose that our recent national calamities have made of us a particularly evil or foolish people.

The revolutionary experience might help us here. The men of that era accomplished great things and we do well to honor their memory and example. But they were not demigods. The age of the Revolution is, as any age, replete with examples of folly, greed, cowardice, selfishness, and stupidity. That part of the record is worth recalling as well (though in perhaps less nasty a fashion than Gore Vidal has accomplished in *Burr*), not in order that we sell ourselves morally short but that we judge our current situation without illusions and with all the honesty, courage, wisdom, and clarity that we can muster.

Our innocence is gone—and well gone—but it would be a great public benefit if we could, without deluding ourselves, recover some of the energy, optimism, and will that, in those prelapsarian days, also characterized our national life. It is, in the end, in the recovery of those qualities that our hopes for revival must lie. ❖



TEMPLE-CLEANSING

WALTER E. KELLER

Walter E. Keller is chairman of the Department of Theology, Valparaiso University.

INI

TEMPLE-CLEANSING IS DANGEROUS BUSINESS. Jesus found that out. There is always a Temple-establishment who cannot conceive that anything is amiss with our Temple, who imagines that the slightest suggestion of filth to be cleaned away is an affront to the honor of God, and who take immediate steps to deal with any blaspheming Temple critic. What sign do you give us to prove your authority to cleanse the Temple? Said Jesus: Destroy this Temple—and in three days I will raise it up. The sign which Jesus offers requires the destruction of the Temple. You may imagine that God's good and gracious presence among men is guaranteed by the Temple. But you are wrong. If God once resided in the Temple, he lives there no longer. So destroy the temple. Only so will you see the sign of Jesus. For it is the body of Jesus which is now the dwelling place of God. And God who dwells bodily in Christ is graciously released in the destruction, the crucifixion of his sinless body for us sinners. And his resurrection is the sign that God in Christ is the God for us. The true worship of God is to have faith in this Word made flesh.

The message of Jesus' resurrection is a message against the Temple. The Temple is empty: no gracious God lives there—unless the cleansing Christ be there. Stephan was also accused of speaking against this holy place. What had he said? He said: the Most High does not dwell in houses made with hand. And they stoned him. He preached unto them Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And they stoned him. But the risen Lord appeared to the dying Stephan to received his spirit.

TEMPLE-CLEANSING IS DANGEROUS BUSINESS. Church-reforming is more dangerous yet. Rebuking Synods most dangerous of all. Have you perhaps ever wondered what might happen, if you tried to cleanse the Temple today? You would probably be met by horrified looks at the very thought that something in our Temple required cleansing. They might pass some Temple resolutions proving that you are a false teacher. Conceivably they might publish periodicals to advertise that you speak against the fathers and even God. They might even stone you with labels like Christian, or Lutheran, or Gospel-reductionist.

Temple-cleansing is indeed such dangerous business, that you had better not try it, unless you are prepared to entrust your dying spirit to the risen Christ.

THE HAPPY-FAMILY AND THE SINGLE MAN

One of the most overlooked factors which reaches into our image of family life and leaves an indelible mark on it is the media. Television, movie, and advertising portrayals of families, while perhaps entertaining, are often simplistic, inaccurate, and debasing. Little is known as to the real effect of these messages on existing and future families, but it is thought to be far-reaching.

Larry and Kim Norton, "The Christian Family: The Gift of God," *The Cresset*.

IT WAS NOT CLEAR WHAT this blissfully single man could contribute to *The Cresset* symposium on the Christian family until the Nortons' thoughtful article alerted me to my gift. As a student of media, I could examine those "simplistic, inaccurate, and debasing" images of the family which move through the media, especially the mass medium, television. More importantly, as a single man I might be able to bring a perspective to those images of family life which families watching them may lack or forget or deny.

A single man is, after all, a deviant and possibly more attuned to the images of family life which pervade our society. Various escalating families—from "The Valparaiso University Family" to "The Porter County Family" to "The Family of Man"—appeal to him to redouble his alms and efforts. The "Whole Family at NIPSCO" wishes me a Merry Christmas with my November electric bill, though NIPSCO workers seem to me even less like a family than Charles Manson's. Many apparently wonder whether Patty Hearst was or was not a member of the SLA family. Family images breed in our society in ways I should find offensive were I a family man, and I am not too crazy about them

Richard Lee is Associate Professor of English and Humanities in Christ College, Valparaiso University.

as a single person who believes families are all right in their place. Only a father and mother and their children make that place. It is especially gracious if a grandmother and grandfather can be there too.

The single person is, I repeat for emphasis, sensitive to all the family images coming down in our society because of his deviancy. One is, at root, not "single" in our society; he is "unmarried" or, more poignantly, he "never married." Marriage is the unquestioned norm from which one deviates much as colorlessness is the apparent racial norm from which "colored" people deviate. Marriage and family are no more considered one way of life among others any more than white people could be considered bleached. I am by no means raising a banner for the liberation of single people, though we could do with much less misplaced pity. Rather, I am simply offering my deviancy from the unexamined norm in this series as a possibly useful perspective on the subject. Among Christians single people are no less concerned for the health of families than families are concerned for the health of single people. There may be some theological justification in my offering my gift of deviancy to a symposium on the Christian family. I note that the fallen Adam was given a family for his consolation but the second Adam was given singleness to be the man for others.

WHEN A SINGLE PERSON turns on his TV he sees those "simplistic, inaccurate, and debasing" patterns of family life too, but he also sees that *nearly all of TV programming is taken over by family patterns*. On his viewing of TV he could believe the American family is as troubled as the theological and journalistic concern for it would lead him to believe. Certainly the American people presently appear insatiably in need of family images on their mass medium, and I take it they are needed for moral support.

To explain what I see on TV requires a little technical discussion of its most rapidly growing formula, the Happy-Family. This formula has long been the mainstay of TV programming because the family is the lowest common denominator of human experience. We all (even single people) come from families and most of us willy-nilly end up in families of our own. The Happy-Family formula is thus in touch with the majority human experience and ready-made for a mass medium. On Television, whose primary purpose is to win the most customers it can for its programs and the products they promote, the Happy-Family formula is a pattern of human relationships which reflects the family in a flattering, cheering, and consoling way and reaffirms American family values perhaps more vigorously than we do ourselves.

The Happy-Family formula started in domestic comedies in the early days of television.¹ In broad terms the pattern requires an authoritative father, a counseling mother, and growing offspring who need their services of authority and counsel. He *knows* and she *solves*. The domestic comedy pivots on the never-failing remedying of something wrong in the family, and the family prevails through those trials which usually only families create for themselves. What is often most "inaccurate" in the image is not that the domestic comedy families are so foolish and foibled but that they triumph so famously. There are few troubles which cannot be overcome by the love and labor and luck of the authoritative father, the counseling mother, and the offspring who may have a precocious wisdom of their own. The TV family is an erratic but efficient problem-solving machine; what distinguishes it from the Christian family is that only the latter ever needs to bear sin with grace.

The Happy-Family pattern started in domestic comedies but it did not rest content there. During the last fifteen years the pattern has enveloped more and more TV shows, some of which have no natural or blood-related families in them but still center on characters who *perform the functions* of the authoritative father, the counseling mother, and their offspring. The pattern widened its range slowly, first by making whole families out of broken families. By the mid-sixties several wifeless husbands were rearing the Happy-Family on TV, and less frequently a few husbandless wives.

1. Years ago we watched *Ozzie and Harriet*, *I Love Lucy*, *Life of Riley*, *One Man's Family*, *Leave it to Beaver*, *Father Knows Best*, *I Remember Mama*, and many more. Today the Happy-Family pattern continues in domestic comedies like *Happy Days*, *Good Times*, *The Jeffersons*, *Swiss Family Robinson*, *Little House on the Prairie*, *The Waltons*, and *All in the Family* among others. Such variety as these series achieve depends upon setting the family in different racial, ethnic, economic, and historical settings.

The families were typically broken by the death of the absent parent before the series went on the air, but after a few episodes the families may as well have been broken by divorce or desertion. These programs were obviously in touch with many *real* broken families in the audience in ways in which the earlier and traditional domestic comedies were not.²

THE BROKEN TV FAMILIES of the sixties and early seventies were made whole, or nearly so, by a substitute character who performed most of the functions of the missing family member. Typically no sexual attraction attached to the substitute character so that the primary blood-related characters were unthreatened. Thus, we could watch a wifeless husband rearing *My Three Sons* with the help of a very domesticated in-house uncle, usually clad in an apron to make sure we saw that the father wore the pants. Or in *Family Affair* the butler, similarly apron-bound, could take the softer counseling mother role. (I here forego a digression on the image of the middle-aged single man on TV—almost always a likeable dolt—in order to hold the focus on the family image.) In *The Courtship of Eddie's Father*, where the promise of a stepmother for Eddie was the premise of the series, a safely de-sexed, elderly Oriental housemaid functioned as the counseling mother until the stepmother should arrive. The epitome of programs restoring the broken family in the early seventies was *The Brady Bunch* wherein a widower and widow marry and make a new family for their prodigious

2. Realism in the popular arts is, of course, a complex question. In TV I look for realism in the patterns of human relationships in the programs and not necessarily in the setting, decor, costumes, and language. In a program like *Good Times*, these latter aspects may be realistic but the pattern of human relationships is WASP and thus unrealistic to the situation of a black ghetto family. Contrarily, an utterly fanciful program like *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir* may be very realistic in the pattern of human relationships surrounding a single woman rearing her children alone.

brood of children. Bizarre programs at nearly the same time showed that a man might marry a witch or be beset by a genie, but the weirdest domestic comedy restoring the broken family in the late sixties was *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir*. There a husbandless wife rears her children with the ghost of a long-dead sea captain serving as the authority figure for the fatherless family. The restoration of the family with substitute parent-figures was the key to the audience appeal of these programs. In the middle seventies, when wifeless husbands tried to rear their families *without* clear and present mother-figures, their programs died. *Joe and Sons* and *Three for the Road* failed to pay homage to Mom and the Happy-Family and paid the price. Everyone knows that the single man cannot make it on his own.

In the early seventies the Happy-Family pattern widened its gorge more voraciously. Now the pattern gobbles up single women on sight and sets them into situations where they create substitute families with an odd assortment of characters surrounding them at their residences and work. I consider this placing of single women "in a family way" one of the more bizarre eruptions in popular culture at this time, and I am not sure a single man is up to an analysis of it. Perhaps help will arrive when single women contribute to this symposium on the family and speak for themselves. Meanwhile, I think none of us a decade ago could have forecast the present TV season with nearly a dozen shows simply titled with a woman's name.³

THE WAY THE HAPPY-FAMILY pattern envelops the single girl—widowed, divorced, or "never married"—can be demonstrated by a brief analysis of the pattern of human relationships in the popular

3. *Rhoda*, *Phyllis*, *Maude*, *Fay*, *Mary Tyler Moore*, *Sara*, *Mary Hartman*, *Kate McShane*, *Laverne and Shirley*, and *That Girl*, give or take a few cancellations and replacements. I omit *Cher* and *The Bionic Woman* since my concern here is for human beings in some human scale and proportion.

Mary Tyler Moore show.⁴ Ms. Moore herself documents the burgeoning Happy-Family on TV in her acting career. Originally she played the counseling mother in a natural family domestic comedy, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*; her shift to her own show, with her own name, about a single woman who creates her own substitute family, gave the impetus to several similar shows which followed. Mary is the mother clone of the single girl domestic comedy, and I suspect the cat in her MTM Production logo has at least nine lives.

In *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* Mary is obviously the central character; she is perpetually virgin as Little Orphan Annie, but the pattern of human relationships radiates from her as the counseling mother. The supporting players serve less as foils to highlight her talents as a career woman and more to perform familial functions around her motherhood. Before she was spun-off into a show of her own, Rhoda, then another "working girl," functioned as Mary's daughter and brought her problems "home" to Mary. To preserve the family atmosphere, the early shows in the series showed Rhoda more in Mary's apartment than her own, and both lived not in an impersonal urban apartment complex but in a charming old house on a tree-lined street in a midwestern neighborhood. The iconographics were practically identical with *Father Knows Best*.

Mary's boss, Lou Grant, is the authoritative father and sometimes the Archie Bunkerish parody, the authoritarian father. He is the strong, sometimes crude, male presence in the show and is severely contrasted with Ted Baxter about whom we have some doubts. Often Mary must protect Ted maternally from

4. Horace Newcomb's *TV: The Most Popular Art* guides me in these paragraphs. Readers of that splendid little book will note where I depart from Newcomb, but I would be ungrateful if I did not acknowledge the usefulness of his approach and the general excellence of his essay in my own.

Mr. Grant's patriarchal wrath.⁵ Murray, Mary's colleague at the news-writing desk, is never-faithfully helpful in the manner of a brother to Mary and a reality-testing Dutch uncle to Ted. The self-centered and insecure Ted suffers the typical conflicts of an adolescent son, and often this most assertive member of the family is also the most vulnerable and in need of protection. Indeed, since his recent marriage to Georgette, Ted still comes "home" to mother Mary for counsel in his marital problems, notably of late impotence and sterility.

Mary lives a single life set in a non-traditional family, and the pattern of human relationships in her whole life at home and at work centers upon her as the counseling mother. My point in this brief analysis of one program, which could be done for other single girl shows with interesting variations, is that the Happy-Family pattern has enveloped other TV programs besides the traditional natural family domestic comedy. "Family viewing time" is not necessarily from seven to nine in the evening when we see bad stories about good people, then tuck the kids in bed so we can watch good stories about bad people. Family viewing time—the time for viewing families—is almost anytime on TV. More on this Happy-Family invasion of TV after a brief message.⁶

5. A good friend, who refuses to be called a "working girl" unless she can call me a "working boy," observes that Mary never calls Lou Grant "Lou"; while he never calls her any more than "Mary," she never calls him any less than "Mr. Grant." My friend is sensitive to these things as a career woman and understands that formality politically is a sign of female subjection. I view it psychologically as a way of keeping the essentially married relationship of Lou and Mary from coming uncomfortably close to the surface and disturbing the audience. Single people agree with each other no more than married people do.

