

The Meaning of "Meaning It"

IN GOETHE'S day it became fashionable for German and Nordic men of the arts and sciences to divide their lives into the periods "before" and "after" their first trip to Italy—as if a thinking and feeling man's humanist awareness was fully ripe only after Nordic discipline and thought had been combined with the style and sensuality of the Mediterranean.

Luther, too, went to Rome. What we know of this visit and of his reactions, however, indicates not only a monastic self-restriction, but also a decidedly provincial unawareness of the nature and the culture of the South, and a strange anonymity, considering the fact that ten years later he became the Pope's effective antagonist. In the autumn of 1510 he set out for Rome on foot, one of two monks who were to present in the Vicar General's office in Rome an urgent appeal from a number of Augustinian monasteries of the Saxon congregation. These monasteries were opposed to plans already decreed by a papal bull, on recommendation of the General of the Order, Mariano de Genazzano, to give Staupitz, just appointed provincial general of all of Saxony, sweeping power to reorganize the twenty-nine monasteries of his congregation. Twenty-two of the monasteries had approved the plans; but seven objected, among them Nuremberg and Erfurt, the two largest and most influential. Over Staupitz's head they decided to send two representatives to Rome. The official spokesman was probably an older monk from Nuremberg; his mandatory *socius itinerarius* (for an Augustinian never traveled alone) was Father Luther from Erfurt. Exactly what mixture of

political principle, inescapable obedience, local loyalty, or personal ambivalence was responsible for Martin's selection for this errand is impossible to know.

By its very absence of any overt sensation, Martin's journey was an event strange to behold. The future reformer, acting as chaperon to an older monk on a regional routine errand to the capital, crosses Southern Germany and Northern Italy, climbs over the Alps and the Apennines, all on foot, and mostly in abominable weather, finally "comes upon the Italian Renaissance," and notices nothing; just as nobody notices anything unusual about him.

He passed through Florence, where, as yet a public novelty of a few years, Michelangelo's gigantic David stood on the porch of the Signoria, a sculptured declaration of the emancipation of youth from dark giants. Little more than a decade before, Savonarola had been burned in Florence: a man of fiery sincerity; a man who, like Martin, had tried academic life, and had found it ideologically wanting; who also had left home to become a monk, and, at the age of twenty-nine, after a long latency as an orator, had burst out preaching against the papal Antichrist. He also became the leader not only of a local political movement, but of an international movement of rebellious northerners. Luther later called him a saint; but there is every reason to believe that at the time of this journey both the visual splendor and the passionate heroism of the Renaissance were to him primarily Italian, and foreign; the social leadership of Savonarola, with its Christian utopianism, must have seemed far removed from whatever Protestant yearning Martin may have felt. What he did notice in Florence was the devoted and quiet *Riformazione* which went along with the noisy and resplendent *Risorgimento*: he admired the personal service rendered to the poor by anonymous aristocrats; he noted the hygienic and democratic administration of hospitals and orphanages.

He and his companion completed their extramural duties in as short a time as possible (as monks should) and took advantage of their trip (as was then routine) to make a general confession at the very center of Christendom. He first beheld The City, as many travelers and pilgrims before and after him, from a certain spot on the ancient Via Cassia; he reached his order's host monastery immediately after having entered through the Porta del Popolo. Once established, Martin seems to have gone about his errand like a repre-

sentative of some firm or union who accompanies an official to the federal capital to see the secretary of a department about an issue already decided against them. He spent much time commuting from his hotel to the department, and more time there in waiting rooms; never saw the secretary himself, and left without knowing the disposition of their appeal. In the meantime, he saw the sights which one must see and attempted to be properly impressed; also he heard a lot of gossip which, when he returned home, he undoubtedly distributed as inside information. All in all, however, the inner workings of the capital have remained mysterious to him.

In one respect, however, Martin differed from most travelers. Although he accepted most of the trip with sober thought, he approached certain of the routine sights with the fervor of a most desperate pilgrim. His attempt to devote himself, in his spare time, to some highly promoted observances in Rome seems to indicate a last endeavor on his part to settle his inner unrest with ceremonial fervor, by the accomplishment of works.

Those who visualize the beggar-monk awed by the splendor of ancient Rome and seething with vociferous indignation about papal luxury will be disappointed to hear first of all that the city of Rome, at that time, was primarily a wasteland of rubble which Martin had to cross on his daily walks from the Augustinian monastery near the Chiesa Santa Maria del Popolo to the center of town. The ancient city had not been restored since the Normans had burned it in 1084. The only architectural signs of life were monasteries, hunting lodges, and the summer houses of the aristocracy; and the only human signs of life were hordes of brigands. A medieval city, with only twice as many people as Erfurt, and with very little of Erfurt's sedate merchant spirit functioned in the flatlands of the Tiber. Papal Rome itself had the character of an administrative capital with ministries, legations, financial houses, hotels, and inns; it was, at the time, deserted by all important functionaries, who had followed the Pope to a warfront. Every monastic order had a central office in Rome, as well as a mother monastery; but a monk on business would not get any closer to the Vatican than the office of his order's procurator. Martin was able to meet only some bureaucrats, lobbyists, the shyster lawyers, and the political agents attached to the various office-holders; and the prostitutes of both sexes who beset them all.

As for Renaissance splendor, the city architecture did not reflect much of it as yet. Imposing avenues had been planned and partially laid out; and a few grandiose palaces, with rather stern and simple exteriors, had been erected to house the Renaissance which was on the move to Rome. But whatever existed of uniform styles of life and of art was confined mostly to the exclusive interiors of these palaces; the streets were still medieval in character. Michelangelo was at work on the ceilings of the Sistine Chapel, and Raphael was adorning the walls of the Pope's chambers; but these projects were private, and excluded, if not the *popolo* of aristocrats, certainly the populace at large, and all undistinguished foreigners. St. Peter's was in the process of being rebuilt, many of the old buildings having been torn down to make space for that imperial edifice which would not be completed for another century. What in style was a renaissance of Caesarian antiquity, no doubt seemed primarily Italian to the busy German monk; he was interested in works of art only for the sake of some curious historical circumstance, or gigantic proportions, or some surprising realism of technique which always impresses those who have not specifically learned to enthuse about a new style.

In his provincial eagerness to absorb the spiritual possibilities of Rome, Martin visited the seven churches, fasting all the way, in order to be ready for communion in St. Peter's, the last and most important. He had no thought of disengaging himself from the flourishing relic business, and he went eagerly to see the arms of his beloved St. Anne, which were displayed in a church separately from the rest of her bones. He saw with awe the halves of the bodies of St. Peter and of St. Paul, which had been weighed to prevent injustice to the church harboring the other halves. The churches were proud of these saintly slices: some later saints, immediately after their souls' departures, had been carefully boiled to prepare their bones for immediate shipment to worthy bidders. With these and other relics, the various churches maintained a kind of permanent fair where one could see, for a fee, Jesus's footprint in a piece of marble, or one of Judas's silver coins. One sight of this coin could save the viewer fourteen hundred years in purgatory; the wanderer along the holy road from the Lateran Church to St. Peter's had done his afterlife as much good as by a pilgrimage to the holy sepulchre in Jerusalem. And so much cheaper.

It is easy to say that the relics were just for the people and that the Church's intellectuals worked hard to reconcile faith and reason. Luther was, and always remained, one of the people; and like highly intelligent men of any age who do not challenge the propaganda of their government or the advertisements of the dominant economic system, Martin had become accustomed to the worst kind of commercialism. Back in Wittenberg Frederic was displaying such relics as a branch of the Burning Bush of Moses, thorns from the Crown of Thorns, and some of the straw of the Manger. The display even included a hair and a drop of milk from the Virgin herself. Later, of course, Luther raged against both the commercialism and the inanity of such "stinking" practices; in Rome, he still so much wanted to be of the people that he did not really rouse ~~from~~ his medieval twilight world. Only his obsessional symptoms stirred. He ran like a "mad saint" through all the churches in vain, finally advancing up the twenty-eight steps of the Lateran Church on his knees, saying a paternoster on each step in the conviction that each paternoster would free a soul from purgatory (without that soul being consulted, as he dared to comment only years later). Arriving on the top, all he could think was: "Who knows whether it is true?" But then, on the way up he had entertained the classical obsessional thought that he "almost" wished his parents dead so that he could use this golden opportunity to save them more surely.

Also typically, he was bothered most by affronts against the very observance which caused the greatest scruples in himself, namely, the Mass. He was horrorstricken when he heard German courtesans laugh and say that the Roman priests, under their breath, were murmuring "*Panis es, panis manebis, vinum es, vinum manebis*"—Bread and wine thou art, and shall always be. And, indeed, the priests' driving hurry was more than obvious to him, the slow pious German, who had come determined to celebrate the Mass faultlessly at the traditional altars, and get the most value out of the occasion. He did not like to be told, "*Passa, passa*—Hurry up, get on." In Sebastian's Basilica, he saw seven priests celebrate Mass at one altar in just one hour. Worst of all, they did not know Latin, and their careless, furtive, undisciplined gestures seemed a mockery. He had desired above all to say Mass on a Saturday in front of the entrance to the chapel *Sancta Sanctorum*; for this act would contribute materially to his mother's salvation. But alas, the rush was too great;

some mothers, Martin's included, never had a chance. So he went and ate a salted herring. All these hindrances and nuisances, however, were to Martin at the time expressions of the Italian national character, not of the Church's decline. He felt at home in only one church in Rome: Santa Maria dell' Anima, the German church, whose sacristan he remembered long and well.

