

Table Talk

News and Views of the
Student Body of The Lutheran
Theological Seminary at Gettysburg.



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BULTMANN READS MOTHER GOOSE

- I-A Hey diddle-diddle,
- I-B The cat and the fiddle,
- II-A The cow jumped over the moon
- II-B The little dog laughed to see such sport,
- III And the dish ran away with the spoon.

1. Authorship and date. Internal evidence rejects the view that we have here an original composition by Mary (Mother) Goose of Boston (1868-1896).¹ The phrasing of I-A is definitely late eighteenth century, since the Goose Period would have rendered it "diddle-diddle" (and thus "fiddle" in I-B). Furthermore, the sequence "cat-cow-dog-dish" represents an obvious redaction and is a compilation of at least four different accounts.² Thus, the author of the piece is unknown,³ and its date is set between 1780 and 1820.⁴ The Sitz im leben of the Depression of 1815 may be reflected in III.

2. Text. The received text is very corrupt. The mythological element in II-A is typical of many other interpolations, as is the anthropomorphism in II-B.⁵ However, I-A may be original, excluding, of course, the "hey."⁶

3. Interpolation. Stripped of its thought forms, the piece tells us of something revolutionary as existentially encountered by three animals, two cooking implements, and one musical instrument.⁷

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- 1. Discussed in F. Saurkraut, Gosses Werke, Vol XIX pp. 845, G.F.W. Steinbanger, Gosserbrief, pp. 75-92, R. Pretzelbender, Die Goosensinger vom Boston, p. 10.
 - 2. See F. Katzenjammer in Goosengeschichtliche Schule Jahrbuch, Vol X
 - 3. Some attribute it to Mary's grandson, Wild Goose, (1793-1849), and other to Wild Gooses' nephew, Cooked (1803-1865) Both views are challenged by A. Kegdrainer in his thirty volume prolegomenon, Gooseleiden, vol X.
 - 4. F. Pfeffernusse contends it is an English translation of a German original by the infant Wagner, See his Geist und Volkgoose, pp27-46.
 - 5. The authenticity of both II-A and II-B is poorly argued by the reactionary American Goosologist, Carl Sandbag in his Old Glory and Mother Goose, (see Vol. IV, The Winters in the South, p. 357
 - 6. The meaning of the word "hey" is now hopelessly obscure. See my articles on "Hey, that ain't" and "Hey, What the..." in Goosengrease, Fall, 1942
 - 7. Perhaps an eclipse of the moon?

FROM THE FACULTY

Our article in this issue, Parish or Perish, is by faculty member, Jacob W. Heikkinen. It begins on page three. We thank Mr. Heikkinen for his contribution to this issue of Table Talk.

WHEN

Our next issue of Table Talk will be published as soon as the spirit moves us. You can help the spirit move. Contribute an article.

Seminary vs. Texas Lunch

It was third time Seminary was playing Texas Lunch in Community Basketball League. I keep the score books and my father keeps the clock. I sensed it would be a terrific game because of the previous games played between the two teams.

The first time they played, the teams both had six wins and no losses. The Texas Lunch team had a 70-some game win streak going in a six year period. Seminary came in second place every year. Texas Lunch won the game by one point.

The second, and supposedly the final game, Texas Lunch had 14 wins and no losses. Seminary compiled a 13 win, one loss record. Seminary upset the league dominators by six points. Frank Barth, at six feet, six inches, who played basketball in college, led all scorers with 23 points.

Both teams had now a record of 14 wins, and only one loss. This meant a playoff game between the two teams to determine the first place team.

I was very excited about the whole thing, and even though I'm the official keeper of the score book, I really wanted to see Seminary win the game.

The third game started and the Lunch jumped out to an early lead. They led at the end of the first quarter by six points. Seminary came back and made the half time score 32 to 27, in favor of the Seminararians. They held the lead to the end of the third quarter, and most of the fourth.