6. Advertisements, as the Nortons suggest, are also "images of family life." My unscientific guess is that nearly a third of TV commercials show part or all of the Happy-Family pattern behind their products. The authoritative father-figure Mr. Goodwin

WHAT IS THE MESSAGE IN the stretching and grasping Happy-Family pattern on TV? The Nortons believe that the effects of the messages on TV are far-reaching, and I would agree if we see TV as a chronic reinforcer of American family values and rarely the values of the Christian family.⁷ I suggest *the messages on television are the formulas for the programs* and little of social significance is reflected on TV until there is a change in the formulas. For the past decade and more the Happy-Family pattern has expanded in order to embrace patterns of life and persons who would be unsettling to the majority of viewers. The Happy-Family formula defuses the threat of novel patterns of life by banalizing them and submerging them in a comfortable and familiar pattern of human relationships.⁸

To be sure, a single girl who makes it on her own is not terribly threatening to family values (blink an eye and she is a working wife), but I can imagine wives and mothers who would not want their daughters

knows the right fluoride toothpaste for mothers to buy for their children; the counseling mother-figure Mrs. Olson *solves the problem* of the wretched coffee with a better brand, and so on. These instant domestic comedies more importantly sell a pattern of human relationships than their products.

7. I use the expression "the Christian family" in harmony with the language of this symposium, but I am not sure there is a Christian family any more than there is a Christian trade union or political party. The family cannot be baptized, though persons surely can be. Heads remain clear on this subject if we speak of the "family of Christians."

8. The absorption of threatening figures into the Happy-Family pattern began in the late sixties with *Mod Squad*. At that time young black radicals, moody white male non-conformists, and female flower-children were seen by many as a threat to their values, or at least to their prejudices and privileges. But that threat was defused when three of these types were put into a family pattern under an authoritative father (their parole officer) and set to work affirming the "system" they appeared to be attacking. *Mod Squad* re-runs in my viewing area and holds up well as a domestic comedy-adventure series even if its subliminal resolutions of sixties tensions are no longer felt or needed by present viewers.

to watch program after program showing a way of life other than their own most attractively. It is, I suspect, not so much men but wives and mothers who feel most threatened by women's liberation, for hell hath no fury like a woman scorned upon by another woman. Therefore it is important that the Happy-Family safety curtain falls between the character of the single girl on TV and the family audience. Now everybody is pleased and the series survives. The independent woman on TV succeeds with style, satisfaction, and ultimately less and less audience amazement—but she only makes it if the audience can hold her subliminally in the familiar family pattern.⁹

The Happy-Family takeover of TV is not limited to single women programs. Happy-Family westerns like *Bonanza* and *Gunsmoke* in the sixties are in process of being supplanted by Happy-Family detective shows. The professional dramas—principally about male lawyers and doctors—are also often robed and smocked in the family formula. There the professional is set into a family pattern in which he plays the authoritative father. Typically he has no natural family so he can be more available to his clients or patients and, I suspect, to female viewer fantasies.¹⁰ This

9. The proliferation of single women's stories in the popular arts today is not unprecedented. In the forties, movies unkindly called "women's weepies" enjoyed extraordinary popularity. During the war many women bereft of fathers and husbands away at the front were forced into independent roles, including the strange new role of the working woman. Consolation for that plight could be had in films which showed a woman succeeding independently for about ninety per cent of the film and then falling back into the care of a man at the end. What distinguishes the seventies from the forties is that the latter independent woman, if she remained independent to the end of the picture, was miserable and often went mad. In the popular arts it makes little difference if the work arouses tears of joy or sorrow. Either way the consumer transcends herself for a little while.

10. I do not discount male viewer fantasies. A physician tells me he likes to fantasize himself as the omniscient doctor he could be if, like Marcus Welby, he treated only one patient a week.

TV season the lawyer programs are in some eclipse, probably due partly to the Watergate fall-out which leaves audiences less inclined to believe in the integrity and authority of lawyers, but the doctor programs are holding up well, including a few parodies. To rehearse the Happy-Family dynamics in all the appropriate shows would take us too far into specialist intrigues, but a brief analysis of *Marcus Welby, M.D.* may serve to counterpoint the earlier analysis of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*.

It is fitting that Robert Young, head of the natural family domestic comedy *Father Knows Best* in the fifties, now stars as the authoritative father in the Welby series. Now he *knows the right* medical advice for his patients and treats them with a combination of clinical expertise and fatherly compassion. The iconographics of the two shows—twenty years apart—are remarkably similar (though Jim Anderson only followed the medical profession by selling life insurance) in their family imagery. Welby keeps his practice in his home, lives modestly in a medium-sized town, drives a middle-priced car, makes house calls, penetrates deeply into the moral and spiritual lives of his patients, and never seems to collect a fee. I should say his image is not only fatherly but pastoral, except that he has no saving message. The Welby series does little more than reinforce the attitude that problems are solved by putting them into the hands of experts and that we are a nation of clients with few responsibilities. The vision of health in the Welby series—and I salute it for the breadth of vision it does sometimes achieve—is very limited. "Marcus Welby" is a magical name—Patients: "Mark us!"; Doctor: "Be well!"—and just about sums up the show.

Doctors and lawyers authoritatively father non-traditional families of clients on TV, but they also deal with natural family tensions in a similarly subliminal way within the healing team. The family dy-

namics of the Welby series, particularly between Welby and Kiley, cannot be fully understood without marking the historical context of the series. *Marcus Welby, M.D.* is a reaction to sixties programs like *Dr. Kildare* and *Ben Casey*. In the sixties, older professionals were hard at work rearing younger professionals, as fathers to sons, and reflected the national preoccupation with troublesomely questing youth at the time. Old Dr. Gillespie was making a fatherly doctor of young Dr. Kildare; old Dr. Zorba was making a fatherly doctor of young Ben Casey; and on the legal and law enforcement beats with *The Defenders* and *Ironsides*, among other programs, widower E. G. Marshall was making a fatherly lawyer out of Robert Reed, and crippled *Ironsides* was making a policeman out of Mark, the angry young black who dutifully pushed his wheelchair by day and went to college by night.

Week after week TV audiences were consoled by seeing the generation gap closed by wise fatherly professionals. Parents who knew not where their children were at the hour nevertheless could look in upon another Happy-Family. While the professional shows in those days were male-centered and rather male-supremacist, a regular counseling mother-figure appeared under the guise of a nurse or secretary to point out the essentially loving relationship between the two professionals when the generations gapped and to remind them of their wider family of patients or clients in need of their fatherly care. The younger professional was often more technically up to date and socially concerned, but the older professional was wiser in the ways of the heart and more personally concerned. You wanted Dr. Kildare to remove your gallstones, but you wanted Dr. Gillespie by your bedside when the ether wore off.

Marcus Welby, M.D. modifies this sixties Happy-Family pattern considerably. As Americans moved further to the right politically and

culturally in the early seventies, the older professionals on TV substantially increased their authority—to the lessening of the authority and sometimes the disappearance of the younger professionals. The psychodynamics were, I believe, essentially a resurgence of *Papa ist alles*. Certainly a greater authority for the fathers was loosed subliminally in the TV shows which survived, and the “unyoung, unblack, and unpoor” rose in TV prominence roughly commensurate with the ascent of Richard Nixon and Spiro Agnew. (At the same time detective shows saw the emergence of the older, rougher ethnic—Banacek, Kojak, Columbo, and others—as the hero.) In the professional shows we were no longer drawn to the social awareness, sensitivity, earnestness, and skills of the younger man, the son. Rather we were drawn to the country wisdom, stability, rectitude, and skills of the older man, the father. It gradually became apparent that Dr. Welby, not Steve Kiley, would hold the center of the series; Dr. Kiley was even married off this season, loosening the father-son bond, something unimaginable for *Dr. Kildare*. The lessening of the family relationship between the professionals, led by the Welby series into many of the professional programs on TV, has generally been accompanied by a heightening of their fatherhood toward their patients and clients. Even TV detective teams are becoming fatherly toward victims of crime.

This single man is by no means suggesting that the Happy-Family pattern has taken over all of TV (late-night movies often redeem the glut), but I do believe the pattern dominates. When the Welby series was recently pre-empted for six weeks, the replacement was a nighttime soaper called—you guessed it—*Family*.¹¹ No one needs to be leaguer the networks for more “family programs.” As things stand, families have a disproportionate share of the medium reflecting family life now.

WHAT ARE FAMILIES, ESPECIALLY families of Christians, to make of the TV Happy-Family phenomenon? The Nortons lead us a good distance of the way. They observe that “Today’s media, excellent and challenging in many areas, often falls (*sic*) short of its (*sic*) portrayal of the family,” and they encourage Christian families to discuss and evaluate the TV family images in the light of their own families.¹² I heartily agree that no medium should be passively received and that each should be subjected to discussion and evaluation as often as possible. The mass media must always be transcended lest we become mass men. In Christian families especially I would hope there is much resounding laughter, sending-up the images of the Happy-Family and all its works and ways.

But I think I would go further than the Nortons. It may indeed be

11. The *Family* mini-series exploited audience interest in the PBS *cinema verite* study of the Loud family in *An American Family*. Not incidentally, this single man notes that the Happy-Family pattern is not limited to the fictional part of TV. Some news programs fall into the pattern and stress the familial aspects of the news team. In the Chicago viewing area the best example is *Channel Seven News* in which it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the news team from the Cartwright family on the old Happy-Family western *Bonanza*. First appears the gravest, oldest spokesman, Fahey Flynn, who plays the authoritative father, Ben Cartwright, and is Lorne Green’s look-alike. Next appears Ben’s eldest son, most like his father, level-headed, cool, and able to bear authority when the father is absent. This son, Adam on *Bonanza*, is played by his look-alike, Joel Daly, on the news. The second Cartwright son was Hoss, a somewhat oafish and child-like character. On the news Hoss is played by John Coleman who can handle less important topics like the weather in a comic way while the rest of the family tease him about his weight. Little Joe, the third Cartwright son, was handsome and somewhat impulsive and can be played on the news by John Drury, but most especially by Mike Nolan. This news team works well for Chicago because it looks fundamentally like a warm Irish family. The characters are bound to one another by apparent affection and horseplay, and they bring order and hope out of the news with a blend of authority, excitement, and humor.

12. *The Cresset*, December 1975, p. 21.

helpful to use distorted family images on the media to focus a family discussion of the family, but it is fateful to stop there. The family is “debased” when attention is focused on the family for its own sake without equal attention to the wider world in which the members of the family serve. Christian families especially know that the family which prays together does *not* stay together but scatters to serve in many callings. The Christian family does not turn its members in upon itself but out to the world.

Television glows with images presenting the family as an end in itself and thus pushes one of the more beguiling idols of our day. The Happy-Family formula especially distorts the worldly realms of labor, business, learning, law, medicine, government, the arts, and other vitalities of life which are not necessarily familial in character and which are trivialized when they are submerged in family imagery. The calling of the Christian family in this situation may be for parents to be clearheaded about what is familial in character and what is not and to communicate to their children not only an alternative vision of the family from that mediated by TV but also an alternative vision of the world. God so loved that world that he did not send the family to save it. ■

GIVE

The Cresset

as a gift

Subscription rates:

1 year, \$3.00

2 year, \$5.50

Five or more subscriptions

from one donor:

\$2.00 per year per subscription

WHAT'S NEW IN HISTORY, II: LUTHER BIOGRAPHY

OLD WINE IN NEW SKINS

YOUNG MAN LUTHER. A Study in Psychoanalysis and History.
Erik H. Erikson. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc. c. 1958.

LUTHER.

Richard Marius. Philadelphia, New York: J. B. Lippencot Company. 1974.

(Concluded from *The Cresset*, May 1976)

PROPAGANDA TO THE RESCUE—OR THE CHIP ON THE AUTHOR'S SHOULDER

MARIUS' GOAL IS TO PRESENT THE REAL Luther and to bring him to life; to refute those clerical historians who present the Reformers as "gallant heroes" of civilization and "paladins of sacred truth" (p. 12), who praise Luther instead of burying him (p. 234); to combat "the overwhelming tendency in contemporary Luther studies [both by Protestants and Roman Catholics] . . . to make [Luther] speak words of wisdom to our own embattled age" (p. 249; see also pp. 12, 248); to pull the rug out from under Luther's "insistent demand that we pay attention to him" (p. 254); and thus to destroy the demon-like "dominion" which the past exercises over the present because the past can be so easily translated into myths which are cherished to the degree of veneration by "ordinary people—and some not so ordinary"—because people refuse to think for themselves (pp. 248 ff., 254 f.).

This goal shows in clear terms that the author has little use for Luther, perhaps even no use at all. And so the author brings down his negative judgment upon all those nameless ones who might have seen in Luther anything other than what he himself sees, and threatens all those who might be tempted to disagree with him with an almost apocalyptic vision (see pp. 176, 228, 230, 242, 250 ff., 254). The author lectures all those who either have fallen under the spell of that giant of history, that "great bulk of a name heaving itself out of our past" (p. 254)—Luther—as well as all who consider that Luther and his age had any constructively significant role in the history of mankind. He brings his judgment

down upon almost everyone³⁰ in the sixteenth century—be he Luther's foe or friend; even Catherine von Bora is scathingly dealt with (pp. 184 f.), in order to demonstrate that we deal not with gallant heroes but with "a generation of vipers" who created a "trauma" in the history of civilization that "our ancestors barely survived" (p. 12). And the author does this with much gusto and bravado—one even may say vehemence and fury, two of the author's favorite terms to describe Luther's activities! The way in which Marius presents his arguments is a sign of his engagement—but engagement with what?

By intent, then, the book is an act of iconoclasm, a fact for which all serious scholars have to be grateful to the author. Nothing wrong so far, though details in the author's presentation can be debated.³¹ And yet the author's goal is such a melange of ideas that one cannot discern between primary and secondary goals. The question of the author's engagement has been raised above; it will be pursued by looking at the author's presuppositions. On pp. 11/12, Marius writes:

History is partly autobiography, and any historian owes it to his readers to explain, as best he can, the set of mind that made him write the book he presents for their judgment.