Luther later mentioned (as far as the records show) only a few impressions of the seventy days of traveling, and they are all utilitarian. He admired the grandiose aqueducts in Rome, and he gave the Florentine aristocrats high praise for their well-run orphanages and hospitals, ignoring whatever other merits they may have prided themselves on. He judged the old St. Peter's acoustics to be as bad as those of the dome in Cologne and the cathedral in Ulm. He liked the fertile valley of the Po; but Switzerland was a "country full of sterile mountains."

Luther ignored the Renaissance and never referred to the esthetic quality of a single one of its statues or pictures, painters, or writers; this is a historical as well as a personal footnote. It takes time, especially for deeply preoccupied people, to comprehend the unity of the beginnings of an era which later will be so neatly classified in history books. Even today, when history has reached the height of journalistic self-consciousness, important trends and events can remain invisible before our eyes. If Luther did not notice the Renaissance, that does not in itself mean that he was not a man of the Renaissance. Erasmus, who had been in Rome a year earlier, and had had access to the papal chambers, never mentioned Michelangelo or Raphael. And Martin was, most of all, a religious egotist who had not learned to speak to either man or God, nor to speak glamorously and in a revitalized vernacular as the Renaissance demanded. He was a provincial Saxon who had studied Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and who had still to create, out of his own explosive needs, the German language with which to speak to his own people.

The traveler of today, however, will find in the Uffizi in Florence, among the grandiose works of Renaissance painting, Cranach's small, exquisite, and sober portrait of Martin Luther.

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case, even German) ox did *not* say. Some have wondered how, in the space of a few years, such a man could grow into a great reformer. Others have suspected that as he was retracing his steps over the wintry Alps, he was seething with well-formulated indignation. Above all, however, his behavior on this trip, and his later utterances concerning it, have been used to bolster the image of Luther as a medieval man, utterly untouched by the Renaissance, to which he seemed blind.

Visually unreceptive he was, to an extraordinary degree. I propose this consideration, however: Luther simply had not reached the end of his creative latency. An original thinker often waits a long time not only for impressions, but also for his own reactions. (Freud was unreceptive to "musical noise," Darwin nauseated by higher literature. Freud did not become a psychoanalyst, nor Darwin an evolutionist, until they had reached the end of their twenties.) In the meantime he lives, as it were, in his preconscious, storing up in other than verbal images what impressions he receives, and keeping his affects from premature conclusions. One could say that Luther was compulsively retentive, or even that he was mentally and spiritually "constipated"—as he was apt to be physically all his life. But this retentive tendency (soon to alternate with an explosive one) was part of his equipment; and just as we assume that psychosexual energies can be sublimated, we must grant that a man can (and must) learn to derive out of the modes of his psychobiological and psychosexual make-up the prime modality of his creative adaptation. The image of Martin inhibited and reined in by a tight retentiveness must be supplemented by one which shows him taming his affects and restraining his speech until he would be able to say in one and the same explosive breath what he had come to really *mean*, what he really had thought through. In order to know himself what he thinks, such a "total" man is dependent on his need to combine intellectual meaning with an inner sense of meaning it. My main proposition is that, after he had come thus to *mean* it, Luther's message (in the first form of his early lectures) did contain a genuine Renaissance attitude. But since a renaissance emerges *against* something, it is necessary to discuss briefly those elements of the dogma which to Luther and his contemporaries were ideological alternatives, and which he restated, rejuvenated, or repudiated in his early lectures.

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Our problem centers around the contribution of religious dogma and practice to the sense of identity of an age. All religions assume that a Higher Identity inhabits the great unknown; men of different eras and areas give this Identity a particular appearance or configuration from which they borrow that part of their identity which we may call *existential*, since it is defined by the relation of each soul to its mere existence. (In this context we should not be sidetracked by such monastic-ascetic techniques as those that systematically diminish man's sense of an individual identity; for they may be rather a supreme test of having a pretty firm one.) The particular Christian combination of a Higher Identity in the form of a Personal Maker of an absolutist moral bent, and a father figure who became more human in heaven as he became more totalitarian on earth was, we suggest, gradually robbing medieval man of just that existential identity which religion owed him.

As was pointed out in the Prologue, the matter is never strictly a religious one, even though the medieval Church could claim a monopoly on official ideologies. The question always involves those events, institutions, and individuals which actually influence the world-image at a given time in such a way that the identity needs of individuals are vitally affected, whether such influence is or is not quite conscious, generally intended, officially sanctioned, or specifically enforced. The problem is a psychohistorical one, and I can do no more than suggest it. There are two sides to it: what makes an ideology *really* effective at a given historical moment? and what is the nature of its effects on the individuals involved?

Consider for a brief moment certain great names of our time, which prides itself on a dominant identity enhanced by scientific truth. Darwin, Einstein, and Freud—omitting Marx, who was a conscious and deliberate ideological craftsman—would certainly deny that they had any intention of influencing, say, the editorials, or the vocabulary, or the scrupulosity of our time in the ways in which they undoubtedly did and do. They could, in fact, refute the bulk of the concepts popularly ascribed to them, or vaguely and anonymously derived from them, as utterly foreign to their original ideas, their methodology, and their personal philosophy and conduct. Darwin did not intend to debase man to an animal; Einstein did not preach relativism; Freud was neither a philosophical pansexualist nor a moral egotist. Freud pointed squarely to the psy-

chohistorical problem involved when he said that the world apparently could not forgive him for having revised the image of man by demonstrating the dependence of man's will on unconscious motivation, just as Darwin had not been forgiven for demonstrating man's relationship to the animal world, or Copernicus for showing that our earth is off-center. Freud did not foresee a worse fate, namely that the world can absorb such a major shock by splintering it into minor half-truths, irrelevant exaggerations, and brilliant distortions, mere caricatures of the intended design. Yet somehow the shock affects the intimate inner balance of many, if not all, contemporary individuals, obviously not because great men are understood and believed, but because they are felt to represent vast shifts in man's image of the universe and of his place in it—shifts which are determined concomitantly by political and economic developments. The tragedy of great men is that they are the leaders and yet the victims of ideological processes.

From time to time, a great institution tries to monopolize, to stabilize, and to master the ideological process. The Church was such an institution. I shall try to reformulate from this point of view some of the main ideological influences which affected Luther's observances and studies.

Christianity, like all great movements, had its heroic era, repeatedly appealed to as a mythical justification, but rarely recaptured in earnest.

What is known of the early Christians of the Paulinian era creates the impression that they lived in the kind of clean and clear atmosphere which exists only after a catastrophic storm. This storm, of course, was Christ's passion. He had died for all men. To his followers, for a while, the merry-go-round of destruction and restoration which characterizes man's cycle of war and peace, festivals and carnivals, intoxication and remorse, had come to rest. The legend of Christ conveyed that total presence and absolute transcendence which is the rarest and the most powerful force among men. A few simple words had once more penetrated the disguises and pretenses of this world, words which at one and the same time were part of the language of the child, the language of the unconscious, and the language of the uncorrupted core of all spiritual tradition. Once again the mortal vulnerability of the individual soul had become the very

backbone of its spiritual strength; the very fragility of a new beginning promised to move mountains. Death, fully accepted, became the highest identity on earth, superseding the need for smaller identities, and assuring at least one unquestionable equality for poor and rich, sick and healthy, ignorant and erudite. The disinherited (disinherited in earthly goods, and in social identity) above all desired to hear and rehear those words which made their inner world, long stagnant and dead, reverberate with forgotten echoes; this desire made them believe that God, from somewhere in the outer spaces, spoke through a chosen man on a definable historical occasion. Because the savior used the biological parable of a sonship of God, they believed in a traceable divine descentance of the son. But alas, having hardly made a God out of the son, they brought the Father down to a level where He seems much too human—for such a son.

The early Christians could be brothers and sisters, eating together without murderous envy, and together partaking of Him Who had commanded them to do so. They were able to ignore obsessive laws of observance, and improvise ritual and conduct as faith seemed to suggest—for had not the Son's uncorrupted self-sacrifice been accepted as valid by the Father of all fathers? History was dead. They could ignore the horizontal of worldly organization, that exchange of bewildering different currencies, all dirty from too much handling, and forever mutually contradictory in exchange value, forever cheating somebody, and most often everybody; they could concentrate on the vertical which connects each man's soul with the higher Identity in heaven, bringing down the currency of charity, and taking faith back up to Him. Occasionally in world history, communities like the early Christians have existed, and do exist, like a field of flowers, even though no one would mistake the single member for a lily, as St. Paul did not. What gave them, as a community, a glow greater than the sum of their individual selves was the identity of knowing transcendence: "We know, therefore we are—in eternity." St. Paul said to them, as if he were speaking to a garden of children: "You may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted."¹ Such identity, vulnerable as it seems, is indestructible in its immediate conviction, which carries within it a sense of reality common to good proselytizers and good martyrs.

I saw a small and transient example of the gaiety of *Agape* only

two decades ago, in a small pueblo in our Southwest. Though excommunicated by the Roman Church for an act of collective disobedience, the pueblo was preparing for a religious holiday, I think Easter. The men were mending the adobe walls of the church, the young people formed a chain to hand buckets of water from the brook, and the women, dressed in gay colors, were scrubbing and washing the church. Where the altar had been, an elder sat, wrinkled, shrewd, and dignified; he was the oldest and the newest priest, and was supervising the construction of a madonna, an enormous ball of colorful cloth topped by a tiny crowned head. Somewhere on her global bosom there lay a tiny pink baby doll. Instead of candles this goddess was surrounded by magnificent cornstalks. One could not help feeling that the concordant gaiety which bound these people together in the improvisation of a religion, combining the best of the old and the new, was a response to having been freed from the supervision of the law. In ignoring the excommunication they gained a gay energy from the historical vacuum. Some, of course, sulked and worried in their houses; and in the background was the absent priest, who was being sacrificially murdered by the proceedings.