With a minute to play in the game the Lunch came within one, and then with 10 seconds to go, went ahead by one. Seminary got the ball and immediately gave it to Frank Barth. With his shoulder-length hair streaming in the air, he dribbled the whole way up to his end of the court. There were five seconds left. He wanted to shoot, but had three Texas Lunch men guarding him, so he passed off to teammate Tom Jolin. With four seconds remaining, Jolin made the shot from 30 feet out. Texas Lunch immediately called time out. They came back on the floor and gave the ball directly to their star player, Merrill Eckhart. With four seconds left, he dribbled the ball the length of the court and ran into two Seminararians. A split second after the collision, two whistles blew. One, blown by my father, signaled to end the game. The other, blown by the referee, was to signal a foul.

Now a foul on one of the Seminararians would give Eckhart two foul shots, and if he made them both, the Lunch would win. If he made one, the game would go into overtime. A foul on Eckhart however, would end the game, and give Seminary the victory.

Everyone waited for the call. Foul on Eckhart! Seminary won the game and got first place. Frank Barth tallied 18 points for the winners. Final Score: Seminary 54; Texas Lunch 53.

This report was written by Mike Lilley, son of Betty Lilley, for English Class. Mike is a Junior at Gettysburg High School.

PARISH OR PERISH

"Parish or Perish" came to life at the invitation of the senior class of 1971 of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg to share the celebration of their Commencement Day.

Parish or Perish

Text: The Revelation to John, 2:1-7

Let us create a setting far removed from this pleasant and elegant place, and for a few moments transport ourselves into a tent, or a barrack, somewhere in the midst of a prestigious metropolis. The Revelation to John communicates its message by fantasy; it stimulates, in fact, it demands the making of fantasy. There we are, meeting at the Lord's table. The president, our bishop, is absent, being held a prisoner in a penal colony out in the sea, like the Alcatraz in San Francisco Bay. He is a prisoner for confessing the faith, having refused to worship the governmental authority as a divinity. Meeting at worship, we too are under suspicion, relatively insecure, and vulnerable to arrest. A messenger arrives from the island, bearing a letter relating directly to the purpose of our gathering. He brings a word to us teachers and students of the apostolic faith and mission, whose very life is to serve as transmitters of "the charter of Jesus Christ" (to echo a phrase from the Church Father, Ignatius). To us is given a warning and a promise: Parish or parish!

- possess the parish as the arena of your life, or then, perish;
- possess the parish as the home for the homeless in an alien land (the word parish, paroikos, means this literally);
- possess the parish as a home which like a magnet draws people to itself, where a singleness of mind and the one and same Spirit are at work creating a common life of faith, of hope, and of love; where the walls of partition fade away between the place for the training of the intellect and the places where people live and toil, sin and suffer.

The message is: Parish or perish--live or die!

More pleasurable, indeed, it would be to sing hymns of exaltation, to be touched by religious ecstasy, in this festive hour than to be the objects of an X-ray examination of our inner being before the eye of the crucified and risen Christ, the Lord of the Church. He comes too near, He is embarrassingly, even offensively intimate. But, so he came, and so it happened in the days of prophet John, at a time when the Church of Christ faced a double threat to its existence: death from within because of creeping corruption, death from without through hostile pressures exerted by the imperial power of Rome.

It was a Sunday morning when John, in his cell on a mountain side, received a vision, an opening up of Christ's will for his Church. The scenario is surrealistic, that is to say, it is an incredible combining and juxtaposing of images. In a rocky cleft, John hears a voice calling, a voice like the sound of a trumpet, directing him to write what he sees and to send it on to the Asiatic churches. What he saw was this: seven lampstands of gold in a circle, in the center of it a human figure wearing a long robe, with a golden girdle around his breast, and his head is dazzling white, white as wool, white as snow; from his eyes flash flames of fire, his feet are as of burnished bronze; his voice like that of many waterfalls, in his right hand are seven stars, from his mouth projects a two-edged sword for piercing and slicing, and his face is like that of the sun, the sun shining in full force. Paralyzed by this awesome spectacle, he hears a voice say: "Do not be afraid, I am the first and the last, and the living one; I died, and look, I am alive forevermore."