This little book on Martin Luther grew out of my experience with my world and his during the last decade. The United States was involved in a dirty war in Vietnam. I taught students who labored under the shadow of death. Some of them were drafted to fight in a senseless and immoral cause; some of them were killed. . . .

During these bitter years, I was teaching the Ref-

30. Erasmus, Montaigne, Rabelais, and Shakespeare are the exceptions; Marius, *op. cit.*, p. 254.

31. See notes 8-11, 34, 35, 38, 43, 46.

ormation, presenting Martin Luther to young men and women preoccupied with the gloom and frustration of current events. My background in an intensely Christian home had taught me to seek comforting words from the religious past to inspire the present. And so I looked at Luther day after day and night after night with an almost devout intensity. I realized slowly and painfully that he had no word to speak to our time. And in my peregrinations around my state, speaking everywhere I could against the Vietnam War, I found my most hostile audiences in the Christian churches that claimed to be the heirs of the Reformation. Most pious Christians I met wanted to treat the Vietnamese as Luther treated the rebellious peasants: to destroy them without mercy as long as they were in a state of resistance to our sovereign will as a nation. Just after the invasion of Cambodia in 1970 and the massacre of four students by the National Guard on the campus of Kent State University, the Reverend Billy Graham brought Richard Nixon to Knoxville to participate in an evangelistic crusade. In a long prayer, Graham spoke in great detail to God of Nixon's Christian greatness. Some students brought signs saying "Thou shalt not kill" to the stadium, intending to hold them silently on their laps. The signs were confiscated by the police. No one had the right to quote the Bible, even silently, against the preacher.

Such was the end of at least one strand woven from the traditions of the Reformation. Increasingly the Reformation era itself struck me as an age of gallant heroes but rather as a generation of vipers, not one of the great stepping-stones of our civilization but rather a trauma like famine or plague that our ancestors barely survived.

In this passage one finds some of the multitude of generalizations which typify the book.³² Who are the "most pious Christians"? What congregations provided this "most hostile audience"? Does Billy Graham stand for "most pious Christians"? What is the "one strand woven from the traditions of the Reformation"? Billy Graham? How can one combine Luther and Billy Graham? More important than the generalizations based on the author's private poll and assessment would be the question why the author thinks that anyone who is interested in reading a Luther biography would also be interested in fragments of the author's life. Is the author's ego so blown out of perspective that he is convinced that the reader indeed is interested in this information? Or does the author feel the pressing need to inform the reader of these events in order to justify himself and his message? In any case, the author's message comes across as follows:

The Bible is "a motley conglomeration of sublime feeling, glorious prose, exciting history, opaque and meaningless mystery, bloodcurdling superstition and

32. See also above.

Review Essay

simple trash" (p. 39); it is "an absurd collection of folktales and fantasy" (p. 254). "Most of [the biblical writings] remain at odds with the temper of our times" (p. 39). "Hardly anyone reads the Bible anymore," and "consequently, it is nearly impossible to set ourselves in Luther's chair . . ." (p. 38). Modern man has freed himself "from the tyranny of the sacred" (p. 39), so that the Bible and the Christian faith are either bunk or opium embraced by imbeciles who do not know better, or by sentimentalists and romantics who "nod by the fire on a snowy evening" when "the wind sings its song in the chimney and the world beyond our windows lies shut away in the magic isolation of a cold and dark that do not quite touch us." For real people who live "in the heat of open day" the Bible and the Christian faith are meaningless (pp. 250 ff.). Therefore, Luther, too, is meaningless since "at every moment" of his life he was informed by the Bible (p. 38)—one is tempted to add: poor guy, he just didn't know better.

This message demonstrates unmistakably that the author's engagement is not with Luther and the sixteenth century but with himself and his position on religion; Luther is simply the whipping boy for the author's message. This message is simultaneously—to couch it in the author's flowery language—a hymn to skepticism, agnosticism, atheism, or whatever "ism" the reader wishes to use; it is designed also to be a swansong for Christianity. Consequently the author's book is propaganda and the author could have saved the energy necessary to read those thousands of dollars' worth of books in order to write this biography (see above, p. 7). He could better have funneled his energy into writing another novel, since he has been praised for his first novel. Furthermore, a novel, especially if it is utopian in character and well-written, is a better medium for "preaching" than a biography. The author is honest enough, or careful enough, not to presuppose that the Christian faith is already dead and buried; it is meaningless only, ostensibly, for most people (see pp. 250 ff.). There are still enough imbeciles, sentimentalists, and romantics around who need to be straightened out; and so the author wraps his message with scholarly history, which generally impresses people, in an effort to bury at least one of the significant representatives of Christianity—Luther.

ALL THIS RAISES SOME INTERESTING QUESTIONS. One could ask, e.g., whether the author is in *all* things a skeptic who insists upon exact scientific verification prior to accepting something. In his book there is a gap between professed ideal and delivered reality; at least the author does not make his readers privy to this verification process. Or, does the author's disenchantment with the Bible and the Christian faith, or

Review Essay

with "at least one strand woven from the traditions of the Reformation" (p. 12), stem from the fact that "most" Christians (nameless and unverifiable to the reader) did not agree with his view of the Vietnam question? And finally, one might ask the author for some substantiation of his generalizations. I am sure that the author, advocate of scientific verification that he is, would not simply buy a statement to the effect that all or most of those who opposed the U.S. involvement in Vietnam were Communists or anarchists. Yet he expects his readers to buy his generalizations regarding "most Christians" on the one hand and "modern man" on the other. The author completely disregards, e.g., the possibility that these "pious Christians," who opposed his view in the Vietnam question, could have been moved to do so by any motivation other than their Christian commitment. And for the author "modern man" has freed himself from the tyranny of the sacred—or he is not modern! The author can expect us blindly to accept his generalizations only because he is not engaged in the historical task, but in propaganda—which thus emerges as the primary goal, superseding the melange of goals listed above.

In light of these observations, the book cannot be taken seriously if viewed from the point of historical scholarship; actually we could put the book back on the shelf right now. Since the publisher was kind enough to make a review copy available to us, we owe him a detailed review, however. Further, the book raises a problem fundamental to historical scholarship: Can one write a biography if one does not appreciate one's protagonist and what he stands for? The answer must be yes, with the added qualification, that one be sufficiently detached from the self to meet the protagonist on his own terms and those of his times, and not on one's *own* terms. Otherwise the product of one's labors will resemble those pathetic book reviews, usually turned out by beginners, in which a book is not evaluated for what it is, but in which the reviewer tells an author what in his, the reviewer's, opinion, the author really should have done. In preparing and writing a Luther biography it ought not matter one iota whether the author has a feeling for or appreciation of, let us say, the reality of the biblical God, the Word of God, the sacraments, indulgences, etc. If it does matter, as is the case with Marius (see pp. 38 f., 46 f., 69, 102, 107, 250 f.), then an author does not write biography. His efforts do not help us to come to terms with Luther but they certainly do disseminate an author's intellectual, religious, social, political views in the disguise of biography. Those who know the efforts of some of those historians who wholeheartedly had espoused the Nazi philosophy have their fill of this type of historiography.

In my opinion, then, Marius' book is poor not because the author is an iconoclast and the book is critical of Luther; in fact, some of the author's observations and statements are so self-evident that they are beyond debate. Rather, the book is poor because the author lacks scholarly detachment. The author rides his own horse instead of Luther's. He preaches. To say it differently: in my opinion the author defines his task in a way in which a biographer worthy of the historical craft may not do.

Marius is a representative of that utilitarian, educational, moralizing approach to history of which Hegel spoke when he lamented that peoples and governments really never learn anything from history. Today so-called "radical historians"—or historicizing radicals—are trying to push this type of history. In an effort to find value for their models of, and alternatives for, socio-political action they ransack history to find mirror images. Once having found these supposed parallels and being convinced they and only they have *all* the right answers, they make value-judgments on the basis of the models and alternatives which they had established before they started to ransack history (see pp. 12 f., 248). They judge history as they think it could or should have been on the basis of what should or could be today or tomorrow. One can almost hear Marius sigh: What . . . if Luther had not at every moment been influenced by that terrible book called the Bible? (See e.g., p. 78.) Since Marius is enough of a historian to realize that this sigh would get him nowhere he has no choice but to declare Luther and his generation "a generation of vipers" (p. 12), and see in the Reformation "not one of the great stepping-stones of our civilization but rather a trauma like famine or plague" (*ibid.*). But—who considers the Reformation such a great stepping-stone in civilization anyway? Is not the Renaissance "generally" considered to be this stepping-stone? With these considerations of the author's goal and the presuppositions in mind I turn to the image of Luther that the author develops.

MARIUS' LUTHER PORTRAIT—OR OLD WINE IN A NEW SKIN

THE PORTRAIT THAT MARIUS PRESENTS of Luther's life is sketchy, and the book is not a biography in the technical sense of the word; whether the book is a "penetrating intellectual biography," as the jacket-text tells us, depends on one's understanding of this term and on a comparison of this book with, e.g., the first part of Koestlin's *Theology of Luther*. In any case, Marius zeroes in on *some* events, writings, and concepts, and the rest falls by the wayside. For the period up to approximately 1522 one can detect a narrative; for the period from 1522/23 to 1546 the author jumps from one topic to the other with the narrative restricted mostly to political history.

THE AUTHOR AFFIRMS THAT THERE IS A watershed in Luther's life which is marked approximately by the years 1522/1525. Yet he is nebulous on this issue, for he can also argue as if this watershed begins as early as 1520, or more precisely, with Luther's book *On Christian Freedom*. In this book the author detects a "brief, giddy flirtation with spontaneity," namely, Luther's concept of the priesthood of all believers; but he also detects advocacy of institutionalized tyranny, namely, Luther's affirmation that the endurance of any kind of social conditions is God's will (see pp. 139 f.). While the author has little use for the Luther of the period prior to the Peasants' War and the controversy with Erasmus, he has even less use for the Luther of the period after these dates (pp. 209-256, with about two pages taken up by comments on Zwingli, ten pages by the topic "Luther and the Jews," sections of many pages by narrative of political history, and eleven pages by concluding remarks). Thus Marius radicalizes the neglect of the "old" Luther, so common in one-volume Luther biographies.³³

Worthwhile noting in this connection is the fact that Marius pushes the division between "young" and "old" Luther back farther than I think has been done in prior biographies. He pushes it at least to the days of the Wartburg Exile (days filled with "restless impatience," "deep melancholy," "horrendous depressions," persecution complexes typical of someone "who believed so fiercely in his divine mission," and the frustration of someone who feels his leadership role jeopardized; pp. 160 f.) and the Wittenberg Turmoil. The *Invocavit* sermons constitute Luther's "finest hour" not because of their theological content but because they portray Luther the demagogue at his best, capable of treating his "misguided people as children who had gone astray" and of preaching them "back into submission" (p. 168).

Alas, it was not entirely the Word of God that whipped Luther's opponents into submission. He was supported by the force of the elector. And as Luther preached the power of the Word of God, the elector used the power of the sword to drive into exile or silence all those who had led the disorders. Luther was left in the position he was to occupy for the rest of his life—chief pastor in Wittenberg, leading lecturer at the University, unofficial head of the developing Lutheran Church. And the Reformation had had a taste of what was to come. By making an alliance with princely power, the Lutheran faith was on its way to becoming as stultifying and narrow-minded as the Catholic Church ever had been (p. 169).

This paragraph demonstrates either the author's ex-

33. In addition to the fact that the author has no use for the old Luther, another reason for this neglect might be the fact that in the secondary literature in general the old Luther is neglected.

Review Essay

trema care in pulling off his propagandistic goal, or the author's carelessness as a historian, or perhaps both. Luther was not the chief pastor at Wittenberg. Bugenhagen was. In light of the number of students that passed through Luther's classroom after 1522 as compared with Melancthon's, e.g., the statement that Luther was the *leading* lecturer at the University needs some qualification. Charity commands us to assume that the author knows these circumstances. Yet he ignores them, and thus he is in a position to put the brush stroke marked "autocratic" into his Luther portrait.

Further, Marius leaves us with the impression that there was co-operation "of sorts" (to use one of the author's overworked phrases) between Luther and the Electoral government in suppressing the turmoil and in putting Luther in control of the situation. Was it perhaps a conspiracy? Yet the author is careful enough, or careless and ambiguous enough, not to spell out specifics. It is not *Luther* who enters an alliance with "princely power," but the "Lutheran faith." What is this supposed to be? The content of the *Invocavit* sermons? The content of the 1520 writings? And further, according to Marius, the support Luther supposedly received could have been simply an action of the government parallel to Luther's own efforts but neither coordinated with Luther's efforts nor solicited by Luther. The opposite could also have been the case. While the historian is committed to a search for truth and to precision in expression, the novelist can afford the luxury of factual ambiguity and the propagandist can afford half-truths, or if not half-truths then at least the twilight that serves his purpose.

By 1522/23 "Lutheranism had begun the spiritual retreat so common to revolutionary idealisms that lower their hands from climbing and begin to protect their behinds" (p. 170), and "after 1525 Luther became increasingly a sectarian leader" (p. 209). He suffered from disappointment, loneliness, a persecution complex, fear for his leadership position, and he abandoned all "hope that the *world* was going to be *renovated* by Christians"³⁴ (p. 231, italics mine; see also pp. 173, 192, 198, 234). He compensated for these feelings by verbal outbursts of arrogance toward and hate for everyone under the sun who did not agree with him, by "changing some of his opinions" regarding ecclesiastical institutions in order to make them fit his efforts of consolidating the establishment over which he was presiding, and by becoming "a vigorous preacher of the law" (pp. 219, 230; see also pp. 170, 190, 200, 221, 231, 234). Yet all the way along Luther "still nourished the pathetic hope that [Emperor] Charles would finally see the light and be

34. Did Luther ever have this hope? I doubt it, and the author does not substantiate his statement.

Review Essay

converted" (p. 220).³⁵ The result of this development was that "Luther became ever more conservative, more distrustful of the people, more isolated from the masses, and the Reformation became cast in a rigidity and caution that were hostile to genuine social change" (p. 194). "Luther himself was so tarnished by the peasants' rebellion that he became nothing more than the leader of a sect, and vigorous leadership passed to other reformers and to other movements" (*ibid.*).³⁶ Since toward the end of his life Luther's "power to convince seemed to be gone [why such a timid judgment all of a sudden?], . . . he responded in the way vehement men usually do to such a situation. He raised his voice to a ranting squeal" (p. 232).