Those early Christians did play havoc with the organized world, the horizontal relation of things and events in space and time. Unhistorically, unhierarchically, and unconditionally, they treated as of no substance or avail the Jewish identity of patriarchal law, the Roman identity of world-citizenship, and the Greek identity of body-mind harmony. All human order was only of this world, which was coming to a foreseeable end.

Christianity also had its early organizational era. It had started as a spiritual revolution with the idea of freeing an earthly proletariat for victory in another world after the impending withering of this one. But as always, the withering comes to be postponed; and in the meantime, bureaucracies must keep the world in a state of preparedness. This demands the administrative planning and the theoretical definition of a double citizenship: one vertical, to take effect *when*; and one horizontal, always in effect *now*. The man who first conceived of and busily built the intersection of the horizontal and the vertical was St. Paul, a man converted out of a much too metropolitan identity conflict between Jewish rabbi, Roman citizen, and

Greek philosopher not to become an empire-builder and doctrine-former. His much-traveled body reached Rome only to be beheaded; but his organizational testament merged with that of Christ's chosen successor, the sturdy Peter, to eventually establish in the capital of the horizontal empire of Rome a permanent anchorage and earthly terminal for all of man's verticals. (Luther, in his first theological restatements, was identifying with Paul's evangelical identity: he did not know, until it was to be foisted on him, how much he was preparing to identify with Paul's managerial fervor, his ecclesiastic identity, as well.)

The sacrifice, in whose blood the early gnostic identity had flourished, was gradually sacrificed to dogma; and thus that rare sublimation, that holiday of transcendence, which alone had been able to dissolve the forces of the horizontal, was forfeited. Philosophically and doctrinally, the main problem became the redefinition of the sacrifice so that its magic would continue to bind together, in a widening orbit, not only the faith of the weak and the simple, but also the will of the strong, the initiative of the ambitious, and the reason of the thinking. In each of these groups, also, the double citizenship meant a split identity: an eternal, always impending, one, and one within a stereotyped hierarchy of earthly estates. For all of these groups an encompassing theology had to be formulated and periodically reformulated.

The philosophers thus had their task set out for them: the theoretical anchoring of the vertical in the horizontal in such a way that the identities of the horizontal would remain chained to each other in a hierarchical order which would continue to receive its values and its style from the Church. To maintain itself, an ideological monopoly must assure all the stereotyped roles it creates, from the bureaucratic and ceremonial center to the militant and defensive outposts on the periphery, a sense of invigorating independence, without weakening their common bond to the centralized source of a common Super-Identity. The Roman Church, more than any other church or political organization, succeeded in making an ideological dogma—formulated, defended, and imposed by a central governing body—the exclusive condition for *any* identity on earth. It made this total claim totalitarian by using terror. In this case (as in others) the terror was not always directly applied to quivering bodies; it

was predicted for a future world, typically in such a way that nobody could quite know whom it would hit, or when. That a man has or may have done something mortally bad, something which may or may not ruin his eternal after-condition, makes his status and inner state totally dependent on the monopolists of salvation, and leaves him only the identity of a potential sinner. As in the case of all terror, the central agency can always claim not to be responsible for the excessive fervor of its operatives; in fact, it may claim it has dissuaded its terrorists by making periodic energetic pronouncements. These, however, never reach the lowly places where life in the raw drives people into being each others' persecutors, beginning with the indoctrination of children.

One philosophical problem, then, involved the definition of the vertical's earthly anchorage in the Church, its unseen destination in heaven, and the kind of traffic it would bear back and forth. This is the question of man's identity in the hidden face of God, and of God's in the revealed face of man; it includes the possibility of ever receiving an inkling of mutual recognition as through a glass darkly, or the shadow of a smile. The philosophers did not shirk concreteness and substantiality; and all the concepts we will mention must be understood to be as thing-like as we can conceive them to be: who is man in this world of things? what equipment does he have to approach God in the hope of making contact, to be heard and perhaps to be given a message? Who is God? and where, and what equipment does He use to partake in life on earth, for the sake of whatever investment He may have in it? The idea that Christ had been divinity become mortal and had returned to be next to and in God again became dogma only centuries after his death, at which time the question became involved in the nascent scientific curiosity (then guided entirely by philosophy) which called for answers combining gnostic immediacy with philosophic speculation, and with naturalist observation; all within a framework of obedience to the Church's dogma.

Plato's Absolute Good, the world of pure ideas, was for thinking people the strongest contender to the idea of a personal god; its pole was the Absolute Bad, the world of special appearances and worldly involvements. Christianity defended itself, as it absorbed them, against Platonism and Aristotelianism; thus, questions of the

relatively greater identity and of the differential initiative of the two worlds became paramount. Does he who learns to recognize the more real also become more real—and more virtuous into the bargain? And who has the initiative in the matter? Is God waiting for our moves, or is He moving us? Do we have the leeway of some initiative? if so, how do we know of it and learn to use it—and when do we forfeit it?

It has been said that Descartes's "I think, therefore I am" marked the end of medieval philosophy, which began with St. Augustine, who saw in man's ability to think the proof not only of God's existence, but also of God's grace. Augustine thought that man's "inner light" is the realization of the *infusio caritatis*, so that we may speak of a *caritative* or *infused identity*. It is precisely because Augustine centered all his theology in faith that Luther called him the greatest theologian since the apostles and before Luther. Augustine (as Luther, later) made no concession about the completeness of *perditio*, man's total lostness, nor is he less relentlessly convinced that only God has Being by Himself. "Things," he says, "are and are not; they are because from God they derive existence; they are not because they only *have* being, they *are* not being. . . . they exist not all at once, but by passing away and succeeding, they together complete the universe, whereof they are a portion."² Man, without grace, would obviously be no different: he, too, passes away. Without grace, the identity of man is also one of the mere succession of men. But God gave him a mind and a memory, and thus the rudiment of an identity.

These things do I within, in that vast court of my memory. For there are present within me, heaven, earth, sea, and whatever I could think on therein, besides what I have forgotten. There also meet I with myself, and recall myself, and when, where, and what I have done, and under what feelings. There be all which I remember, either on my own experience or other's credit. Out of the same store do I myself with the past continually combine fresh and fresh likenesses of things which I have experienced, or, from what I have experienced, have believed: and thence again infer future actions, events and hopes, and all these again I reflect on, as present. . . . Sure I am that in it Thou dwellest, since I have remembered Thee ever since I learnt Thee, and there I find Thee, when I call Thee to remembrance.³

In spite of Augustine's pessimistic statements about man's total perdition, then, he does seem to be rather glad to meet himself face to face in his own memory. Nonetheless, it is a gift of God's *caritas* that he can thus meet himself, for, as Paul said: "Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?"⁴ To look at himself in his own memory without being grateful to God would be narcissism—what Augustine calls *praesumptio* which, together with *superbia*, constitutes man's greatest sin: egomania. For man forfeited all free will when he was born human, and thus sick in origin (*morbus originis*). Because of Christ's sacrifice, he is able to receive through baptism redemption from the sins of previous generations; but he is still burdened with *concupiscentia*, with the "touchwood, the tinder, of sin" (*fomes peccati*). He is only a *homo naturalis*, but does have the chance that his mind might be recreated by the infusion of God's grace, and that he might become a *homo spiritualis*.

To Augustine, *concupiscentia* was covetousness, and thus libido, which is not sin, but only the stuff sin is made of; it becomes sin through man's *consensus*. By a free act of love, God can give man the ability *not* to identify with his own drives. But should man sin, there is still God's *miseriordia indebita*, his pity, which is available even to the undeserving. Thus, whatever we are and become, what we can do and will do, is all a gift from God: *Ex Deo nobis est, non ex nobis*. But for all his renunciation of free will, Augustine shows a pathway up the vertical whose waysigns are *fruitio* and *perfectio*. His theology, compared with those that followed, is a maternal one; in it the wretched human being is forever reassured that, because of Christ's sacrifice, he is born with a chance in life; growth, and fruition, and possible perfection are open to him; and he may always expect his share, and more, of the milk of grace.

St. Augustine saved the Church from Platonism by embracing and converting it; St. Thomas did the same with the Aristotelianism which re-emerged in the middle ages, intellectually ornamented by the medical and mystical Arabs and Jews. Platonism, the orientation toward the Idea, was, through St. Thomas' work, augmented by a new orientation toward the facts and forces of Nature. God, the *prima veritas* and the primary good, was shown to reveal Himself in His creation as the prime Planner and Builder. He was the *causa*

causans; although man was only a *causa secunda*, he could feel necessary both as a planned part of this created world, and as its contemplator and theorist.