While all of this may seem bewildering, beyond any rational explanation, the stage setting is plain and simple: the seven lampstands represent the seven churches, and the seven stars represent the seven angels, namely, their pastors; in brief, the disclosure from Jesus Christ is addressed to seven parishes and their seven shepherds. Seven symbolizes the wholeness of the Church.

Angel means messenger. In the book of Revelation, the "angel of the church" is the representative messenger of Christ; through him, as an intermediary, "the church is united with the heavenly order, with the hidden reality, which alone makes the church Christ's people" (Paul Minear). It is that hidden order, that concealed community of God, whose reality is ultimately decisive for all sociological forms and historical continuities of ecclesial institutions. Doing double duty: the angel is totally responsible to Christ, to and for the church; he is the communicator between the purpose of Christ and the community committed to the fulfillment of that purpose.

What does John's X-ray show? Commendable achievements, to begin with. Praiseworthy industry, patience when things were going wrong, readiness to remove evil persons from among them; theological rectitude in cutting off the heretics, an unflagging energy and persistency to get things done. All these credits, however, in a single flash, appear in a different light under the charge: "I have this against you; you have abandoned the love you had at first," that fresh, childlike, spontaneous giving of yourselves--free of calculation, free of manipulation, free of envy and competition and therefore free to create trust and invite confidence. Remember from what you have slipped away, do things the way you used to do in the springtime of your early love, turn back, be changed...If you choose not to turn, your accomplishments are as if nothing. Even worse, they will prove to be contrivances of darkness unless the love you once knew and shared be revived. Christina Rossetti's comment on this text is to the point:

Behold, the worm is in the melon;
all that gracious verdure and flourishing
luxuriance is death-stricken.

Have you noted, I ask, how seldom, if ever, we talk seriously about love in our proclamation (least of all in theological discussion)? We're too sophisticated for that! Should we be? We feel disillusioned, believing that love is a hazardous base on which to build anything real,--love is subjective, sentimental. Therefore, it is smarter to use clever words, nice words, sometimes icy words. At any rate, we must use efficient words.

There was placed on display recently the idol of efficiency, that all-consuming monster and Moloch of our Christian style. In the survey uncovering 94 key issues facing the Lutheran Church in America as reported in the Lutheran last March, there glimmers an image of efficiency. Dominant and frequent are these terms: application, public image, services, systems, strategies, structures, projects, promotion, function, effectiveness. On all fronts the appeal converges on productive action. In fact, the desirable objectives raised to preeminence are the very things for which the church at Ephesus was praised! Industry, enthusiasm, zeal, diligent do-it attitude. Luther published 95 major points which shook the foundations of institutions. We have discovered 94, none of which touch the foundations. Of course, this is an unfair comparison, considering the difference in time and place between the 16th century and our times. Yet, I ask, should there be a difference in regard to the quality of primary bases on which the Church's life is founded, for which alone she has a right to claim an existence on earth, namely, to be creative of community, to upbuild the common life of man through the power of the love of God in Jesus Christ? "Above all," the Apostle Paul instructed the Colossian community, "put on love which binds everything together in perfect harmony."

Do we actually see where we are? There comes to mind a whimsical verse, cause for smiles and shudders, from William Blake's "Songs of Experience."

Dear mother, dear mother, the Church is cold but
the Ale-house is healthy and pleasant and warm...
If at the Church they would give us some Ale
We'd sing and we'd pray all the live-long day.
Nor ever once from the Church to stray.
Then the parson might preach, and drink, and sing
And we'd be as happy as birds in the spring...