This "old" Luther stands "in some sort" of contrast to the "young" Luther. He "seemed tolerant, patient, and good-humored" (p. 77), and he had the potential for being "a witty, warmhearted . . . theologian debating calmly and easily certain propositions [at Heidelberg in 1518] . . ." (p. 78); he had confidence, was even "exuberantly hopeful . . . and believed that [the] spirit in the Christian's heart was sufficient to let him live by the gospel alone" so "that the world was going to be renovated by Christians" (pp. 230 f.). But alas—Luther changed.

This, then, is the frame of Marius' Luther portrait and it is nothing new. The author serves us the old wine, well-known since the days of Zwingli, e.g., or at least since the days of certain liberal historians. He provides a new skin, his racy prose and self-admitted temptation to verbal exuberance. Since the author does not give us any detailed evidence for his view of the Wittenberg Turmoil, e.g., one is expected simply to accept his view. Other views are possible, however, and have been more carefully substantiated than is the author's view. The author would, of course, reject these views as those held by "clerical historians" who try to praise Luther, and would be unbothered by the fact that this is not always the case.

35. The author does not substantiate his argument that after 1521 Luther held the hope that Emperor Charles would be *converted*, and I doubt that the author could do this. If Luther had any hope at all regarding the Emperor, it most probably would have been the hope that the Emperor would *tolerate* the evangelicals, and this is totally different from the hope for conversion. Further, the author does not make clear why Luther supposedly nourished such a hope. One must assume, however, that the author intends to say that by means of this expected conversion Luther could have felt more secure, perhaps even been elevated to an evangelical pope "of sorts."

36. Marius makes this generalization even though in the previous sentences he chastises "most leading reformers" for lining up with the political establishment against the "wolves, . . . those classes wanting to change things." In the quotation above he sees some "other" reformers exercise some other kind of vigorous leadership. Whom is he talking about? Leadership of what? Or of whom?

Whether in light of the work of Franz Lau one may accept as gospel truth the author's unqualified statement that as a result of the Peasants' War Luther was finished is highly dubious. But then in the author's eyes, Franz Lau would also be one of those clerical historians who try to keep Luther's good reputation alive; that this assumption is extremely shaky would bother the author not at all. And finally, since the author is fascinated by and disturbed with the fact that the Reformation was not socially progressive in the way he understands the term, the author ought to make clear why the Reformation ought to have been socially progressive in the first place, or why Lutheranism ought to have produced "a revolutionary faith" (see also pp. 175, 199). Otherwise he gets himself into a position where he contradicts himself; for in his analysis of the concerns which motivated the young Luther he—correctly—emphasizes that Luther was motivated by religious and theological concerns to the exclusion of concerns pertaining to the economic or administrative conditions of the papal church, i.e., of social concerns (see pp. 27, 54, 66 ff., 76 ff.). The author would feel comfortable in this position were he to become aware of it, because it is for him a foregone conclusion that religion and theology must be judged in terms of their value for social or political progress. How the author expects to substantiate from sources his sketch of the characteristics of the young Luther remains his secret; anyone who knows the evidence will realize that the author moves at this point in the world of phantasy.

The author's sketching of the characteristics of the personality of the old Luther is in part to the point, in part boring, but it is by no means as new as the author wishes us to think. Whether the total image of Luther's personality that one sees emerging on the basis of this frame does justice to old man Luther the reader will have to judge for himself on the basis of a rereading of Luther. Regarding the author's statements about the exuberance of the young Luther it must suffice to point out that, in my opinion, the author reads the evidence in a one-sided way. The same must be said for the author's contention regarding the *change* in Luther's position on matters of ecclesiastical institutions—clarification is one thing, change is something else again. And to argue that the *old Luther became* a vigorous preacher of the law and to contrast that preacher to the young Luther (p. 230) is either a sign of ignorance regarding the young Luther, or of reading the evidence in the light of one's goals and presuppositions, or of constructing history to fit one's pattern, or of all of these. Within this frame the author develops his Luther portrait. What are its features?

The Features

AFTER ALL THAT HAS BEEN SAID THUS FAR it might be surprising to the reader to find out that Marius tries to give a balanced picture of Luther. The

Review Essay

Reformer appears not only as villain. Marius does find certain positive elements in Luther. That Marius' efforts in this respect are half-hearted and that his tendency is to cause his Luther image lopsidedly to lean into the direction of the villain is beside the point. In order to do justice to Marius' Luther image one must keep in mind, then, that the author does make some positive statements about Luther, the man and his work.

According to Marius Luther was "never" an eschatologically oriented "fanatic" (p. 105) but tried to steer a middle course between zealous world denial and blind world affirmation (p. 231). Luther had a rather pessimistic view of the moral qualities of princes; he did not simply bow to them or assign divine status to them, but "fearlessly" told them off (pp. 122, 175). Luther was one of the "bravest men" alive (p. 145) and "performed a stupendous task" (p. 134). Luther was not a "little mind" (p. 130) and had a "superb gift for language" (p. 162); in fact, he "was one of the most gifted men our culture has ever produced" (p. 19); "he looked at the commonly accepted religious life of his time in a critical and inventive way. (Not many of us are able to do the same.)" (p. 134). The Reformer "only sought to redefine the old, not to create something entirely new," and in this gradual approach to the issues "much to his own genuine amazement, he was set adrift from the ancient communion of the Catholic Church" (pp. 135, 75). Luther was not "consciously dishonest in his approach to Scripture" (p. 187), and he "always has the mark of deep sincerity stamped on his works, and it is difficult to suspect him of scheming" (p. 226). Luther "was a loyal husband" and a "warmhearted father" (p. 208), and had a good, humane attitude toward nature, sex, family, and common sense (pp. 131 ff., 204 ff., 233). Alas! "The qualities we might genuinely admire—Luther's gentleness to his children, his heartiness, his brilliant gift for language, his blistering wit, his hilarious obscenity—we may find in many another without the evils that Luther hammered into them" (p. 254).

Further, throughout the book one finds material with which one cannot quarrel. Examples of such material are the assessment of late Medieval piety and theology, or of the significance of the religious element (as over against elements of administrative reforms) in the development of the young Luther, or of the Leipzig Disputation. A similar judgment can be made about the analysis of the socio-economic condition of the peasants and the evaluation of Luther's papal opponents. There is very little to say to the author's paraphrases of those portions of Luther's writings which the author chooses to paraphrase since, except for the author's racy prose and occasional comments, these sections remind one of a text book. But one questions the purpose of these paraphrases. They certainly are not paraphrases of the whole text for the purpose of giving a quick orientation. (Should the reader seek this he had better reach for that old stand-by, the first part of Koestlin's *Theology of Luther*.) And they are not careful textual analyses,

or systematic content analyses. They are sketchy summaries with a one-sided emphasis on those elements that serve the author's goal.³⁷ While one may sometimes feel uneasy about the racy prose, this element is not what strikes one when one reads the book. Rather one is struck by a lack of precision, by oversimplifications and omissions, and by a skirting of those points that are at issue in Luther's biography or theology. Regarding some issues the book is not only old wine; it is outdated. Some observations made below must suffice.³⁸

The final feature which must be pointed out in Marius' Luther portrait is that with which we are already somewhat familiar from the discussion of the frame of the portrait, namely, the characterization of the personality and work of the old Luther. The author does not restrict these characteristics to the old Luther, however. They are a part of the total picture and apply to the young Luther as well, just as the author makes certain positive statements about the old Luther, albeit most sparingly. For Marius Luther "felt passionately about most things" (p. 130);³⁹ "he was a man of powerful feeling—almighty hatreds and devoted attachments" (p. 134), and a man of a "vehement" temperament (p.

37. This is especially apparent in the author's treatment of *On Christian Freedom* and *On Secular Authority*.

38. The following page references refer to Marius, *op. cit.* The canon law is not "the constitution of the Roman Church," as the author suggests (p. 63). The problem of the possible influence of the *Devotio moderna* on Luther is totally ignored. Regarding the debate on the posting of the *Ninety-five Theses* the author is apparently not aware that this debate was started by Hans Volz in 1957 and not "in the last decade" (p. 70), i.e., 1963-73, and not by Erwin Iserloh, as the author suggests (*ibid.*). In this debate the author sides with Iserloh (who had argued that Luther never intended the theses to be debated, and therefore never nailed them to the door of the Wittenberg Castle Church, but only mailed them to the Archbishop of Mainz; see also *The Cresset* 31, No. 1 (November, 1967), 8 ff.) because "in that angry mood, [Luther] did what one might expect from one of so vehement a temperament: he fired off a letter. . . ." (p. 72); and further, "the sentiments limiting papal power are repeated several times in slightly different ways in the ninety-five theses. In my opinion this repetition lends credence to the notion that the theses were not designed for true debate, but were a succession of running heads. . . . [They were a] comic-strip theology, though a comic strip of a very high order" (p. 67). How this argumentation is supposed to justify the author's siding with Iserloh is nebulous. And how the evaluation of the content of the theses as *comic-strip* theology is to fit with the picture the author gives of the theses' "vehement" author remains Marius' secret, and this all the more since up to this point the author has said very little if anything about Luther's temperament or character.

The theses of the *Heidelberg Disputation* may not be considered "propositions that had always found shelter, however scant, within Catholic orthodoxy" unless one first qualifies "Catholic orthodoxy," and then clarifies the sixteenth century relationship of orthodoxy and ecclesiastical establishment. — It is highly dubious that by 1519 Luther "had not yet said or published anything to make it impossible to wear a cardinal's hat" (p. 86). It would be possible to accept this statement only if the author had presented a thorough analysis of Luther's position and of that of the ecclesiastical establishment of Luther's day.

Review Essay

72). The Reformer was "fiercely aggressive" (p. 88), and his was the "typical headlong, fighting way" (p. 93). Luther was "a genius with words, always treading to the different drummer pounding a tattoo in his own heart, able in his isolation to grow wild and true to himself" (pp. 36 f.).⁴⁰ Marius' Luther was full of inconsistencies (p. 100), spoke as the moment dictated (p. 101), and changed as he saw fit (see above). Luther "was always a provincial" and "had no sympathy at all with the world of courtesy where gentlemen observe the proper forms and let each other live. He equated tolerance with cowardice, urbanity with hypocrisy, and respect for one's adversaries with lack of conviction" (p. 33). Luther was absolutely certain that God's grace had been granted to him (see p. 144), but he also was an egomaniac who "was never able to tolerate any important experience different from his own" (p. 66). Marius pictures Luther as one driven by a "restless quest for vindication" (p. 84), and hated everyone who got in his way (see p. 156). Luther "believed that God would use him to death" (p. 146); his "mentality was such that he

It is not natural for Luther to have used the Greek text of the Erasmus New Testament for his September Testament, as the author wishes us to believe (p. 162). The situation regarding the basis for Luther's translation is more complicated, and had the author read the secondary literature he could have presented an accurate picture. What "reliable political" ally other than the princes could Luther have had? (P. 228, italics mine.) The bishops? The peasants? Further, the author is careless in choosing his words, for not only were *princes* Luther's reliable allies—if indeed they were—but also the city magistrates; consequently, the appropriate word to use would have been "governments." And, finally, Luther was not so ignorant, or such an egomaniac, to assume that by allying himself with the princes and by supporting them, "he could also *limit* their ferocity" (*ibid.*, italics mine). If the author expects us to accept this, he must produce some evidence.

The author does not substantiate his argument that Luther was possessed by a "consistent hostility to the merchant and banking classes." Further, if this really had been the case, would the reason for it have been Luther's rejection of that "dangerous *instinct for change*" and of that "*ambition for worldly things*" inherent in the capitalistically oriented merchants and bankers—qualities "directly contrary to that spirit of patient, passive, and watchful obedience in Christ" which is the sign of "the suffering of the Christian life"? (Pp. 229 f., italics mine.) Could it not have been that Luther opposed capitalism because he, as a peasant-born "provincial" (see above), was aware of the damage that merchants and bankers could and actually sometimes did inflict upon people?

According to the texts available to me, the supposed very last statement of Luther (in translation) does not read, "We are *still* beggars" (p. 250, italics mine), but "We are beggars."

Turning to matters of Luther's theology and theological biography, it must be pointed out that the author makes short shrift of what is commonly called Luther's monastic struggle by simply declaring that the statements Luther made on this subject in later life to be a good story. ". . . it is difficult to find evidence of a titanic struggle in the written works of the young Luther. . . . He looks very much like a young man of great intelligence, developing his thought in a rather normal and

could never consider human beings to be capable of functioning in an orderly way . . . unless they had some official leader" (p. 119); and—obviously—who felt more capable of filling this leadership role than Luther himself!?

PULLING THESE BITS AND PIECES TOGETHER, adding to them some of the other observations Marius makes throughout the book, and keeping in mind the way in which Marius has characterized the old Luther, one perceives clearly this last feature in the author's portrait of Luther, and this characterization may be summarized as follows:

Although Luther was intellectually highly gifted and religiously committed, he was a typical provincial, uncouth, vehemently passionate, self-centered; he also was an intolerant ideologue of superb linguistic gifts who was able to make himself heard and listened to. He was filled simultaneously with a Messiah complex and a persecution complex which drove him to vindicate himself by attacking, defeating, and eliminating as demonic tools of Satan all who disagreed with him or dared to oppose him, because he considered that their opposition was not directed against him personally but against that God whose tool he felt himself to be. In order to pursue this, Luther developed a program full

undramatic way" (p. 46). Granted that the early sermons and lectures do not furnish evidence of a "titanic struggle." Yet the author's analysis of this material is too thin, superficial (pp. 47-52, 53), and one-sided (he argues as if *humilitas* was the only theme with which Luther dealt in this material) to support his contention that Luther's thought developed "in a rather normal and undramatic way."