Aristotle had left Plato intact, but complemented him: God was the *sola gratia*, and it remained of prime importance to distinguish between *quod est ex gratia* and *quod est ex libero arbitrio*—that which originates in God's love, and that which man can accomplish with his God-given reason and free will. God was the only Being which, "being to all beings the cause of their being," was His own necessity. But it is clear that Aristotle permitted reason and will a greater leeway; they were active participants in the "creativity of creatures," which gave man's identity an independent method of self-verification. In theological terms, this process was one of reading God's goodness from the *ordo* which he had manifested in the world. Man could practise his power of observation by contemplating forms and similarities, images and ideas; he could establish causalities and eventually translate them into experiments, and thus become God's assistant planner and mover. In St. Augustine the currency which passed along the vertical between the two worlds was faith and love. St. Thomas added the currency of perceived form and order. God's message was perceivable in the *ordo divina*; man's equipment included the ability to perceive order; and there was prescribed order in the inner formability of man. So that he can negotiate among all these orders, man is given a number of organs: intuitive vision; perception on the basis of faith; and recognition *per rationem rationalem*. Man's reason, in turn, is given a high enough place in the order of things so that even matters of good and bad can, and in fact, must, be reasoned out. This may lead to no more than a *certitudo conjecturae*; but at any rate, St. Thomas reserves a place for active and reasonable conjecture where before there was room for only faith and hope. In this philosophy man as a contemplator acquires a new identity, that of a "theorist." We may, therefore, speak of Thomism as centering in a *rational identity*: the identity verified by a divine order perceived by reason.

It is clear that through Thomism theology acquired as its own those Aristotelian strivings for observation and speculation which became dominant in the Renaissance. But man's equipment for observation and reason still needed divine encouragement to give it the *perseverantia* to utilize the *cooperatio* between the two worlds.

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A greater synthesis between Antiquity and Christianity, Reason and Faith, could not be conceived; its immediate results were a dignified piety, immaculate thought, and an integrated cosmology well-suited to the hierarchic and ceremonial style of the whole era. Luther's question however, was whether, in this synthesis, problems of conscience are not drawn into the sphere of reason, rather than reason being incorporated into faith.

St. Thomas, an architectural thinker and himself an expression of the *ordo* in which he recognized God's message, was also representative of the highest expression of the medieval identity: the grandiose as well as minute *stylization* which characterized the cathedrals, built for eternity, and the ceremonies, which allegorized God's order in the microcosm of special occasions. Ceremonialism permits a group to behave in a symbolically ornamental way so that it seems to represent an ordered universe; each particle achieves an identity by its mere interdependency with all the others. In ceremonial stylization, the vertical and the horizontal met; the Church's genius for hierarchic formulization spread from the Eucharist to the courts, the market places, and the universities, giving the identity of medieval man an anchor of colors, shapes, and sounds. The medieval ceremonialist also tried to place man in a symbolic and allegoric order, and in the static eternity of estates and castes, by drawing up minute and detailed laws of conduct: thus man partook of a gigantic as well as a minute order by giving himself ceremonial identities set apart by extravagantly differentiated roles and costumes.

It must be added, however, that active self-perpetuation and self-verification in the ceremonial microcosms were restricted to small groups of ecclesiastic and secular aristocracies. The masses could participate only as onlookers, as the recipients of a reflection of a reflection. This parasitic ceremonial identity lost much of its psychological power when the excessive stylization of the ruling classes proved to be a brittle defense against the era's increasing dangers; the plague and syphilis, the Turks, and the discord of popes and princes. At the same time, the established order of material and psychological warfare (always so reassuring a factor in man's sense of borrowed godliness) was radically overthrown by the invention of gunpowder and of the printing press.

The daily intellectual and religious life to which Luther was exposed in college and monastery was stimulated by three isms:

the great philosophical antithesis of realism and nominalism; and religious mysticism.

Realism was the assumption of a true substantive existence of the world of ideas. Its quite unphilosophical alliance with the fetichistic adoration of relics (messengers from the other world, like fragments of meteors from the skies) could not be illustrated better than by the fact that St. Thomas, immediately after his death, was boiled by his confreres so that they could sever, by one industrial act, the perishable flesh from the pile of negotiable bones. Realistic thought had little influence on Luther, the dogmatist; but it dominated the *Zeitgeist* which often emerged in Luther's more informal utterances, especially in its alliance with demonism. We know Luther to have been a lifelong addict of demonic thought, which he managed to keep quite separate from his theological thought and his scientific judgment. The devil's behind maintained a reality for him which—because his intellect and his religious intuition seemed to function on different planes—could be said to verge on the paranoid were it not at the same time representative of a pervading medieval tendency. As Huizinga puts it:

Now, it is in the domain of faith that realism obtains, and here it is to be considered rather as the mental attitude of a whole age than as a philosophic opinion. In this larger sense it may be considered inherent in the civilization of the Middle Ages and as dominating all expressions of thought and of the imagination. . . .⁵

All realism, in the medieval sense, leads to anthropomorphism. Having attributed a real existence to an idea, the mind wants to see this idea alive, and can only effect this by personifying it. In this way allegory is born. It is not the same thing as symbolism. Symbolism expresses a mysterious connection between two ideas, allegory gives a visible form to the conception of such a connection. Symbolism is a very profound function of the mind, allegory is a superficial one. It aids symbolic thought to express itself, but endangers it at the same time by substituting a figure for a living idea. The force of the symbol is easily lost in the allegory. . . .⁶

The Church, it is true, has always explicitly taught that sin is not a thing or an entity. But how could it have prevented the error, when everything concurred to insinuate it into men's minds? The primitive instinct which sees sin as stuff which soils or corrupts, which one should, therefore, wash away, or destroy, was strengthened by the extreme systematizing of sins, by their figurative representation, and even by the penitentiary technique of the Church itself. In vain did Denis the Carthusian remind the people that it was but for the sake of comparison that he calls sin a fever, a cold

and corrupted humour—popular thought undoubtedly lost sight of the restrictions of dogmatists.⁷

The following passage gives us the medieval background for some of Luther's occasional preoccupation with bodily zones and modes:

The infusion of divine grace is described under the image of the absorption of food, and also of being bathed. A nun feels quite deluged in the blood of Christ and faints. All the red and warm blood of the five wounds flowed through the mouth of Saint Henry Suso into his heart. Catherine of Sienna drank from the wound in His side. Others drank of the Virgin's milk, like Saint Bernard, Henry Suso, Alain de la Roche.

Now, whereas the celestial symbolism of Alain de la Roche seems artificial, his infernal visions are characterized by a hideous actuality. He sees the animals which represent the various sins equipped with horrible genitals, and emitting torrents of fire which obscure the earth with their smoke. He sees the prostitute of apostasy giving birth to apostates, now devouring them and vomiting them forth, now kissing them and petting them like a mother.⁸

Huizinga's analysis prepares us for the issue of indulgences. Realism, just as it served to give supernatural reality to the "dirt" on earth, also gave monetary substance to grace itself, establishing the vertical as a canal system for that mysterious substance of supreme ambivalence which both the unconscious and mysticism alternately designate as gold and as dirt. The idea of a heavenly treasure of the works of supererogation was an ancient one; but the capitalist interpretation of a reserve which the Church can dispose of by retail was officially formulated only in 1343 by Clement VI, who established the dogma that the wide distribution of the treasure would lead to an increase in merit—and thus to continued accumulation of the treasure. In this dogma realism took a form which Luther eventually fought in his opposition to the cash-and-carry indulgences which were supposed to instantly affect the condition of a soul in purgatory—the way a coin can immediately be heard as it drops into the collector's box.

The dangers to man's identity posed by a confused realism allied with a popular demonology are obvious. The influences from the other world are brought down to us as negotiable matter; man is able to learn to master them by magical thinking and action. But momentary victories of magic over an oppressive superreality do

not, in the long run, either develop man's moral sense or fortify a sense of the reality of his identity on this globe.

The systematic philosophical content of German mysticism is small, indeed, and Luther did not read Tauler, the most systematic mystic, until after he had established the basic tenets of his own theology. Tauler was the exponent of an ism which is one of the constant, if extreme, poles of spiritual possibilities. For Tauler, God begins where all categories and differentiations end (*on allen unterscheid*); he is the Unborn Light (*ein ungeschaffen Licht*). To reach him, one must be able to develop the *raptus*, the rapt state of complete passivity in which man loses his name, his attributes, and his will. He must achieve something for which only the German language has a proper word—*Gelassenheit*, meaning a total state of letting things be, letting them come and go. This includes also the all-Christian condition of accepting total guiltiness, but without excessive remorse or melancholy. Thus, returning to one's inner darkness and nebulousness (*nebulas et tenebras*) one becomes ready for the *Einkehr*, the homecoming to the *Seelengrund*, the ground and womb of spiritual creation. Here is the meeting-ground for the wedding (*das Hochzeit*), and God becomes, for an instant, mightily active; his coming is as quick as a glance (*in einem snellen Blicke*) which cuts through all the ways of the world (*ueber alle die Wise und die Wese in einem Blicke*). But mind you, this ray of light from God's eye does not penetrate to him who attempts to look at God; it comes only to one who is in a state of total receptivity, free of all striving.⁹

We are here confronted with a system which retreats far behind the gnostic position, and far below the trust position of infancy. It is the return to a state of symbiosis with the matrix, a state of floating unity fed by a spiritual navel cord. We may call it the *passive identity*. Its clear parallel with, and its differentiation as German mysticism from, other Western or Eastern systems must not occupy us here. Luther adored it from afar (he wrote a preface to Tauler's works); but he was intellectually and temperamentally unfit for it, and somehow afraid of it.