Ours is a schizoid age (I am not referring to pathology, but in plain words to

a dominant socio-cultural tendency), schizoid in the sense of avoiding closer relationships, keeping out of touch (Rollo May), playing it cool, without deep feeling with minimized sense of responsibility for another human life. Apathy is the key word that best describes it. Love is indeed a problem. It has been said, time and time again, that love solves all problems. Now we are face to face with the problem of love because love has lost its light, having become disjointed from the will. Will without love becomes a callous application of pressure; love without will becomes selfish, sentimental, fickle and unstable. Thus, while we hunger for community, we refuse to will community. The poet, T. S. Elliot, etched this climate of being with remarkable foresight over a generation ago when he wrote:

We are the hollow men...
leaning together
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!¹

What lies behind this rootlessness, this homelessness and hollowness? The spiritual saga of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner," suggests the deep depths of the peculiar loneliness in the consciousness of modern man.

Alone, alone, all, all alone
alone on a wide wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

We note: not a saint took pity... communion of saints is conspicuous by its absence. Koinonia as a participation of life with life is unheard of, unknown.

Now we need to ask: What is the source from which loving and willing spring? Of humanness and wholeness? My young friends: your destiny hinges on this question. The Ephesian congregation received the message: Repent, turn around, go back to your early love, accept the change effected by the death of Christ, which reveals the power of God as the power of invincible, suffering love. John the prophet opened his message, singing,

To him who loves us
and has freed us from sins by his blood
and has made us a kingdom of priests to God the Father
To him be glory and dominion forever and ever...

This message, John urges, is to be spoken out and listened to,

Blessed is he who reads aloud...
blessed are those who hear.

Young brethren and friends: Your life's task is to proclaim the love of God in Christ, not in cliches distressingly familiar and innocuous, but in the specifics of modernity, revealing a wisdom of compassion and care for persons, in their identity and in their solidarity with one another, "wielding the double edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart." Your task is to open deaf ears, to put eyes into the ears, so that our people may come awake and discern where they are, and begin to listen to the voice of the living God. "We have not met our responsibility in the church when we write and read books," wrote Luther, "since there it is essential that the message be spoken and heard. Even though the apostles did write a few things, they spoke many more (Luther himself had a certain hatred for books as books)... we desire that there be more good preachers than good writers in the church. The church is a mouthhouse, no penhouse." These thoughts echo Paul's words: Faith comes through hearing, and hearing through preaching. How are men to hear without a preacher?

It is an extraordinary gift as well as an extra-ordinary burden to serve as a

1. T. S. Elliot, Collected Poems, New York, Harcourt Brace and Co., 1934, p.101.

mouthpiece of the living God. We wish you inexhaustible courage, that very capability which we are unable to pass on by instruction in the Seminary. As the most skilled modern Spanish bull fighter said a few weeks ago on his New York visit: the bull fighter's prime need is courage, but "there are no universities of courage." We can only entrust you in the care of the Shepherd, Jesus Christ, for, "We are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Romans 8:37).

Should you be given the blessing of a long life, be assured that your youth will only revitalize itself. Herman Melville, in Moby Dick, gives a glimpse of the meaning of the pulpit and its occupant. The pulpit is this earth's foremost part as the prow is of its ship. Father Mapple preaching in the Nantucket whaler's chapel, as Melville describes him, was in the hardy winter of a healthy old age, that sort of old age which seems merging into a second flowering youth, for among the fissures of his wrinkles there shown certain mild gleams of a newly developing bloom-- the spring verdure peeping forth even beneath February's snow.

You, friends and servants, hear my little doggerel:

Old preachers never die, they do not even fade away,
they only bloom.

Let him who has ears to hear, hear what the Spirit is saying here and now.

OUT OF THE PAST

"Let no man in or out of authority see it without first reverently raising his hat. It is not possible for many men ever to touch or even look upon a page of a Gutenberg Bible." Thus wrote agent Henry Stevens from London as he sent the first Gutenberg Bible to the United States in 1847.

A leaf of the Gutenberg Bible is one of several rare items currently on display in the A.R. Wentz Library. A valuable illuminated manuscript Bible of the 13th century, other handwritten pages, scrolls of Esther and Job, and candles from the tomb of Abraham at Hebron are a part of this exhibit.