That same superficiality may be observed in the author's statement of what is commonly called Luther's breakthrough to the gospel. Here the author repeats what others have developed from the sources. He affirms what is known as the late dating. Until the beginning of the indulgency controversy, Luther held a radicalized medieval *humilitas* theology. During this controversy he put together his doctrine of justification by faith, while discovering—how, we are not told—"some-time in 1518 and 1519 . . . that he had faith" (pp. 54, 95ff., 103). The author's presentation suggests that he is totally unaware of the complexity of this issue. In connection with justification, for example, he does not come to terms with the problem whether justification by faith is an analytic or a synthetic statement (p. 96), a fact from which a direct line leads to his one-sided reading of Luther's ideas on Christian life. And further, the author's presentation suggests that he is totally unaware that the sources do not permit his over-simplified approach to this crucial event in Luther's life. A more thorough analysis of the young Luther's theology, for example, could have helped the author avoid arguing that in young Luther's theology "sin becomes the basis for our *fellowship* with God, since *God will not have anything to do* with those who come to him claiming righteousness" (p. 48, italics mine). One look into the early lectures and sermons or the secondary literature on this material shows at once that the basis for "fellowship" with God is not sin, but God's grace, and that God certainly will have something to do with those self-righteous ones. The question would be only—what? And the answer would be provided by the way in which God acts through his law. Since the author deals only superficially with the theology of the young Luther (the early lectures are not even listed in the index of those of Luther's works which the author discusses) he is able to argue that the late Luther "became a vigorous preacher of the law" (p. 230), or that after 1525 Luther "became more and more preoccupied with the means of grace" (p. 215).

Review Essay

of inconsistencies, and proclaimed it with vehement fury and hate. Since parts of this program appealed to certain elements of the masses and to certain elements of the political establishment, the old order of society went up in smoke and a new order emerged, with Luther autocratically controlling the hearts and minds, and the princes despotically controlling the bodies of the people in a more stultifying and oppressive way than before. Luther's position in the Peasants' War and on the Jewish question are the best illustrations of this characterization.

The way in which the author shapes this characterization leaves no doubt that it is to dominate his Luther portrait, and that it is this characterization that the author wants to fix in his reader's minds. This characterization is not as new as the author wishes us to believe. The author serves us the same old wine offered us in prior years by social analysts and journalists (W. M. McGovern, W. Shirer, E. Kahler), merely pouring it from the new skin provided by his racy prose. What he says has enough truth that one may not simply discard it, but it has not enough truth that one may accept it.

The first point that must be made in this connection deals with the way in which the author presents the externals of Luther's development from being a faithful member of the church to being an outcast. According to

Marius' presentation of Luther's God image is one-sided. Of course predestination, providence, and opaque mystery are a part of Luther's God-experience and image. One may question whether "opaque" (a word the author seems to love, if judged by the frequency of its use) is the best term for describing the mystery of God as Luther experienced it. It is more important, however, to emphasize that there is more to Luther's God-experience than this element suggests.

Throughout the book are statements about Luther's understanding of the term Word of God, and the existence of the Christian, with which statements one cannot quarrel (e.g., pp. 106 f., 138 ff.). At close range it is apparent, however, that the author has not grasped the totality of this element as Luther saw it. Regarding the nature of the Word of God, he does not come to terms with what "clerical historians" and theologians commonly call the Trinitarian nature of the Word and the dialectic of law and gospel. Regarding the nature of the existence of the Christian in this world, as it emerges from the author's comments on Luther's *On Christian Freedom* and *On Secular Authority*, it must be pointed out that the author apparently has never heard of the two-kingdom theory in Luther's theology, and totally ignores Luther's *On Good Works*, as well as Luther's position on idea and reality of the Common Chest.

Since the author does not come to terms with the dialectic of law and gospel and the question of the synthetic or analytic quality of justification by faith, he likewise does not grasp the dynamics of Luther's understanding of the existence of the believer as *simul iustus et peccator*. The result is the author's picture of Luther's understanding of Christian ethics, which is dominated by passivity (see in this note above, the comments on Luther's attitude toward bankers, and also below, note 43), "Luther's beloved *fantasy* [held by the young Luther] that Christians could live with *no laws* at all" (p. 221, italics mine), and the young Luther's hope "that the world was going to be renovated by Christians" (p. 231; see also pp. 173 f., 192 f.), a hope of which the old Luther had abandoned any trace.

The author's views are no more clear than in his comments on Luther's understanding of Christian vocation (pp. 228 f.). The doctrine

of the material presented above, Luther became an outcast because, vehement, aggressive, and hateful as he was, he was driven into a restless quest for vindication (p. 84). Thus, the development from October 31, 1517, to, let us say, January, 1521, must be seen as one grand act of justification of self by demolishing others. Had Luther not been such an egomaniac and had the papacy left Luther alone after he had delivered himself of the *Ninety-five Theses*, history might have developed differently (see also p. 78)!

How does this picture square with the other one in which the author suggests that Luther became an outcast as a result of his scholarly endeavors? On p. 54, the author suggests that on the eve of the controversy over indulgences Luther was slowly working out a new religious-theological concept. Up to this point the author has said very little, if anything, about Luther's personality, except that at the very beginning of his narrative he assured us that Luther was always one of those German provincials (pp. 18, 33 f.). Once the theses were out and questioned for their orthodoxy, Luther was

of vocation can of course be understood as an effort to freeze any social improvements on the part of the individual, and hence as an effort to promote passivity. But it can also be understood as an element stimulating the highest activity on the part of the individual who takes his religious commitment seriously, because it places the day-by-day work into the frame of the God-man relationship and thus of the religious responsibility of the individual. The author works with the first possibility to the exclusion of the second to such a degree that he is not even aware of the alternative possibility of interpreting this doctrine. Anyone who has come to terms with Luther's idea on the concept of "faith active in love" will recognize the one-sidedness of the author's presentation at this point.

And, finally, on p. 101, the author comments on Luther's 1519 sermon on how to die well. "... this sermon on dying does seem quite different in temper from the certainty of faith that Luther was otherwise claiming at the same time, and the effort to make him fully consistent seems strained. . . . Though always in his reflective moments [Luther] considered certainty in faith to be the sign of the true Christian, his own understanding of that certainty wavered with circumstances." And so the author suggests the possibility that "here Luther fell back onto an old idea that if one were too concerned with one's own salvation, one thereby made an idol of oneself and one's destiny." What the author wishes to present to us as a great discovery in reality demonstrates his lack of knowledge of the late medieval *ars moriendi* literature (notwithstanding his references to Biel, More, and Erasmus) and of Luther's theology. What seems to him to be a novelty, namely, the wavering in Luther's faith-certainty, is in reality at the very center of Luther's understanding of faith, and not the result of the dictates of the moment as he argues. The author could have seen this element of *Anfechtung* had he not been in such a great hurry to gloss over Luther's monastic struggle, or had he come to terms with Luther's ideas on the dialectic of law and gospel and on the believer as *simul iustus et peccator*.

39. What is this sentence supposed to mean? Did Luther feel passionately about money, e.g.? Or about his dog?

40. I admit that I cannot make any sense out of this sentence.

Review Essay

forced to substantiate his position and explain it, and thus was forced to ask new questions (p. 76). This began a process of building a "coherent commentary on Church teachings and practice" (*ibid.*). Here we are presented with a picture in which Luther's personality fades totally into the background. While the element of justification or vindication is obviously there, it is shown as having nothing to do with Luther's personality, but rather is restricted to the task of providing scholarly substantiation for the position taken in the theses. The author does not see this discrepancy, nor would he be able to pursue this alternative picture, because he has nailed himself to the model of the German uncouth provincial who "was never able to tolerate any important experience different from his own" (p. 66), and who "did what one might *expect* from one of so vehement a temperament" (p. 72; italics mine)—he exploded. Having once exploded, this "fiercely aggressive" person (p. 88) could not be stopped in his drive for vindication. Thus we are provided with a bridge from one picture to the other by way of a social-character typology which, as the author himself admits, is simply an assumption, an expectation. In light of the author's goal he obviously finds this expectation confirmed, regardless of the evidence from which he was able to draw a totally different picture—and one might add, a picture which is more adequate—when he looks at the evidence while disregarding his assumption.

Further, Luther's literary vehemence is common knowledge, and only apologists try to defend it. The reason for this vehemence is another matter. The author suggests that Luther's provinciality, aggressiveness, leadership complex, autocratic ambitiousness, etc., are the causes. The author seems to ignore the possibility of reaction, however. Could it not have been that Luther simply returned the compliments, so to speak? After all, it was Sylvester Prierias—one of those urbane Italians for whom the author has such high admiration (p. 33 f.), a member of the world of gentlemanly courtesy, of the most distinctive of all the European courts, the papal court—who started the literary outbursts, the name-calling, etc. In addition, not all of Luther's so-called literary outbursts are to be taken seriously; he used both irony and satire. The author generalizes in taking everything that Luther says at face value and in establishing what the psychohistorian calls a trend. This generalizing gets the author into a contradiction "of sorts," for on p. 254 he admits the possibility of admiring Luther precisely for his "blistering wit" and his "hilarious obscenity." Apparently when it suits the author he does differentiate between Luther's various types of literary outbursts in terms of quality—and then again when it suits him, he does not.

While the issue of hate and persecution versus tolerance on the part of Luther toward those who disagreed with him or actively opposed him will be dealt with below, at this point it must be underscored that on these issues the author simply makes generalizations. How does the Luther who, according to the author, was *never* tolerant (p. 66), never accepted a difference of opinion, hated everyone who dared to oppose him, and who in his vehement passion hunted them down, square with the Luther who in his own house hid his enemy Karlstadt from the police while Karlstadt was on the run? Or with the Luther who tried, even though unsuccessfully, to hold a protective hand over the Brethren of the Common Life, whose religious experience certainly was different from his own? Or with the Luther who insisted that congregations not consider his liturgical texts as law? Or with the Luther who signed the *Wittenberg Concord*, or endorsed the Bohemian Brethren, or "tolerated" Brenz's theology, or the position taken by the theologians and politicians of Ansbach-Brandenburg and of Nürnberg in matters of resistance to the government?

I am by no means arguing that Luther was a liberal; but there is a difference between blanket generalizations and detailed analysis. To argue that these cases are exceptions that prove the rule would dodge the issue. To say that in these cases Luther dealt with people who were more or less friendly to him, or that Luther was not aware of the questions of differences or sameness, or that these people agreed with him in principle anyhow would also dodge the issue. In Karlstadt's case none of these arguments would apply, and in the other cases Luther was confronted with experiences and positions that were different from his own, a fact which Luther knew. Therefore one must qualify one's generalizations if one wants to do justice to one's protagonist. But Marius seems uninterested in doing this. He is more interested in finding his model. The social analyst tells him that people born in backward areas are provincials, that provincials are boors,⁴¹ and that religiously committed provincials with intellectual gifts turn out mostly to be intolerant ideologues. Marius somewhere picks up the idea that the Germans were "politically and intellectually" backward (p. 18).⁴² Luther was born a German provincial; once a provincial, always a provincial; ergo . . .

Studying this last detail of Marius' Luther portrait

41. Just as for the author, a short man is aggressive and of uncompromising confidence in himself; see note 8.

42. The author does not provide us with any substantiation for this statement except the banality that "the civilizing influence of the old Roman Empire had only tentatively spread into the *German lands*" (p. 18, italics mine)—which is true only if one assumes that the German lands were the southwestern regions of Germany and the Rhine Valley. The statement above is, then, another one of those pointless generalizations, just as are the author's characterizations of the German princes and of other bits and pieces of sixteenth century Germany. See also note 10. Is the author trying to pull the reader's leg? Or is he trying to settle a score?

even a novice will be led to ask the question: Could it really have been so bad? Marius himself apparently felt that he was in danger of treading the path of verbal-judgmental overkill, for he writes (p. 208, italics mine):

Whenever we are tempted to see in Luther only that bitter and vengeful man assailing his adversaries with unrestrained vehemence and invective, we must pause just a moment before the recollection that he was a loyal husband and a generous, warmhearted father and that his children adored him.

Given the three features and the frame of Marius' Luther portrait, the author's goals and presuppositions that have been outlined above, one must ask now: What is the sum of all this? How does the Marius-Luther look?

THE DEMYTHOLOGIZED AND REMYTHOLOGIZED LUTHER — OR BIOGRAPHY AS AUTOBIOGRAPHY

LUTHER, A PRODUCT AND REPRESENTATIVE of late Medieval backwoodsish Germany and of late Medieval Roman Catholic piety and theology, was a man of some qualities which "we might genuinely admire." Above all else, he was a man of great intellectual ability, of intense emotions and vehement passions, and of deeply rooted religious commitments. "To seek the salvation of his soul" (p. 27) he entered the monastery.

During his monastic and academic career up to 1516/17 Luther intensified his religious commitments, radicalizing late Medieval *humilitas* theology in what amounts to a masochistic way (see pp. 49, 67). Luther had gone as far as he could and was just about to put together a new religious-theological concept when he was confronted with the sale of indulgences. Deeply offended by the mercenary quality of this practice and its devastating impact on the religious life of people, a practice which did not fit his own religious experiences and notions (see p. 52), and "never" able to tolerate "any important experience different from his own" (p. 66), Luther "did what one might expect from one of so vehement a temperament" (p. 72)—he exploded by means of a letter to his ecclesiastical superior, to which he added the *Ninety-five Theses*. This affair was basically insignificant—"it was comic-strip theology" (p. 67)—but it mushroomed when Luther, asked to explain himself (p. 76), felt challenged and forced to put together a "coherent commentary on Church teachings and practice" (*ibid.*). In doing this he made statements of a revolutionary nature (pp. 115 f., 131)—inconsistent though they were—and set forth his doctrine of justification by faith.