The great common sense identity based on the view that things are things, and ideas, ideas, was mainly established by Occam; his

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influence helped to change the meaning of the term *realism* into "things as they are." Occamism was eagerly ideologized at a time when the empire of faith was threatening to fall apart into all-too-concrete, all-too-human entities: a God with the mind of a usurer, a lawyer, and a police chief; a family of saints, like holy aunts and uncles, with whom people made deals, instead of approaching the distant Father; a Church that had become a state, and a Pope who was a warring prince; priests who had lost their own awe and failed to inspire it in other people, and thus became more contemptible as they became only too understandable; observances which at the earthly end of the vertical were measured in hard cash, and at the other, in aeons of purgatory.

Occam, or at any rate Occamism, severed the vertical from the horizontal. One might almost say it made parallels out of them. Such entities as God, soul, or spirit were not considered to be matters accessible to the mind down here. God has no ascertainable attributes and does not underlie any generalities which we can "think." We cannot know His intentions or His obligations: his *potentia* is *absoluta*. He has *infinita latitudo*, and there is no way of obliging or coercing Him by developing the right disposition, be it ever so saintly. All we can hope is that when the judgment comes we will prove acceptable to Him, and that He will grant us an *extenuatio legis*. All we can do is to obey the Church (which Occam disobeyed) and be reasonable (*ratio recta spes*), for we can assume that even God's laws are subject to logic. Gerson, the famous French Occamist, who was one of Luther's favorite authors and whose pastoral writings were obligatory reading for all student priests, even suggested that one could expect God not to be too unreasonable in His decisions on judgment day.

As to this world, single things do have a concrete and immediate reality, as man's intuitive knowledge clearly perceives. But a symbol of a thing is nothing but *flatus vocis*, a burst of verbal air. Ideas, or universals, do not exist, except in *significando*, in the mental operations by which we give them meaning. We have no right to attribute to them the quality of thingness, and then to proceed to increase their quantity as our fancy might lead us to do: *Non est ponenda pluralitas sine necessitate* is the famous sentence which establishes the law of parsimony, a law which sharpened the search of the natural sciences, and now hounds psychology with its demand to

reduce man, too, to a model of a minimal number of forces and mechanisms.

All in all, then, Occam's nominalism is a medieval form of skepticism and empiricism which antedates the philosophy of enlightenment. Some historians attribute to Occam operations of thought mature enough to antedate the mathematics of Descartes. But one can well see why, to some Catholic thinkers, Occamist became an adjective worse than Pelagian. And, in many ways, Occam was an abortive Luther. He, too, called the Pope an Antichrist; he, too, supported the princes' supremacy over the Curia; he, too, was attracted by the absolutism of an earlier form of Christianity, which was forever embarrassing to the Church: Franciscan communism. But Occam was at heart a pragmatic philosopher; and although Luther's own shrewdness appreciated Occam's practical scepticism, it was Occam's demonstration that the vertical could not be approached at all by way of the horizontal which impressed Martin. Occam showed that faith as an individual experience had been lost in all the cathedral building and hierarchy arranging, in all the ceremonializing of life and formalizing of thought. The dream of a predictable vertical anchored in an orderly horizontal was failing the most faithful, and leaving the faithless to the overwhelming dangers of the day.

In contrast to these medieval trends of thought, what did the Renaissance man think of his relative reality on this planet?

First of all, he recovered man's identity from its captivity in the eleventh heaven. He refused to exist on the periphery of the world theater, a borrowed substance subject to God's whims. He was anthropocentric, and existed out of his own substance—created, as he somewhat mechanically adds, by God. This substance was his executive center. His geographic center, because of his own efforts, turned out to be peripheral to the solar system: but what did lack of cosmic symmetry matter, when man had regained a sense of his own center? Ficino, one of the prime movers of the Platonic Academy of Lorenzo the Magnificent's Florence, made this clear. The soul-of-man, he says, "carries in itself all the reasons and models of the lower things that it recreates as it were of its own. It is the center of all and possesses the forces of all. It can turn to and penetrate this without leaving that, for it is the true connection of things.

Thus, it can rightly be called the center of nature." ¹⁰ And Pico della Mirandola, the author of *On the Dignity of Man* (1494) celebrated the "highest and most marvelous felicity of man! . . . To him it is granted to have whatever he chooses, to be whatever he wills. On man when he came to life, the Father conferred the seeds of all kinds and the germs of every way of life. . . . Who would not admire this chameleon?" ¹¹

The human theater of life, according to this humanist school, is circumscribed for each by the power of that specific endowment which in him happens to be blessed with the gift of workmanship, be he painter or sculptor, astronomer, physician, or statesman. For Leonardo, it was the trained, intent eye, the "knowing how to see," which was "the natural point," in which "the images of our hemisphere enter and pass together with those of all the heavenly bodies. . . . in which they merge and become united by mutually penetrating and intersecting each other." "These are the miracles . . . forms already lost, mingled together in so small a space, it can recreate and reconstitute." ¹² Michelangelo found this center in the hand which, guided by intellect, can free the conception "circumscribed in the marble's excess." ¹³

This view again anchors the human identity in the hierarchy of organs and functions of the human body, especially insofar as the body serves (or is) the mind. Renaissance sensuality (in contrast to the medieval alternation of asceticism and excess) tried to make the body an intuitive and disciplined tool of reality; it did not permit the body to be sickened with sinfulness, nor the mind to be chained to a dogma; it insisted on a full interplay between man's senses and intuitions and the world of appearances, facts, and laws. As Leonardo put it: "Mental things which have not gone through the senses are vain and bring forth no truth except detrimental." ¹⁴ But this implies disciplined sensuality, "*exact fantasy*," and makes the verification of our functioning essence dependent on the meeting between our God-given mental machinery and the world into which God has put us. We need no proof of His identity nor of ours as long as, at any given time, an essential part of our equipment and a segment of His world continue to confirm each other. This is the law of operating inside nature.

Ficino strained this point of view to its ideological limit; his statement in many ways has remained the ideological test and limit

of our own world image: "Who could deny," he says, "that man possesses as it were almost the same genius as the Author of the heavens? And who could deny that man could somehow also make the heavens, could he only obtain the instruments and the heavenly material?" ¹⁵

It cannot escape those familiar with psychoanalytic theory that the Renaissance is the ego revolution *par excellence*. It was a large-scale restoration of the ego's executive functions, particularly insofar as the enjoyment of the senses, the exercise of power, and the cultivation of a good conscience to the point of anthropocentric vanity were concerned, all of which was regained from the Church's systematic and terroristic exploitation of man's proclivity for a negative conscience. Latin Christianity in Martin's time tended to promise freedom from the body at the price of the absolute power of a negative external conscience: negative in that it was based on a sense of sin, and external in that it was defined and redefined by a punitive agency which alone was aware of the rationale of morality and the consequences of disobedience. The Renaissance gave man a vacation from his negative conscience, thus freeing the ego to gather strength for manifold activity. The restoration of ego vanity to a position over superego righteousness, also established an ideological Utopia which found expression in Ficino's statement. Renaissance man was free to become what Freud called a god of protheses, and the question of how to dispose of this god's bad conscience came to occupy not only theology, but also psychiatry.

Nietzsche, Luther's fellow-Saxon, prided himself on being the belated German spokesman of the Renaissance and Europe's gay moralist. Wrongly informed about Luther's trip to Rome and believing his ninety-five theses to have been a German peasant's revolt against the Renaissance, Nietzsche blamed on Luther's untimely interference the failure of the Medici to imbue the papacy with a Renaissance spirit mature enough to completely absorb medieval spirituality. Nietzsche felt that Luther had forced the Church into the defensive instead, and had made it develop and reinforce a reformed dogma, a mediocrity with survival value. Erasmus, also, four hundred and fifty years before Nietzsche, had blamed Luther for ruining the dreams of Humanism. It is true that Luther *was* completely blind to the visual splendor and the sensual exquisiteness of the Renaissance, just as he was furiously suspicious of Erasmus' in-

lectuality: "*Du bist nicht fromm*," he wrote to him. "You do not know what true piety is."¹⁶ And although for a few years Luther occupied the stage of history with some of the exhibitionistic grandeur of a Renaissance man, there is no doubt that he concluded his life in an obese provinciality.

Yet one could make a case that Martin, even as he hiked back to Erfurt, was preparing himself to do the dirty work of the Renaissance, by applying some of the individualistic principles immanent in the Renaissance to the Church's still highly fortified homeground—the conscience of ordinary man. The Renaissance created ample leeway for those in art and science who had their work confirmed by its fruits, that is, by aesthetic, logical, and mathematical verification. It freed the visualizer and the talker, the scholar and the builder—without, however, establishing either a truly new and sturdy style of life, or a new and workable morality. The great progress in pictorialization, verbalization, and material construction left, for most of the people, something undone on an inner frontier. We should not forget that on his deathbed Lorenzo the Magnificent, who died so young and so pitifully soon after he had withdrawn to the country to devote the rest of his life to the "enjoyment of leisure with dignity," sent for Savonarola. Only the most strongly principled among Lorenzo's spiritual critics would do as his last confessor. Ficino, who in his youth addressed his students as "beloved in Plato," became a monk in his forties; Pico, who wrote *On the Dignity of Man* when he was a mere youth, died in his early thirties a devout follower of Savonarola, and considering a monastic life. These were all men who somehow had loved women, or at any rate their own maleness, too much; altogether womanless men, like Leonardo and Michelangelo, found and recognized the defeat of the male self in grandiose ways. Surely existential despair has never been represented more starkly than in the Sistine man facing eternal damnation, nor essential human tragedy with more dignity than in Michelangelo's *Pieta*. One must review the other Madonnas of the Renaissance (della Robbia's, del Sarto's, Raphael's) who are shown with the boy Jesus making a gay and determined effort to stand on his own feet and to reach out for the world, to appreciate Michelangelo's unrealistic and unhistorical sculpture—an eternally young mother holding on her lap the sacrificial corpse of her grown and aged son. A man's total answer to eternity lies not in what he says at any one period of

One page on Luther for time's sake, try writing a paragraph they would like.

his life, but in the balance of all his pronouncements at all periods. Psychologically speaking, Renaissance man contained within himself the same contradictions which are the burden of all mortals. History ties together whatever new ideological formulations most fitly correspond to new conquests over matter, and lets the men drop by the wayside.