In January the library began featuring displays of some of its historical collection. The first was of a series of woodcuts by Albrecht Durer based on the Revelation of Saint John Apocalypse. Next was a group of lithographs from the VASES ETRUSQUES DE LUCIEN BONAPARTE, PRINCE DE CANINO, dated 1830. Future plans include artifacts from the Zimmerman Collection, S.S. Schmucker's baptismal certificate, Justus Falckner's ordination certificate (the first German Lutheran ordination in the colonies) and other rare possessions of the library.

THANK YOU

For the many ways in which that magnificent and blessed abstraction, the Seminary Community, manifested itself in loving personal contacts after the death of my father, my wife and I want to make known how deeply we appreciated every thought, word and deed.

Howard N. Bream

BE A SQUARE

Things will be swinging at the Refectory at 8:00 P.M. on Friday night, March 30. Marian Myers, caller for the Drummer Boy Campground, will be calling moves, his wife, Bev, helping the novices. Gals, grab your flat heels, Guys, your partners, and meet us there.

swing

yer

partner



TRANSFIGURATION

Those who attended the Transfiguration Eucharist on Feb. 14 most certainly experienced one of those truly "unique" worship events! Although the order of service was familiar to most, the trappings certainly were not. Luther's first liturgical guide was followed to the letter with only slight modifications from how it might have been done in Wittenberg (eg. English instead of Latin and German). It is difficult to believe that anyone went home that night without some kind of reaction to or opinion about what he/she had experienced. Since this writer was initially quite skeptical about the success and reception of this kind of worship at the Seminary, he now feels that certain comments and observations may be appropriate in retrospect.

The Music: Bill Kauffman deserves nothing but the highest praise for his leadership and for helping a choir which had never really been exposed to the intricacies of plainsong to become a more than competent conveyor of its beauties. While most of us had never before heard the Third Setting of The Service (now out of print), the style is not totally unfamiliar to us. The SBH's Second Setting is based on plainsong and derives its style from it. True, it would have been difficult for the congregation as a whole to sing the canticles and responses without prior rehearsal, but the three hymns were glorious examples of what congregations can do with plainsong when given the chance! Too often we let ourselves become enslaved to musical instruments in worship, insisting that people just aren't confident enough to sing a cappella, let alone unfamiliar hymns. This simply is not predictable! This congregation did a beautiful job of both listening to and then following the lead of the choir. The unison singing of the whole worshipping assembly was truly beautiful. It might also be noted that there was considerably less "dragging" in the singing than usual - something we can count on happening when we lazily depend on the organ to pull us along! The congregation did its "liturgy" admirably well and it was rather unfortunate that more congregational hymn-singing was not used during the Communion. The absence of "Of the Father's love begotten" (SBH #17) was notable since it is probably the most familiar of the plainsong hymns. More difficult but still possible are #147, 206, 277, and 483. In short, although the congregation may have had to concentrate more than usual on listening and singing, it sounded fantastic! (Bill Kauffman has it on tape if you need convincing!)

The Ceremonial: In this age of liturgical renewal, reform, revision, and revulsion, our search for "relevance" can easily lead us astray. Brother Martin had a healthy respect for tradition in worship and saw it not as a necessary evil, but as a force for unity and continuity. His loyalty to Catholic worship patterns, purged of the various heresies of his own era, is well known. While today we may either chuckle or shudder at some of his liturgical ineptitude, the basic principles which guided his revision are still important: (1) the centrality of the Gospel as Proclamation in all acts of worship, and (2) the ability of the people to be active witnesses to that proclamation. Obviously certain ceremonials are no longer as clearly interpreted as they were at one time, but on the other hand, some ceremonies once totally foreign to Lutherans have been revived, the offertory procession and the passing of peace being good examples. We can easily dismiss the consideration of any ceremonials by dismissing them as adiaphora! However, we too often confuse "non-essential" with "un-important" and end up with only poverty in our worship instead of the vitality of symbolic and parabolic action. Thus out of either ignorance or bias it is easy for us to be just as narrow-minded about what is "appropriate liturgically" as those hundreds of congregations at whom we hurl the same accusation. Whether we be spikes or Prots, our prissy ways are equally dangerous. The desire for "relevance" and/or "correctness" can easily breed monotony and intolerance without occasional reminders of the church's worship heritage. Some extremists in the "relevance" faction of liturgical renewal would even discredit Holy Communion itself in their compulsive drive for perfection..."why not coke and potato chips?" they argue. Let us never forget that our worship also connects us with the communion of saints in all times and all places and that the Spirit has the power to convey his Work and works through the very Sacraments and sacramentals we often deride.