Simultaneously Luther got a positive echo from the public. He began with "a quest for honest and free expression against the convention of stultifying dignity and restraint" (p. 78), and at Heidelberg one can see

Review Essay

"what he might have been—a witty, warmhearted young theologian debating calmly and easily certain propositions" (p. 78). Alas! this was not to be, and that for three reasons: the ecclesiastical establishment tried to crush Luther (see p. 78), Luther's aggressive personality and vehement temperament drove him to a restless quest for vindication (p. 84) by charging at his opponents "in his typical headlong, fighting way" (p. 93) in an effort to demolish them, and Luther's understanding of himself as a tool used by God to destroy the forces of evil. The combination of these three facts resulted in Luther's life's work, causing his personality to turn from bad to worse (over-shadowing, even blocking out, whatever good and positive features there were in it) and causing a new ecclesiastical-political establishment to be created.

Luther tried to preside over this establishment with increasing arrogance, vehemence, fury, and destructive hate for all who disagreed with him, fearing all the way along that he might lose control over the situation. This new establishment was totally insensitive to the individual and his needs and values, and to the need for social change. It was as stultifying and oppressive in the intellectual and political realm of human activity as the Medieval establishment had been, even more so because the autocracy of the political sector of this establishment was religiously buttressed by certain elements of Luther's program so that the princes must be considered the "real winners" of Luther's work (p. 228). Luther's position in the controversy with Erasmus and in the peasants' uprising, and Luther's attitude toward the Jews illustrate the tyranny of Luther and of his rationally unverifiable or indefensible system of thought.

These cases also prove that there is a parallel between Luther and the "Prussian attitude of the Christian toward government."⁴³ In fact, "Luther was an ancestor of Hit-

43. This is the author's summary (1 1/4 pages) of Luther's *On Secular Authority*. From this book, together with some of Luther's 1530/31 material on the resistance issue, the author constructs his view of Luther's political ethics. "The Lutheran and Prussian attitude of the Christian toward government" consists for Marius of "the two extremes" advocated by Luther: "cooperating with government whenever cooperation is possible, and suffering when the prince becomes an oppressor." Luther's position on the resistance issue is Marius' major substantiation for this contention. (See Marius, *op. cit.*, pp. 174. ff.)

No one denies that these two positions can be found in Luther's *On Secular Authority*. But one must ask: in light of Luther's total literary productivity, are these two positions, unqualified as they stand, all that Luther has to say on the issues? And, further, how does the author propose to substantiate in terms of sources his contention that it was "this" book, i.e., *On Secular Authority*, that formed this Prussian attitude?

Only the propagandist can simply equate Luther, Lutheran, and Prussian, and thus treat approximately 250 to 350 years as if they were a unit, and not cite chapter and verse. And, finally, what is this Prus-

Review Essay

ler's" (p. 174, 242). This last observation is not as important for Marius as it might seem. It is extremely important for him, however, to have established "that Luther is yet another example of that nearly ritual bloodiness that in our history is so frequently associated with men whose lives are tied to desks and theories, isolated from the red ground where the blood is shed. Hitler is gone, but the almost ritual propensity for abstract violence among the theory class [as illustrated by Luther's outbursts against Jews and peasants] is still frighteningly with us. Maybe Luther was one of the first of that horrible ilk" (p. 242).

MARIUS PUTS GREAT EMPHASIS ON LUTHER's personality and self-understanding. Though he is quite free in making what amount to psychoanalytic diagnostic statements, he approaches Luther's self-understanding not as a psychoanalyst but as a theologian "of sorts." For Marius, the key to Luther's self-understanding lies not so much in Luther's personality in the psychoanalytic sense, as in Luther's theology.

"Luther believed that God would use him to death. . . . He was delighted in his own role in bringing God's Word to the world. . . . It was a burdensome task, . . . Death threatened him. . . . Enemies might threaten him. Some friends were worse than enemies for they urged him to be cautious. And yet he kept furiously on" (p. 146). Add to this certain character trends supposedly typical of a German provincial and you have a Luther with a Messiah complex, a man who preaches a message full of unverifiable and inconsistent ideas, who is furiously determined to have his way, and who is being heard by some people whom he, by means of his demagoguery, can seduce into believing that his way is

sian attitude or mentality? According to the author, this attitude consists of two elements—obedient but spineless citizenship, silently suffered martyrdom—which must be summarized in one catchword: passivity (see also note 38, and below, in the text, the section numbered 3). Thus the author creates the impression that this attitude is a uniform entity, a symbol which obviously is to be filled by the images of reality conjured up by the author's use of the symbol: the Prussian *Junker*, the Prussian civil servant and docile masses, goose-stepping armies, and, above all, the racial, religious, or political victims of this mentality. All of this the author lays at Luther's doorstep. That absolutism and tyranny did develop in areas which were untouched by Luther's *On Secular Authority* is of little concern to the author. Further, notwithstanding the reality of the horror connected with the images that dance before our eyes, the Prussian attitude, the symbol, the suggested uniform entity, is a figment of the author's imagination, a fact the author could have learned from reading the sources of nineteenth century German history, or, for example, the writings of Hans Joachim Schoeps, who, as a Jew, was a victim ("of sorts") of this supposedly uniform entity called Prussian attitude toward the government or Prussian mentality. And finally, for Luther's position on the resistance issue, see note 46.

God's and therefore the only right way. Being "one of the terrible simplifiers of our history" (p. 190), Luther saw everything in black and white. And having a Messiah complex, he considered those who opposed him to be either stupid, or men of evil will, or Satan's tools—any or all of whom must be eliminated (see pp. 147, 155 f., 200, 202). Luther "was a complete ideologue, judging people always in terms of their doctrines rather than on the grounds of a larger humanity. There is hardly a shred [why so cautious!?] of sustenance in Luther for those who believe in a human brotherhood based on the toleration of diversity. Diversity to him was akin to disorder—and disorder was Satanic. . . . To be tolerant is always to confess uncertainty" (p. 147),⁴⁴ and Luther was to have nothing to do with uncertainty. His was an "indomitable faith" that "can make men heroes or fanatics, builders or destroyers, leaders of men or profaners of civilization. Faith made Martin Luther all these things" (p. 103).—Luther: a Thomas Muntzer or Karl Marx "of sorts"—and his work a trauma which civilization hardly survived!

Marius is extremely vague on the biographical questions how and when Luther arrived at this faith (see p. 103), but he leaves no doubt as to its source. It is the Bible, for which, as demonstrated above, the author has no use. "Intoxicated with his vision of God" (p. 47), i.e., the vision of the God who stands in the center of the Bible, this "motley conglomeration of sublime feeling . . . and simple trash" (p. 39), Luther tried to reconcile his own "various passions with the Bible" (p. 130), an enterprise which resulted in his understanding of Scripture. From this, in turn, Luther drew that faith which gave him certainty of his own predestination to an other-worldly salvation. Luther, being the oversimplifier that he was, solved all inconsistencies jeopardizing this faith-certainty by recourse to the mysterious will of the biblical God; then he turned around and applied this faith-certainty pertaining to an *other-worldly* salvation to this world (see also p. 200), i.e., to everything and everyone, because all is under the sovereignty of this mysterious (i.e., unverifiable) will of the biblical God. And the result is Luther the demagogic dictator in affairs of religion, thought, and society.

If one considers that this world is the only world we have and that human life is precious because it is so limited by time and that in the active labor to destroy tyranny by force the human spirit may achieve its most noble expression, then neither Martin Luther nor his tradition has anything to give us for help (p. 176).

44. Apparently it never occurs to the author that a person is able to be tolerant precisely because he is certain of his position, and, conversely, that intolerance can be the result of uncertainty or insecurity. The statement which the author makes above is a contradiction "of sorts" to the way in which in other connections he tries to depict Luther as an intolerant person, due to uncertainty about or fear for the leadership position.

Review Essay

All this adds up to the following questions: What, if anything, may or can one expect from a God such as the one who stands at the center of the Bible, and from a man such as Luther who takes this kind of a God seriously? Or, had Luther had a different Bible with a different God at the center (see also pp. 200 ff., 352 f.), and had Luther not been the person he was, he would—perhaps—not have been the failure he was (that Luther was a failure is for Marius beyond discussion; see also p. 101), and Luther's work would—perhaps—not have been the trauma that it was. (Or, in every day terms: if we had some ham, we could have some ham and eggs, if we had some eggs!)

This, then, is Marius' Luther. Whatever positive or negative statements the author makes about Luther the man and his work, whatever accurate or inaccurate observations on Luther's theology or Luther's times he produces, all are illumined by this portrait. Not a pleasant picture for those who see in Luther a "saint" of the church or the authority for faith and life. If Marius' intention was to demythologize, he has succeeded totally. Luther stands before us naked, stripped of every halo which ecclesiastical tradition and individual sentimentality may have placed upon him.

CRITIQUE AND SUMMARY

BY WAY OF A SUMMARY CRITIQUE SEVEN points must be made regarding this demythologized Luther.

1. In fairness to the author one must state that he makes many statements about Luther with which one must agree. Only apologists, sentimentalists, or worshippers who want or need a saint would deny Luther's verbal vehemence, for example, or his tendency to make short shrift of his opponents, or trends that reveal "earthiness." But (as the author himself feebly tries to remind us) there is also another side to Luther, and there is enough material available to give a more balanced picture of Luther than the author does.

2. Further, one must underscore that the author goes for Luther's jugular vein. The author is correct in arguing that in the final analysis it is only theology that can explain the man, important though personality characteristics may be. And it is in this connection that the author's naked Luther turns out to be a very poor caricature. For the author the Christian faith and its source, the Bible—more precisely the God of Scripture who has revealed himself in Jesus Christ—are unverifiable bunk, of importance only for intellectual imbeciles, romantics, or sentimentalists, or for people who are weak-kneed when they are exposed to the "heat of open day," or are forced to stand on "the red ground where the blood is shed" (pp. 252, 242). The author uses this, his assumption, to measure Luther, for whom the Bible was not bunk and for whom the relationship

to the biblical God was literally a matter of life and death. Consequently if the author wants to be true to himself he has no choice but to see in Luther's faith ideology, in Luther's integrity the dimensions of arrogance, terror, and dictatorship, in Luther's "heroic confidence" an "insidious side" (p. 146), and in Luther's humility the Messiah complex (p. 200), and to see all this leading to destructive tyranny.

3. Certainly someone who cannot take the biblical God seriously and is unwilling to grant that for some people that God is more than bunk, and someone who constantly measures history with his own yardstick, cannot understand that Luther's faith is anything else but bunk, or destructive. The author is as intolerant of Luther as he charges Luther to have been of others, and he is as much an ideologue as he charges Luther with having been. He is as unwilling to listen and engage in dialogue as he charges Luther was. For him Luther raised his voice to a "ranting squeal" when Luther realized he no longer could convince the people or control the masses (p. 232). On the basis of the autobiographic fragments the author supplied his readers, it becomes clear that in this book the ideologue of the late sixties, frustrated by his inability to make those "pious Christians" whom he encountered shape up on the Vietnamese question in the way he thought they should, raised his voice to the "ranting squeal" of iconoclasm and demagoguery, just as others in the streets raised sticks and stones. How much of an ideologue the author is and how thoroughly he judges his fellowman "in terms of their doctrines [and, one might add, in terms of his own doctrines] rather than on the grounds of a larger humanity" (p. 147), i.e., acts precisely as the Luther acted whom the author presents to us, is apparent from the author's evaluation of the "so-called German resistance to Adolf Hitler" (p. 175).⁴⁵

On the basis of his reading of Luther's *On Secular Authority* and his interpretation of Luther's position on the issue of armed resistance to the government,⁴⁶

45. One must question the function of this issue in a Luther biography.

46. The author's presentation of the development of Luther's position on this issue does justice neither to the circumstances nor the sources. Whether, and in what sense, Luther changed his position on this issue will be debated *ad infinitum*. In 1530/31 Luther did, however, endorse the Smalcaldic League, which was committed to the affirmation of the right of armed resistance to the Emperor. He did so, perhaps, "reluctantly," as author states, but certainly not "sadly and reluctantly," because he supposedly felt that he had abandoned his former position, as the author argues; see Marius, *op. cit.*, pp. 140, 174 f., and especially 224. If Luther was reluctant, then he was so because he was suspicious that the evidence from the imperial law presented to him by the jurists of the Smalcaldic League in support of resistance was flimsy. The sources and the present discussion of this issue give us a more precise picture than the author does. This obser-

Review Essay

the author concludes that Luther and “the Lutheran . . . attitude of the Christian,”⁴⁷ politically seen (i.e., in terms “of organizing any movement for political change or active resistance to unjust authority”) are totally worthless. In fact, they are even dangerous, for they advocate passivity⁴⁸ and prayer in the name of God’s will (pp. 174 f.). It is, then, “no wonder that Lutheranism has never been a revolutionary faith, and that Lutherans have usually (why such a cautious word?) stood for authority against change . . .” (p. 199). Luther’s advocacy of suffering or of passive resistance (i.e., suffering the punishment of the prince for disobeying him in case of unjust orders or actions) are the author’s main proof for his opinion. There was in Luther “always . . . that gnawing desire to make Christians passive, to let God do their striving for them, while they watched and waited” (p. 225), and, we may add, endured punishment for disobeying the unjust prince, i.e., became martyrs. Apparently the author is convinced that “this sort” of passivity takes less of a man than the activity of the assassin. In any case, having set forth his opinion, the author continues (pp. 175 f.):

This Lutheran proclivity for prayer and passivity was dreadfully illustrated in the so-called German resistance to Adolf Hitler, especially in the group that included Dietrich Bonhoeffer. These people were bungling and incompetent conspirators, mired in theory and in unreal plans for the future like oxen belly-deep in wet sand. Their pitiful efforts to assassinate Hitler would be ludicrous performed on a stage against a paper villain with a painted mustache, who might allow us the detachment of laughter.

And yet these men proved to be glorious martyrs. Bonhoeffer’s most noble writing was the collection of letters he wrote from prison while he awaited a terrible death. In the end martyrdom was the vocation that suited him best. We might wish that he and his crowd had been better with pistol, bomb, or poison⁴⁹ than they were with words and suffering. But Luther would have been proud of them. Yet had

vation must be underscored, since the author deals with this issue in such a one-sided way and so superficially that, for example, he totally neglects what Luther has to say about the way in which God finds means, among them God’s “men of miracles,” to dethrone tyrants.