Luther accepted for his life work the unconquered frontier of tragic conscience, defined as it was by his personal needs and his superlative gifts: "*Locus noster*," he said in the lectures on the Psalms, "*in quo nos cum Deo, sponsas cum sponsa, habitare debet . . . est conscientia*."¹⁷ Conscience is that inner ground where we and God have to learn to live with each other as man and wife. Psychologically speaking, it is where the ego meets the superego; that is, where our self can either live in wedded harmony with a positive conscience or is estranged from a negative one. Luther comes nowhere closer to formulating the auditory threat, the voice of wrath, which is internalized in a negative conscience than when he speaks of the "false Christ" as one whom we hear expostulate "*Hoc non fecisti*,"¹⁸ "Again, you have not done what I told you"—a statement of the kind which identifies negatively, and burns itself into the soul as a black and hopeless mark: *conscientia cauterisata*.

Hans' son was made for a job on this frontier. But he did not create the job; it originated in the hypertrophy of the negative conscience inherent in our whole Judaeo-Christian heritage in which, as Luther put it: "Christ becomes more formidable a tyrant and a judge than was Moses."¹⁹ But the negative conscience can become hypertrophied only when man hungers for his identity.

We must accept this universal, if weird, frontier of the negative conscience as the circumscribed *locus* of Luther's work. If we do, we will be able to see that the tools he used were those of the Renaissance: fervent return to the original texts; determined anthropocentrism (if in Christocentric form); and the affirmation of his own organ of genius and of craftsmanship, namely, the voice of the vernacular.

After his return from Rome, Martin was permanently transferred to the Wittenberg monastery. Some say that he was pushed out by

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the Erfurt Augustinians, some, that he was pulled to Wittenberg by Staupitz's influence. The fact is that his friend John Lang had to go, too; a few years later, Luther's influence over the whole province was so great that he was able to appoint Lang prior back at Erfurt.

Martin's preaching and teaching career started in earnest in Wittenberg, never to be interrupted until his death. He first preached to his fellow-monks (an elective job), and to townspeople who audited his intramural sermons. He became pastor of St. Mary's. As a professor, he lectured both to monks enrolled in advanced courses, and to the students in the university. Forced to speak his mind in public, he realized the rich spectrum of his verbal expression, and gained the courage of his conflicted personality. He learned to preach to the heart and to lecture to the mind in two distinct styles. His sermons were for the uplift of the moment; in his lectures, he gradually and systematically developed as a thinker.

Luther the preacher was a different man from Martin the monk. His posture was manly and erect, his speech slow and distinct. This early Luther was by no means the typical pyknic, obese and round-faced, that he became in his later years. He was bony, with furrows in his cheeks, and a stubborn, protruding chin. His eyes were brown and small, and must have been utterly fascinating, judging by the variety of impressions they left on others. They could appear large and prominent or small and hidden; deep and unfathomable at one time, twinkling like stars at another, sharp as a hawk's, terrible as lightning, or possessed as though he were insane. There was an intensity of conflict about his face, which might well impress a clinician as revealing the obsessive character of a very gifted, cunning, and harsh man who possibly might be subject to states of uncontrolled fear or rage. Just because of this conflicted countenance, Luther's warmth, wit, and childlike candor must have been utterly disarming; and there was a total discipline about his personality which broke down only on rare occasions. It was said about Luther that he did not like to be looked in the eye, because he was aware of the revealing play of his expression while he was trying to think. (The same thing was said of Freud; and he admitted that his arrangement for the psychoanalytic session was partially due to his reluctance "to be stared at.")

Martin's bearing gradually came to contradict the meekness de-

manded of a monk; in fact, his body seemed to be leaning backward so that his broad forehead was imperiously lifted toward the sky; his head sat on a short neck, between broad shoulders and over a powerful chest. Some, like Spalatin, the elector's chaplain and advisor, admired him unconditionally; others, like the elector himself, Frederic the Wise, felt uncomfortable in his presence. It is said that Luther and the elector, who at times must have lived only a short distance from him and to whose cunning diplomacy and militant protection he would later owe his survival, "personally never met" to converse, even though the elector often heard him preach—and on some occasions, preach against him and the other princes.

As a preacher and lecturer, Luther combined a command of quotations from world literature with a pervading theological sincerity. His own style developed slowly out of the humanistic preoccupation with sources, the scholastic love of definitions, and the medieval legacy of (to us, atrocious) allegory. He almost never became fanciful. In fact, he was soon known for a brusqueness and a folksy directness which was too much for some of his humanist friends, who liked to shock others in more sophisticated ways: but Luther, horrors! was one who "meant it." It could not have endeared him to Erasmus that of all the animals which serve preachers for allegories and parables, Luther came to prefer the sow; and there is no doubt but that in later years his colorful earthiness sometimes turned into plain porcography. Nervous symptoms harassed his preaching; before, during or after sermons he was on occasion attacked by dizziness. The popular German term of dizziness is *Schwindel*, a word which has a significant double meaning, for it is also used for the fraudulent acts of an impostor. And one of his typical nightmares was that he was facing a congregation, and God would not send him a *Konzept*.

But I think the psychiatrist misjudges his man when he thinks that endogenous sickness alone could have kept Luther from becoming a well-balanced (*ausgeglichen*) creature when his preaching brought him success. After all, he was not a Lutheran; or, as he said himself, he was a mighty bad one. On the frontier of conscience, the dirty work never stops, the lying old words are never done with, and the new purities remain forever dimmed. Once Luther had started to come into his own as a preacher, he preached lustily, and at times compulsively, every few days; when traveling, he preached in hos-

pitable churches and in the marketplace. In later years when he was unable to leave his house because of sickness or anxiety, he would gather wife, children and house guests about him and preach to them.

To Luther, the inspired voice, the voice that means it, the voice that really communicates in person, became a new kind of sacrament, the partner and even the rival of the mystical presence of the Eucharist. He obviously felt himself to be the evangelical giver of a substance which years of suffering had made his to give; an all-embracing verbal generosity developed in him, so that he did not wish to compete with professional talkers, but to speak to the people so that the least could understand him: "You must preach," he said, "as a mother suckles her child." No other attitude could, at the time, have appealed more to members of all classes—except Luther's preaching against taxation without representation which, in 1517, made him a national figure. By then, he had at his command the newly created machinery of communication. Within ten years thirty printers in twelve cities published his sermons as fast as he or the devoted journalists around him could get manuscripts and transcripts to them. He became a popular preacher, especially for students; and a gala preacher for the princes and nobles.

Luther the lecturer was a different man from either preacher or monk. His special field was Biblical exegesis. He most carefully studied the classical textbooks (*Glossa, Ordinaria, and Lyra*), and his important predecessors among the Augustinians; he also kept abreast of the humanist scholars of his time and of the correctives provided by Erasmus's study of the Greek texts and Reuchlin's study of the Hebrew texts. He could be as quibbling a linguist as any scholasticist and as fanciful as any humanist. In his first course of lectures he tries the wings of his own thoughts; sometimes he bewilders himself, and sometimes he looks about for companions, but finally he soars his own lonesome way. His fascinated listeners did not really know what was happening until they had a national scandal on their hands, and by that time Luther's role had become so political and ideological that his early lectures were forgotten and were recovered only in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Because of Luther's habit of telescoping all of his theological prehistory into the events of 1517, when he became a celebrity, it has only been recognized in this century that his theology was already completed

in outline when he burst into history. Then it became politics and propaganda; it became Luther as most of us know him.

But we are interested here in the beginnings, in the emergence of Martin's thoughts about the "matrix of the Scriptures." Biblical exegesis in his day meant the demonstration—scholarly, tortured, and fanciful—of the traditional assumption that the Old Testament was a prophecy of Christ's life and death. The history of the world was contained in the Word: the book of Genesis was not just an account of creation, it was also a hidden, an allegorical, index of the whole Bible up to the crowning event of Christ's passion. Exegesis was an ideological game which permitted the Church to reinterpret Biblical predictions of its own history according to a new theological line; it was a high form of intellectual and linguistic exercise; and it provided an opportunity for the display of scholastic virtuosity. There were rules, however; some education and some resourcefulness were required to make things come out right.

The medieval world had four ways of interpreting Biblical material: literally (*literaliter*), which put stress on the real historical meaning of the text; allegorically (*allegorice*), which viewed Biblical events as symbolic of Christian history, the Church's creation, and dogma; morally (*tropologice*), which took the material as figurative expression of proper behavior for a man of faith; and anagogically (*anagogice*), which treated the material as an expression of the life hereafter. Luther used these techniques for his own purposes, although he always tried to be sincere and consistent; for example, he felt that the demand for circumcision in the Old Testament foretold his new insight that outer works do not count; but this interpretation also expresses the idea that the covenant of circumcision stressed humility by its attack on the executive organ of male vain-glory. Luther's ethical search gradually made him discard the other categories of exegesis and concentrate on the moral one: *tropologicem esse primum sensum scripturae*.²⁰ The scriptures to him became God's advice to the faithful in the here and now.