I make no attempt to critique the entire catalog of Western ceremonial at this point; let those who have more interest and expertise in such matters make their

cases for genuflections, ablutions, censings, prostrations, and processions. I would like to make my case for two simple ceremonial actions based on our experience with Formula Missae. That certain ceremonials have more credibility and vitality than others is largely a matter of opinion. Here is mine.

The posture of kneeling, while almost abandoned today, has been traditionally used by Lutherans as an act of penitence and humility. Having thought about the moments during the Transfiguration Liturgy which we marked by kneeling, and also, having taken a similar lesson from our Anglican brethren, I would like to suggest that we have been too restrictive of this ancient act of worship. How appropriate a response to God's incredible act of incarnation it was to fall on our knees in humility and respect at the creedal confession FOR US...CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN. How appropriate a response to God's act of redemption and grace it was to fall on our knees at the proclamation THIS IS MY BODY. How appropriate it was to kneel in wonder, adoration, and thankfulness to receive God's heavenly food (something we really cannot experience gathered around our usual "musical table"). And finally how appropriately conducive to experiencing God's blessing it was to kneel for the benediction.

Another non-essential but meaningful ceremony is the elevation. Long gone from Lutheran liturgies since the sacrificial purge, perhaps it has a more obvious use for us. How many of us will have to cope with East-wall altars for some years to come? By lifting the bread and wine so that all may see (either at the offertory or the verba or both) we draw the worshipper's attention to what God will do for us through these common elements. Using other ceremonial acts such as bowing and prayer postures for the hands may be very helpful for the congregation's attitude toward what is happening. The blank, inexpressive back of the pastor is hardly helpful in dispelling the myths about magic and hocus-pocus many of our parishioner still hold. And besides it's boring!

In short, some ceremonial acts, done properly and expressively, can add to rather than detract from the drama of worship. This brings up a final observation about the drama itself, the roles of the actors.

Participation: Doubtless the most common criticism of this kind of worship arises at this point. How does the congregation participate in action which is so "high priestly?" Lutherans are the fuss-budgets of all Christendom when it comes to how participation in liturgical action is to be accomplished! Some other questions must be asked before any solution is possible, however. Does "corporate action" necessarily demand "unison activity?" The choir chants a psalm, the clergy kneel or move about in some symbolic action, the congregation witnesses and meditates: in an era when personal piety is being encouraged and is hopefully reappearing, who is to deny the validity of such activity as "participation?" The choir, the congregation, the celebrant, the deacon, the acolytes all have their parts in worship - why must everybody's part always be the same?

Though most of us prefer more overt participation in worship, this kind of ceremonial worship can occasionally serve as a reminder that corporate worship requires specific actors to perform specific roles. It is too easy for us to think that corporate is synonymous with unison and consequently miss out on the action of the drama which we re-enact whenever we gather to share the feast which he has prepared: the Good Friday-Easter-Pentecost event, our own dying and rising with Christ into new life. In Lutheran worship we are both givers and receivers, both workers and witnesses. During the rapid swing toward "involvement" in worship, let us beware lest we lose sight of God's unsolicited gift to us which Luther emphasized in his worship forms!

In conclusion, perhaps many disagree with the motivation behind ritualistic ceremonial. Perhaps others would like to see the elements of mystery and wonder more recognized by the modern church. Wherever we stand individually, at least we all ought to be able to admit that intelligent worship activity requires a certain amount of education into the meaning behind these activities: A certain amount of responsible roll-playin_ is required for the drama to be enacted.

Walter Startzel