47. If with “Lutheran” the author means Lutheran church, then he owes us some evidence. See also note 43. In the case of the resistance issue and the passivity of the Lutherans, the author ought to check his blanket statement against the sources, especially material that emerged in the 1550s and 1560s.

48. See note 38.

49. Is this what Luther should have learned from those urbane Italians for whom the author has such high praise (see note 9), so that Luther could have inspired his followers accordingly?

deliverance from Hitler been left to Bonhoeffer and others like him in Germany during that dreadful time, the entire world would now lie prostrate under Nazi barbarism. If one considers that this world is the only world we have and that human life is precious because it is so limited by time and that in the active labor to destroy tyranny by force the human spirit may achieve its most noble expression, then neither Martin Luther nor his tradition has anything to give us for help.

Marius can deliver himself of this opinion because he judges the martyrs of the German resistance movement not “on the grounds of a larger humanity” (e.g., respect for people who are willing to die for what *they* have perceived as being the truth, compassion with all who suffer persecution) but on the ground of his own radical ideology; because—to use the author’s own words, now addressed to him instead of being addressed to Luther—he is one of “that horrible ilk,” who is tied to his ideology and who can safely, protected by a democratic constitution, use his desk and lecture podium to preach his theory, i.e., agitate in an “abstract” way for violence, and in an attack of self-righteousness scorn those who do not perform as he thinks they should perform, while others attempt to do battle in the “heat of open day” and on “the red ground where the blood is shed” (see pp. 242, 252).

4. If the author’s presuppositions gave him no choice but to evaluate Luther the way he did, they did, conversely, provide him with a convenient opportunity to disseminate his own message. Judged from a literary point of view, the dialogue, the tract, the novel, would be an appropriate form to do this. Since the author chose the writing of history in the form of biography as his medium, he presents us with an autobiography “of sorts” rather than a biography; that is, he presents himself and his ideas in the disguise of a Luther biography. In doing this he remythologizes Luther by perpetuating the Luther myth, the prefix being not apologetics or romanticism or hero worship, but iconoclasm and propaganda. In the center of this myth stands the unbalanced picture of Luther’s personality and the distorted evaluation of Luther’s theology. And based on this center, the author posits the mythical line from Luther to Hitler and others like him, a myth for which the author, for whom the Bible is bunk that cannot be verified, does not supply us with any scientific verification. What seems to be new in this myth is the fact that the author interjects Robespierre into this otherwise nameless mythical family tree of villains (p. 203). To demythologize that myth one need only, for a beginning, ask whether Marius thinks that Hitler and his hordes would have acted differently had Luther never appeared on the stage of history, and then demand scientific verification for the author’s answer. Or, one may ask why some of his few idols of the sixteenth century, Montaigne and Rabelais, did not prevent the revocation of

Review Essay

the Edict of Nantes, that signal of the tyranny of absolutism, or the atrocities of the French Revolution, committed in the name of that reason which supposedly was to dampen "the heat of crusading passion" (p. 254) but which did not do so in the case of Luther.

The intolerant Luther, the Luther of crusading irrational passions as illustrated by Luther's outbursts against Erasmus, peasants, and Jews, the Luther who generated a climate of stifling oppression, of persecuting hatreds and who in some mysterious way is to be linked with Hitler and other power hungry fanatics in the past and present—this is Marius' Luther myth. Seeing this, one can clearly understand why the author has absolutely no use for Luther, and in light of the author's autobiography one can see behind this myth the radical of the late sixties and early seventies appear.

5. To the man of the twentieth century judging Luther with "the gospel according to Charles Darwin" (p. 210) and the yardstick of radical ideology, Luther's position must appear irrational and intolerant. Whether one may call Luther intolerant if one measures him with his own yardstick, or the gospel available to him and his time, would be quite another question. What we call tolerance Luther had never heard of; after all, he still lived under the "tyranny of the sacred" from which modern man supposedly has freed himself! (P. 39) Does ignorance automatically make villains? May one automatically equate ignorance with guilt? If so, then the author must re-evaluate his position on Erasmus' supposed tolerance or reason-boundness (by which supposedly the "heat of crusading passion" was damped down), and consequently his greatness (p. 254). For if one considers the total Erasmus, it is apparent that he could demand privileges for himself which he did not grant to others, that he demanded tolerance for himself, yet was quite unwilling to reciprocate. That Erasmus did this in his urbane, gentlemanly way and Luther did this in his provincial, earthly way is beside the point. This argument is not to excuse Luther's outbursts, but is to suggest that explaining these outbursts by way of that twentieth century concept, tolerance, which did not even begin to appear until the second half of the sixteenth century, with Montaigne—as the author correctly observes—is a wrong approach to the problem. And explanation is, after all, one of the tasks of the historian *sine ira et studio*, not excusing or accusing, at least in my opinion. It is quite another matter that the author would disagree with such a definition of the historian's task.

6. In light of this observation it must be categorically stated that Luther's outbursts against peasants and Jews may not be excused or whitewashed. A human being, much less a pastor, may not speak that way. Others, among them at least one whom the author would consider one of those whitewashing clerical historians, have repeatedly stated this fact. Yet the author is apparently not aware of this, for he argues as if his indictments of Luther are novelties. Further, what may not

be excused hardly will be forgotten. What the connection is to be, however, between not forgetting and forgiving, and "justice"—whatever this term is to mean in connection with the Jewish victims of the concentration camps the author does not tell us—I cannot grasp (p. 248).

If Luther's outbursts may not be excused can they be explained? Regarding Luther's position in the Peasants' War the explanations, some *sine*, some *cum ira et studio*, abound, just as the apologies do, but few give us as oversimplified a picture as the author does. Regarding Luther's position on the Jews the situation is different. There are extant many efforts of whitewash so blatant that they must be discarded, and the author is correct on this point. There is at least one effort that works under the full weight of the horrible seriousness surrounding the results of anti-Semitism in Germany during the Nazi era. While I do not know whether the author is aware of this effort, I feel sure he would make short shrift of this effort, too, and consider it a whitewash. I would not be prepared to follow him. And then there are the efforts of the author and others like him who confuse explanation and accusation and like to build myths. The question whether Luther's position can be *explained at all*—i.e., has anything to do with something that can be explained—has not yet been pursued, and there has not yet emerged a consensus on the method of approach regardless of the point of departure used. Seen from a standpoint of historical method one may, however, not separate Luther from his age and proceed as if Luther alone were an anti-Semite in the sixteenth century. The report on the possible contribution of this larger problem to the Luther question is not yet in, though, if I see correctly, we may soon expect it in the form of a dissertation sponsored by Temple University.

7. The author's contribution to this problem is of no value for he so blatantly works *cum ira et studio* in an effort to buttress his Luther myth.

First, the author's presentation leaves the reader with the impression that Luther was the only anti-Semite in the sixteenth century.

Further, in good propagandistic fashion the author oversimplifies the issue by operating with the blanket term anti-Semitism and by rejecting any differentiation in the reality of anti-Semitism by means of economical, legal, religious, or racial elements. These differentiations are for him abstractions designed to buttress in a rational way one's own prejudices (p. 234). The fact of the matter is, however, that these differentiations are not the product of abstractions, but are the product of the encounter of humans in the "heat of day." That such a differentiation does not excuse the reality, or is of

Review Essay

no comfort to the victim of the reality, is obvious. It is also obvious, however, that the passion of human prejudice is stirred by concreteness and not by abstractions.

While the author rejects the notion of differentiation, he works with it anyway when it suits him. For Luther's anti-Semitism is not anti-Semitism as such, but religious anti-Semitism, i.e., the product of Luther's encounter with the Bible and with the Jew who rejects Jesus Christ. Thus Luther's anti-Semitism is explained as something religious, hence making the absolute demand of obedience by man, as over against any other relative element such as economic (usury, banking) or personal elements (Luther's age, ability to reason clearly, personal encounters). Add to this absolute religious quality Luther's personality, as Marius has depicted it all the way along, and one has the total picture. Marius spends much energy to prove this religious absolute quality from Luther's writings against the Jews (writings which horrify every person who reads them), conveniently ignoring, for example, those passages where it is clear that the economic element in this anti-Semitism may not be disregarded if one is to explain *sine ira et studio*; or those elements for which another explanation, e.g., in terms of personality (lack of a critical approach to popular opinion, so "typical" of Luther) is possible. I am not suggesting that Luther's outbursts against the Jews may, can, must be explained in terms of economics or personality and not in religious terms—I know better—but I am suggesting that critical text analysis requires that one do more than simply paraphrase or weight every statement identically both as to its importance and the intention of the author, as Marius does.

But Marius' generalizing way of proceeding, not to say his ranting (to which Luther's writings lend themselves so easily), is a convenient means for the author to forget about dealing with the initially established religious *Leitmotiv* of Luther's anti-Semitism, to operate with anti-Semitism in general terms, and thus to build the bridge from the anti-Semite Luther to the anti-Semite Hitler. He is forced to do this for he knows very well (at least charity demands that we assume this) that Hitler's anti-Semitism had nothing to do with religion. In fact, Hitler desperately tried to find a religious substructure for his anti-Semitism, motivated as it was by racial considerations, by organizing the *Deutsche Christen*. And when Hitler and the *Deutsche Christen* were rebuffed by the *Bekennende Kirche* movement and the confessional territorial churches,⁵⁰ Hitler shrugged off

50. It is beside the point that this rebuff was not vigorous enough and that in this process of rebuffing, theological concerns (i.e., the nature of dogma and of the church) dominated and that the social implications of the Christian faith (i.e., a theologically sound posture on

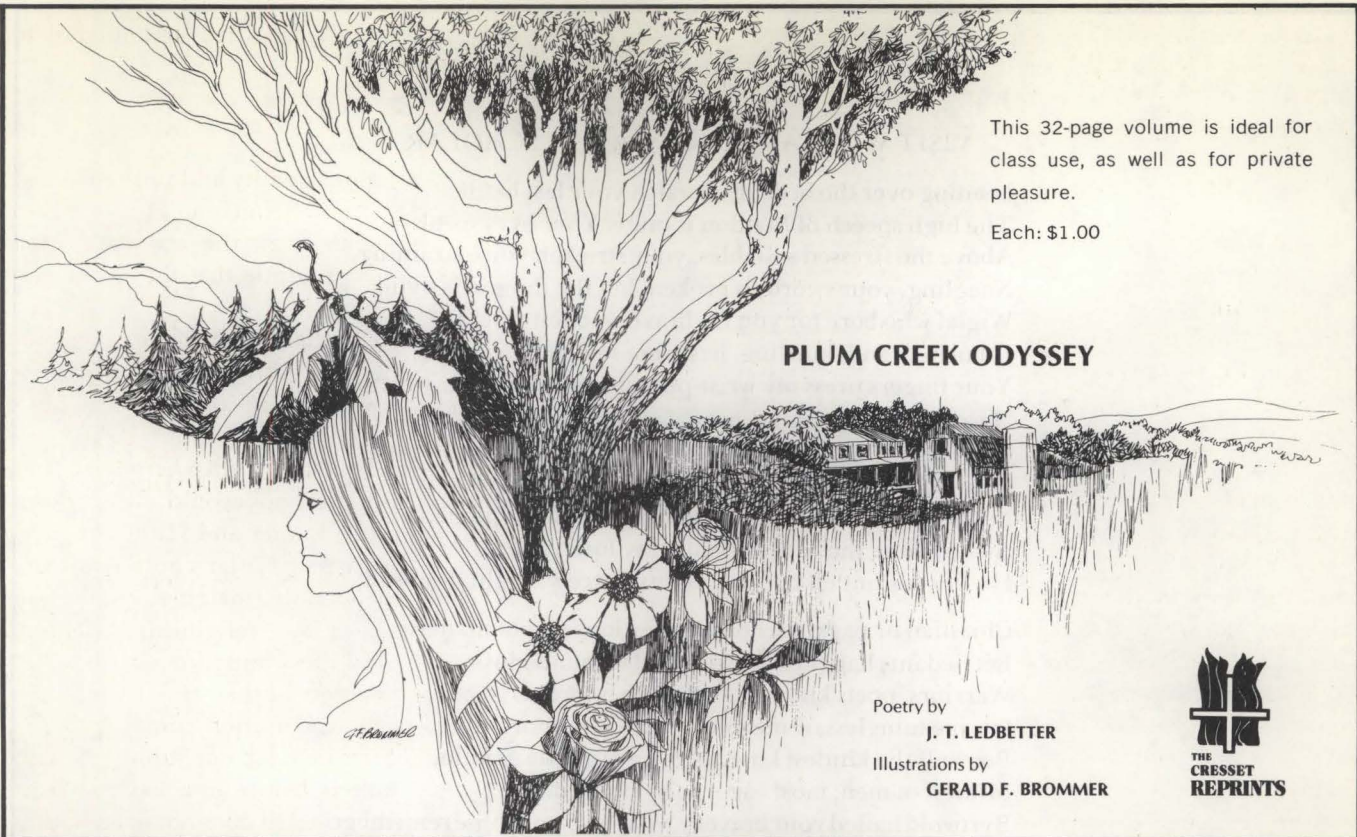
the attempt to find a religious quality and pushed ahead with his racially oriented anti-Semitism. This is not to suggest that other elements, e.g., the economic one, were excluded, but rather to argue that the racial element was the dominant one.

Therefore if Marius, who had established religiosity as the *Leitmotiv* for Luther's anti-Semitism, connects Luther with Hitler, he either must abandon this *Leitmotiv* in favor of generalizations, or get into an uncomfortable position. Not abandoning this *Leitmotiv* and not operating with generalizations would either point out the discrepancy between Luther and Hitler, or show a lack of knowledge concerning Hitler's anti-Semitism. Marius does indeed abandon his original contention that Luther's anti-Semitism was religiously oriented, does operate with generalities, and thus perpetuates the myth of a bridge between Luther and Hitler. He, the advocate of scientific verification, turns into the apostle of myth, for which he does not supply us with any verifiable data.⁵¹ Others before him have at least tried to establish a family tree. He does not even bother with this, except to mention the Prussian attitude⁵² of the Christian toward the state (p. 174)—another mythical entity akin to one of Hitler's favorite mythical entities, *Die Seele des deutschen Volkes*—and to Robespierre, though he does not do this in connection with anti-Semitism. If it gets down to the details of historical scholarship, of establishing and verifying the chain of influence that supposedly runs from Luther via the Prussian mentality to Hitler, Marius is silent, though he could have had available even secondary sources that deal with this problem. And so in returning this book to the shelf, we are forced by the author's silence to repeat the question, now more burning than ever: Will the real Luther stand up, please!