The Book of Psalms was the subject of the first series of lectures given by the new *lector bibliae* in the academic year 1513-14. Tradition suggested that King David the Psalmist ought to be interpreted as an unconscious prophet whose songs prefigured what Christ would say to God or to the Church, or what others would say to or about Christ. Our point here is to establish the emergence of Luther-

isms from the overripe mixture of neoplatonic, sacramental, mystical, and scholastic interpretations; but we must remember that the personal conflict and the theological heresy on which we will focus were firmly based in what was then scholarly craftsmanship and responsible teaching. Nothing could make this more clear than the fact that no eyebrows were raised at what Martin said: and that as far as he was concerned, what he said was good theology and dedicated to the service of his new function within the Church. Furthermore, despite the impression early Lutherisms give, Luther maintained in his sermons and in his lectures a disciplined dedication to his metier, and allowed his personality expression only in matters of divine conviction. When he discussed a certain depth of contrition in his lectures, he could confess simply, "I am very far from having reached this myself";²¹ but on the day he was to leave for Worms to face the Emperor, he preached in the morning without mentioning his imminent departure for that historical meeting.

His series of lectures, at the rate of one lecture a week, extended over a two-year course. Luther took the job of being a professor rather unprofessionally hard. He meticulously recorded his changes of mind, and accounted for insights for which he found the right words only as he went along with editorial honesty. "I do not yet fully understand this,"²² he would tell his listeners. "I did not say that as well the last time as I did today." *Fateamur nos proficere scribendo et legendo*,²³ he pleaded: We must learn to become more proficient as we write and read. He does not try to hide his arbitrariness ("I simply rhymed the abstract and the concrete together"),²⁴ or an occasional tour de force: "All you can do with a text that proves to have a hard shell is to bang it at a rock and it will reveal the softest kernel (*nucleum suavissimum*)."²⁵ For these words he congratulated himself by marks on the margins. It is obvious that his honesty is a far cry from the elegant arbitrariness of the scholastic divines, and their stylized methods of rationalizing gaps between faith and reason. Luther's arbitrariness is part of a working lecture in which both rough spots and polish are made apparent. The first lectures on the Psalms impress one as being a half-finished piece of work; and Luther's formulations fully matured only in the lectures on Paul's Epistles to the Romans (15:5-16). But concerned as we are here with the solution of an extended identity crisis rather than

with a completed theology, we will restrict ourselves to the first emergence of genuine Lutherisms in the lectures on the Psalms.

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Rather dramatic evidence exists in Luther's notes on these lectures for the fact that while he was working on the Psalms Luther came to formulate those insights later ascribed to his revelation in the tower, the date of which scholars have tried in vain to establish with certainty. As Luther was reviewing in his mind Romans 1:17, the last sentence suddenly assumed a clarity which pervaded his whole being and "opened the door of paradise" to him: "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, *The just shall live by faith*." The power of these words lay in a new perception of the space-time of life and eternity. Luther saw that God's justice is not consigned to a future day of judgment based on our record on earth when He will have the "last word." Instead, this justice is in us, in the here and now; for, if we will only perceive it, God has given us faith to live by, and we can perceive it by understanding the Word which is Christ. We will discuss later the circumstances leading to this perception; what interests us first of all is its relation to the lectures on the Psalms.

In a remarkable study published in 1929, Erich Vogelsang demonstrated that the insights previously attributed exclusively to Luther's revelation in the tower, and often ascribed to a much later time, appear fully and dramatically early in these lectures. Whether this means, as Vogelsang claims, that the revelation really "took place" while Luther was occupied with the lectures, that is, late in the year 1513, is a theological controversy in which I will not become involved. My main interest is in the fact that at about the age of thirty—an important age for gifted people with a delayed identity crisis—the wholeness of Luther's theology first emerges from the fragments of his totalistic reevaluations.

Vogelsang's study is remarkable because he weeds out of Luther's text statements which are, in fact, literal quotations from older scholars; Vogelsang thus uncovers the real course and crescendo of Luther's original remarks. Moreover, he studies usually neglected dimensions of the original text, dimensions which are not visible in the monumental Weimar Edition. For instance, there is the

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“archeological” dimension—the layers of thought to be seen in the preparatory notes for the lectures, in the transcripts of the lectures, and in later additions written or pasted into the text. Vogelsang studied the kinds of paper and ink used, noted variations in handwriting, and analyzed the fluctuating personal importance attached by Luther himself to various parts of his notes, indicated by underscorings and by marginal marks of self-applause. Vogelsang discovered the path of a spiritual cyclone which cut right through the texts of the lectures on the Psalms: “When Luther, in the *Psalm-enkolleg* faces the task of offering his listeners an *ex professo* interpretation of the passage, *in iustitia tua libera me* [and deliver me in thy righteousness], this task confronts him with a quite personal decision, affects him like a clap of thunder, and awakes in him one of the severest temptations, to which he later could think back only with trembling for the duration of his life.”²⁶

This much was acknowledged by old Luther: “When I first read and sang in the Psalms,” he said, “*in iustitia tua libera me*, I was horror-stricken and felt deep hostility toward these words, God’s righteousness, God’s judgment, God’s work. For I knew only that *iustitia dei* meant a harsh judgment. Well, was he supposed to save me by judging me harshly? If so, I was lost forever. But *gottlob*, when I then understood the matter and knew that *iustitia dei* meant the righteousness by which He justifies us through the free gift of Christ’s justice, then I understood the *grammatica*, and I truly tasted the Psalms.”²⁷

Vogelsang finds interesting bibliographical and graphological evidence of Luther’s struggle. “In the whole *Dresdener Psalter*,” he writes, “there is no page which bears such direct witness to personal despair as does the *Scholie* to Psalm 30:1 [Psalm 31 in the King James’ version]. He who has trained his ear in steady dealings with these lectures here perceives a violence and passion of language scarcely found anywhere else. The decisive words, *in iustitia tua libera me*, Luther jumps over in terror and anxiety, which closes his ear to the singularly reassuring passage, ‘Into thine hand, I commit my spirit’ [Psalm 31:5, King James version].”²⁸ Remember what Scheel said about Martin’s *tentatio* during his first Mass: that he seemed blind to the reassuring passage which referred to Christ as the mediator, and preferred to test the rock bottom of his despair, “because there was no real faith.” Vogelsang continues: “He imme-

diately proceeds with ‘Have mercy upon me, O Lord,’ (the handwriting here is extremely excited and confused; he adds a great number of underscorings) and prays with trembling conscience in the words of the sixth Psalm [Psalm 7, King James version]—‘*Ex intuitu irae dei*.’ And even as the text of the 31st Psalm is about to call him out of his temptation with the words ‘*in te speravi Domine*,’ [‘But I trusted in Thee, O Lord’] he deflects the discussion only more violently back to the words of the sixth Psalm.”²⁹

Although Vogelsang does not make a point of it, it cannot escape us that these psalms are expressions of David’s accusations against his and (so he likes to conclude) the Lord’s enemies; in them David vacillates between wishing the wrath of God and the mercy of God upon the heads of his enemies. There are other passages in Psalm 31 which Luther ignores, besides those which Vogelsang mentioned: “Pull me out of the net that they had laid privily for me: for thou art my strength”;³⁰ and “I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the Lord.”³¹ Luther probably had enemies at the time in Erfurt. But there was another enemy who, “regarding lying vanities,” had “privily laid a net” for Martin; had not his father, thwarted in his vain plans for his son, put a curse on his son’s spiritual life, predicted his temptations, predicted, in fact, his coming rebellion? In Martin’s struggle for justification, involving the emancipation of his obsessive conscience from his jealous father and the liberation of his thought from medieval theology, this new insight into God’s pervading justice could not, psychologically speaking, be experienced as a true revelatory solution without some disposition of his smouldering hate. We will come back to this point when we discuss Luther’s identification with Christ; for the Psalmist’s complaint about his enemies reminds us of the social setting of Christ’s passion. He, too, was mockingly challenged to prove his sonhood of God: “He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.”³²

When the lectures on the Psalms reached Psalm 71:2, Luther again faced the phrase, “Deliver me in thy righteousness,” again preceded (Psalm 70) by “Let them be turned back for a reward of their shame that say, Aha, aha.” But now his mood, his outlook, and his vocabulary had undergone a radical change.³³ He twice quotes Romans 1:17 (the text of his revelation in the tower) and concludes

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"*Justitia dei . . . est fides Christi*": Christ's faith is God's righteousness. This is followed by what Vogelsang calls a dithyrambic sequence of new and basically "Protestant" formulations, a selection of which we will review presently. These formulations center in Luther's final acceptance of Christ's mediatorship, and a new concept of man's sonhood of God.

This was the breakthrough. In these lectures, and only in these, Luther quotes St. Augustine's account of his own awakening four times: in the very first lecture; in connection with the dramatic disruption caused by Psalm 31; and twice in connection with Psalm 71.

It seems entirely probable, then, that the revelation in the tower occurred sometime during Luther's work on these lectures. Alternatively, instead of one revelation, there may have been a series of crises, the first perhaps traceable in this manuscript on the Psalms, the last fixed in Luther's memory at that finite event which scholars have found so difficult to locate in time.