Hitler's racially oriented anti-Semitism which could be transplanted into social action) were shortchanged. The fiery crusading spirit of passion for which, according to the author, Luther and his faith stood (see Marius, *op. cit.*, p. 254) and Luther's heroic quality with an insidious side so much maligned by the author (*ibid.*, p. 146) were apparently not fiery and insidious enough in Luther's twentieth century heirs to produce either martyrs or assassins by the carload. And so the Lutheran church in Germany, though awake when it came to theological issues—the author would call them bloodless and useless abstracta (see *ibid.*, pp. 250 ff.)—was sleeping when it came to social concerns (see *ibid.*, pp. 251 f.). The *Kristallnacht* and the way in which Hitler began to handle the euthanasia problem began the slow process of a horrible awakening which was marked by too little, too late.

51. How much an apostle of myth the author is whenever it suits him may be seen from the way in which he looks at death. As a good mythologist he considers death to be "the long cold and the dark" with which man must come to terms (p. 256). How does he know that death is the long cold and the dark? And how does he propose to verify his knowledge?

52. See note 43.



This 32-page volume is ideal for class use, as well as for private pleasure.

Each: \$1.00

PLUM CREEK ODYSSEY

Poetry by
J. T. LEDBETTER
 Illustrations by
GERALD F. BROMMER



ALL REPRINTS AVAILABLE FROM:
 The Cresset, Reprints, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana 46383
 Postage paid if payment accompanies the order.



REPRINTS

ON ABORTION

- John Strietelmeier "Legalized Homicide" (April, 1973)
- Richard Stith "In Response to Those Who Ask Why I Care About Abortion" (December, 1973)
- Calvin J. Eichhorst "Moral and Theological Issues in the Abortion Controversy" (June, 1975)
- Donald A. Affeldt "Notes in Response to Dr. Eichhorst" (June, 1975)
- David M. Horowitz and Jean Garton "Abortion: Should the United States Constitution Protect the Right to Choose?" (June, 1975)
- Discussion of Horowitz/Garton Lectures (June, 1975)

All in one 24-page reprint.
 Single copy: ea. 35c
 In multiples of 10: ea. 30c
 In multiples of 100: ea. 25c



REPRINTS

A Review Essay of
 A STATEMENT OF SCRIPTURAL
 AND CONFESSIONAL PRINCIPLES.

From The Cresset, May 1973, and (Part II), October 1973

SALE PRICE
 Single copy ea. 25c
 In multiples of 10: ea. 15c

VISIT WITH AN ANGLO-SAXON SCHOLAR

Leaning over the bedside, I watch your last battle.
The high speech of Maldon is mute. Your eyes speak
Above the stressed syllables, your stricken voice straining.
Naegling, your sword, is broken, but the dragon is dying.
Wiglaf who bore for you his brave wooden shield
Is burned, and, burning, has crept to you for cover.
Your fingers press my wrist-pulse to spell out your words:
"I would give my son (I have none) my war clothing."
I remember Maldon; I would be Leofsunu.
Long ago you knew me well, called me a coward.
Leofsunu speaks for me, "I would go lordless home,
Abandoning the battle because my lord is dead."
He lifts his linden buckler, fights fiercely, flight despised.

Christian or pagan, scholars' questions do not matter.
Let pedants haggle over scorched text and gloss.
Warriors, poets know that courage is forever,
for, meaningless or meaning, fame is immortality.
Beowulf the kindest king, as you are gentle, gentle,
Mildest of men, most eager to be praised.
Byrtwold hailed your bravery, your eyes and mine remember:
"Pride shall be the hardier, high heart the keener;
Courage shall be the greater, as our might lessens,"
And this world goes sundown cold.

SARA deFORD

THEATER — WALTER SORELL

MURDER AT LINCOLN CENTER

IT IS DISHEARTENING WHEN some of the foremost stages, such as Joseph Papp's Vivien Beaumont Theatre at Lincoln Center, consciously perpetrate a crime in mutilating the spirit of a playwright. One such case is Bertolt Brecht, whose ideas and theories on the theater and, in particular, on the

epic theater have become so well-known and successfully propagated by Eric Bentley since the 1950s. It is even more disheartening that the stage director, Richard Foreman, dares conjure up the spirit of the "softer, semi-popularized Marc Blitzstein version" of the *Threepenny Opera* which was done off-Broadway in 1955, but which, undoubtedly watered down, had a charm all its own. Certainly, our classics and semi-classics have been tampered with from time to time. Poor Shakespeare has probably been victimized most often—and yet he survived. Hopefully, also Brecht will survive Richard Foreman's re-staging of the *Threepenny Opera*.

What is perhaps a more frighten-

ing sign of our time is the brazenness with which Papp & Foreman went into print, on a separate sheet inserted in the playbill, saying that their version will permit the audiences to see "something much closer to the original Brecht." And surely it is most disheartening that the young generation, conditioned by psychedelic nonsense, may believe this statement, all the more since the influential New York critics applauded this travesty of Brecht's work.

Undoubtedly, as Papp & Foreman maintain, "Brecht's aim" was "not to create a *Threepenny Opera* audiences will love and take to their hearts, but"—as their claim continues—his and their aim is "to restore

the original anguish to a piece, meant to disturb, confound and thereby to excite." This production disturbed me indeed and deeply, but not in Brecht's way: to feel confronted with reality and to feel forced to bring back a verdict that would condemn "a world ruled by money." It disturbed me because I felt confronted with an unreal and utterly unlikely world of Brecht, and my verdict is the total condemnation of a surrealist concoction betraying the man to whom it should have brought us closer. It confounded me that intelligent people and probably gifted artists in their own limited fashion can be so blind in accepting their own psychedelic sputum for Brecht's furious spit. And I was excited in a Brechtian sense that an innocent "bourgeois" audience will be exposed to such a staged hoax with the help of clever critics who have not done properly their homework about Bertolt Brecht.

WHAT BRECHT BELIEVED in is, in a nutshell, simple and only seemingly complex. The dramatic ground which he covered was, as John Willet, one of the Brecht experts, described it, "that interesting and largely neglected area where ethics, politics, and economics meet." Brecht wanted to instruct—like a judge his jurors—and entertain with a sparse, bony style. He said so in one of his poems:

... I address you
Cold and broadly
In the driest terms
.....
I address you merely
Like reality itself
(Sober, incorruptible...)

To get the facts across was always more important to Brecht than any fictional event or fantasy. He asked for plain action in a constantly clear light. His concept of consciously alienating his audiences through a straight confrontation with truth ("Die Wahrheit is konkret," truth is concrete) left no room for the intrusion of any "atmospheric" elements. He loathed stage emotional-

ism and asked for naked simplicity and direct appeal. He went so far in it as to prevent the actor from identifying with his role; on the contrary, he had to observe himself as the character he portrayed and to comment on that character. During rehearsals the action was filmed so that the actor—who could also observe himself in mirrors—could realize where to cut out any kind of personal involvement.

Joseph Papp entrusted Richard Foreman with the direction of the play. He must have been fully aware that Mr. Foreman was the founder-director of Ontological-Hysteric Theatre. Papp must have anticipated anything hysterical in an ontological way, and he got it served on a Dali-esque silver platter of tawdry tomfoolery with flashes of *nouveau-art* absurdities. Instead of simplicity we were shown a jumble of indecorous decors in a highly flamboyant manner. Brecht's favorite colors were brown, grey, and off-white, and he always insisted on all stage sets being of the barest functional type.

Brecht detested physical typecasting, and it was all there at the Lincoln Center; first of all, C. K. Alexander's Mr. Peachum looked like the Daumier figure of an obese business tycoon. Brecht preferred even casting against the type, for it was important to him what people did on stage and not what they looked like. One of the more recent Peachums of the Berliner Ensemble was a slim, thirty-year-old actor of whom Kenneth Tynan said he would have delighted Brecht. Mr. Alexander would not have been his type of Peachum. The Peachum of the original productions in Berlin and Vienna—which I saw—were slenderly built. Brecht shunned to work with the impact of caricatures.

The legends shown on screens and so important in Brecht's dramatic thinking—namely, to shock his audience, time and again, into the realization of reality—became mere embellishment and a flowery farce in this production. In the context of Mr. Foreman's stage con-

cept this Brechtian idea did not work. What violated most the Brechtian spirit was the introduction of a mute figure that, in a dancing gesture, moved through the entire play. He seemed to represent a fool now, a prop man then, a commentator and dancing narrator; he is Mr. Foreman's creature and the most obvious proof of how Brecht was manhandled at Lincoln Center.

Clive Barnes in *The New York Times* pleaded for a change of locale, wishing for the *Threepenny Opera* "to be set in New York—and with Brecht's very clearly stated views on translation and adaptation, he might himself have found such a course preferable. Never be tactful with Brecht—he was never tactful with anyone else." True, Brecht loved the paradox. He could even dumbfound and fool our Senators of the Un-American Committee in the early 1950s, who, after interrogating him, were no longer sure of whether they themselves or Brecht may have been Communists. True, Brecht considered a play script the blue print for a production. True, he may have gone to a small city and somewhat changed his play to adjust it to the needs of a smaller stage. But this does not mean that he would ever have betrayed his principles, the tenets of his theories.

Perhaps this premeditated slaughter at Lincoln Center is only a minute symptom of our sick world which takes its own disintegration lightly, as a matter of fact, with a hysteric grin and an ontological flourish. ❧

"From the Trivial . . ."

(continued from page 32)

the public sphere leads to the development of a character informed by the civic virtues. No longer are we dependent upon a cause to provide incentive and motivation, nor are we tied to a situation ethic which depends upon the moment of decision to give direction to life. Steadiness of purpose and the freedom to respond creatively stem from our own discipline of life in a path of confident conviction. ❧

Guest Opinion

DALE G. LASKY

FROM THE TRIVIAL TO THE ROUTINE

FOR MORE THAN A YEAR we Americans have been busy devising ways to celebrate the bicentennial of our nation. Program committees have been appointed and discussion groups have abounded. However, something has often seemed lacking. What should have been a moving experience has often seemed almost trivial.

At first this writer wondered whether such a reaction lay in the fact that he is well into his mid-forties. Could the feeling be nothing more than the reflection of a phrase in one's personal biography? But the same reaction has been observed among the young and youthful.

Certainly it is not because we lack important issues that require deliberation and decision. The problems confronting us today often make those faced by the founding fathers seem simple by comparison. And the old words that speak of liberty, justice, freedom, and truth are not empty. There are people ready with will and energy to make them live.

We seem unable to find a ground between two extremes that leave us unsatisfied — ballyhoo and cynicism. The spokesmen of the first employ a seeming endless string of hyperboles to describe our American past and claim that the same reality still

Moellering Memorial Library
Valparaiso University
Valparaiso, Indiana 46383

2 Co.

But the doctrine of vocation. But the words come too easily, and the picture is drawn too neatly to jibe with our experience. The daily news releases report a very different reality in our political, social, and economic life. And the truth about the past reveals a history that was not sharply different. The cynic views the same world and sees only human frailty, at best, or human perfidy, at worst. He cannot see the honest dedication and struggle which are still a part of this marred and imperfect society.

But the answer does not seem to lie simply in finding a middle path between the two extremes. We need an alternative which has its own ground and meaning, rather than presenting us with nothing more than a compromise between two inadequate extremes. Interestingly, both ballyhoo and cynicism share the common desire to find a cause of sufficient purity and virtue to hold their allegiance. The one refuses to acknowledge the flaws in order to maintain its commitment, while the other refuses participation because it finds no cause that can meet its aspirations.

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY has long considered this problem in terms of the concept of vocation, or calling. That doctrine has been frequently dusted and opened again during recent years. As we take it up, however, we have to do it with an awareness of the pitfalls involved in its use.

The doctrine of vocation too easily leads to ballyhoo. How easy it is to pronounce that for the Christian every job and hobby or diversion can be entered with divine sanction. But there are many jobs which people perform that must be recognized as tedious and alienating. And it is difficult to demonstrate with credibility how they contribute to the welfare of society or to the deepening of human experience. And many hobbies and diversions seem only to provide a way of passing time. Glib talk about vocation cannot erase or cover up these realities.

But the doctrine of vocation warns against the attempt to find the full meaning of life in inner or private experience, whether we label it as religious or employ another term. Many have followed this route in seeking meaning and renewal in "religious experience." We can recognize that this has been a necessary corrective for persons who have lost the enjoyment of their bodily and spiritual capacities by being totally absorbed in activity. It has been a corrective to that distortion of Christian vocation that has become known popularly as the Protestant work ethic. But has it been more than a corrective?

The issue is how to express our full selves in our action and yet to know that it is not my doing that makes me myself. The doctrine of vocation does not simply pronounce every activity as good and wholesome and allow us to engage in it with a religious dedication. It has been stated in a recent paraphrase of Luther's description of Christian freedom: The Christian is the most worldly of all persons, subject to the ambiguity of human life and knowing that fulfillment of life comes through action in the world. The Christian is the most unworldly of all persons, released from ultimate concern about any event, and knowing that the fulfillment of life does not come from his action in the world.

The escape from the trivial may lie in uncovering a new meaning in the routine. The dictionary defines routine as "a round daily or frequently pursued." The routine has meaning when the person controls the daily round rather than being controlled by it.

In his book *Images of Hope*, William Lynch makes the passing comment that one of the best evidences of human hope lies in a careful concern for detail. But it is a critical concern which knows what details should be forgotten and gives care and attention to those of value.

The doctrine of vocation lived in
(Concluded on page 31)