The finite event seems to be associated in Luther's mind with a preceding period of deep depression, during which he again foresaw an early death. The reported episode has been viewed with prejudice because of its *place* of occurrence. Luther refers to a *Secretus locus monachorum, hypocaustum, or cloaca*; that is, the monks' secret place, the sweat chamber, or the toilet. According to Scheel, this list originates from one transcript of a table-talk of 1532, when Luther is reported to have said "*Dise Kunst hatt mir der Spiritus Sanctus auff diss Cl. eingeben*": the holy spirit endowed me with this art on the Cl.⁹⁴ Rorer, whom the very critical Scheel considers the most reliable of the original reporters, transcribes Cl. as cloaca. Nevertheless, Scheel dismisses this interpretation; and indeed, no other reported statement of Luther's has made mature men squirm more uncomfortably, or made serious scholars turn their noses higher in contemptuous disbelief. The psychiatrist concedes that Cl. does refer to the toilet; but, of all people, he haughtily concludes that after all, it is not relevant *where* important things happen.

This whole geographic issue, however, deserves special mention exactly because it *does* point up certain psychiatric relevances. First of all, the locality mentioned serves a particular physical need which hides its emotional relevance only as long as it happens to function smoothly. Yet, as the psychiatrist himself points out,

Luther suffered from lifelong constipation and urine retention. Leaving the possible physical causes or consequences of this tendency aside, the functions themselves are related to the organ modes of retention and elimination—in defiant children most obviously, and in adults through all manner of ambivalent behavior. There can be little doubt that at this particular time, when Martin's power of speech was freed from its infantile and juvenile captivity, he changed from a highly restrained and retentive individual into an explosive person; he had found an unexpected release of self-expression, and with it, of the many-sided power of his personality.

Those who object to these possibly impure circumstances of Martin's spiritual revelation forget St. Paul's epileptic attack, a physical paroxysm often accompanied by a loss of sphincter control, and deny the total involvement of body and soul which makes an emotional and spiritual experience genuine. Scholars would prefer to have it happen as they achieve their own reflected revelations—sitting at a desk. Luther's statement that he was, in fact, sitting somewhere else, implies that in this creative moment the tension of nights and days of meditation found release throughout his being—and nobody who has read Luther's private remarks can doubt that his total being always included his bowels. Furthermore, people in those days expressed much more openly and conceptualized more concretely than we do the emotional implications (and the implication in our emotions) of the primary bodily functions. We permit ourselves to understand them in a burlesque show, or in circumstances where we can laugh off our discomfort; but we are embarrassed when we are asked to acknowledge them in earnest. Then we prefer to speak of them haughtily, as though they were something we have long left behind. But here the suppressed meaning betrays itself in the irrational defensiveness; for what we leave behind, with emotional repudiation, is at least unconsciously associated with dirt and feces. St. Paul openly counted all the glittering things which he had abandoned for Christ "but dung."

A revelation, that is, a sudden inner flooding with light, is always associated with a repudiation, a cleansing, a kicking away; and it would be entirely in accord with Luther's great freedom in such matters if he were to experience and to report this repudiation in frankly physical terms. The cloaca, at the "other end" of the bodily self, remained for him sometimes wittily, sometimes painfully, and

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sometimes delusionally alive, as if it were a "dirt ground" where one meets with the devil, just as one meets with God in the *Seelengrund*, where pure being is created.

The psychiatric relevance of all this is heightened by the fact that in later years, when Luther's freedom of speech occasionally deteriorated into vulgar license, he went far beyond the customary gay crudity of his early days. In melancholy moods, he expressed his depressive self-repudiation also in anal terms: "I am like ripe shit," he said once at the dinner table during a fit of depression (and the boys eagerly wrote it down), "and the world is a gigantic ass-hole. We probably will let go of each other soon."³⁵ We have no right to overlook a fact which Luther was far from denying: that when he, who had once chosen silence in order to restrain his rebellious and destructive nature, finally learned to let himself go, he freed not only the greatest oratory of his time, but also the most towering temper and the greatest capacity for dirt-slinging wrath.

The problem is not how extraordinary or how pathological all this is, but whether or not we can have one Luther without the other.

We will return to this question in conclusion. In the meantime, what we know of Martin's autocratic conscience, and what we begin to know of his tempestuous temperament, will stand us in good stead as we see the lecturer find his balance and his identity in the act of lecturing, and with them, some new formulations of man's relation to God and to himself.

In what follows, themes from Luther's first lectures are discussed side by side with psychoanalytic insights. Theological readers will wonder whether Luther saved theology from philosophy only to have it exploited by psychology; while psychoanalysts may suspect me of trying to make space for a Lutheran God in the structure of the psyche. My purposes, however, are more modest: I intend to demonstrate that Luther's redefinition of man's condition—while part and parcel of his theology—has striking configurational parallels with inner dynamic shifts like those which clinicians recognize in the recovery of individuals from psychic distress. In brief, I will try to indicate that Luther, in laying the foundation for a "religiosity for the adult man," displayed the attributes of his own hard-won adulthood; his renaissance of faith portrays a vigorous recovery of his own ego-initiative. To indicate this I will focus on three ideas:

the affirmation of voice and word as the instruments of faith; the new recognition of God's "face" in the passion of Christ; and the redefinition of a just life.

After 1505 Luther had made no bones about the pernicious influence which "rancid Aristotelianism" had had on theology. Scholasticism had made him lose faith, he said; through St. Paul he had recovered it. He put the problem in terms of organ modes, by describing scholastic disputations as *dentes* and *linguae*: the teeth are hard and sinister, and form words in anger and fury; the tongue is soft and suavely persuasive. Using these modes, the devil can evoke purely intellectual mirages (*mira potest suggere in intellectu*).³⁶ But the organ through which the word enters to replenish the heart is the ear (*natura enim verbi est audiri*),³⁷ for it is in the nature of the word that it should be heard. On the other hand, faith comes from listening, not from looking (*quia est auditu fides, non ex visu*).³⁸ Therefore, the greatest thing one can say about Christ, and about all Christians, is that they have *aures perfectas et perfossas*:³⁹ good and open ears. But only what is perceived at the same time as a matter *affectionalis* and *moralis* as well as intellectual can be a matter sacred and divine: one must, therefore, hear before one sees, believe before one understands, be captivated before one captures. *Fides est "locus" animae*:⁴⁰ faith is the seat, the organ of the soul. This had certainly been said before; but Luther's emphasis is not on Augustinian "infusion," or on a nominalist "obedience," but, in a truly Renaissance approach, on a self-verification through a God-given inner "apparatus." This *locus*, this apparatus, has its own way of seeking and searching—and it succeeds insofar as it develops its own *passivity*.

Paradoxically, many a young man (and son of a stubborn one) becomes a great man in his own sphere only by learning that deep passivity which permits him to let the data of his competency speak to him. As Freud said in a letter to Fliess, "I must wait until it moves in me so that I can perceive it: *bis es sich in mir ruehrt und ich davon erfahre*."⁴¹ This may sound feminine, and, indeed, Luther bluntly spoke of an attitude of womanly conception—*sicut mulier in conceptu*.⁴² Yet it is clear that men call such attitudes and modes feminine only because the strain of paternalism has alienated us from them; for these modes are any organism's birthright, and all our partial as well as our total functioning is based on a metabolism of

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passivity and activity. Mannish man always wants to pretend that he made himself, or at any rate, that no simple woman bore him, and many puberty rites (consider the rebirth from a kiva in the American Southwest) dramatize a new birth from a spiritual mother of a kind that only men understand.

The theology as well as the psychology of Luther's passivity is that of man in the *state of prayer*, a state in which he fully means what he can say only to God: *Tibi soli peccavi*, I have sinned, not in relation to any person or institution, but in relation only to God, to *my* God.

In two ways, then, rebirth by prayer is passive: it means surrender to God the Father; but it also means to be reborn *ex matrice scripturae nati*,⁴³ out of the matrix of the scriptures. "Matrix" is as close as such a man's man will come to saying "mater." But he cannot remember and will not acknowledge that long before he had developed those wilful modes which were specifically suppressed and paradoxically aggravated by a challenging father, a mother had taught him to touch the world with his searching mouth and his probing senses. What to a man's man, in the course of his development, seems like a passivity hard to acquire, is only a regained ability to be active with his oldest and most neglected modes. Is it coincidence that Luther, now that he was explicitly teaching passivity, should come to the conclusion that a lecturer should feed his audience as a mother suckles her child? Intrinsic to the kind of passivity we speak of is not only the memory of having been given, but also the identification with the maternal giver: "the glory of a good thing is that it flows out to others."⁴⁴ I think that in the Bible Luther at last found a mother whom he could acknowledge: he could attribute to the Bible a generosity to which he could open himself, and which he could pass on to others, at last a mother's son.

Luther did use the words *passiva* and *passivus* when he spoke Latin, and the translation *passive* must be accepted as correct. But in German he often used the word *passivisch*, which is more actively passive, as *passific* would be. I think that the difference between the old modalities of *passive* and *active* is really that between *erleben* and *handeln*, of being in the state of *experiencing* or of *acting*. Meaningful implications are lost in the flat word *passivity*—among them the total attitude of living receptively and through the senses, of

willingly "suffering" the voice of one's intuition and of living a *Passion*: that total passivity in which man regains, through considered self-sacrifice and self-transcendence, his active position in the face of nothingness, and thus is saved. Could this be one of the psychological riddles in the wisdom of the "foolishness of the cross?"

To Luther, the preaching and the praying man, the measure in depth of the perceived presence of the Word was the reaction with a total affect which leaves no doubt that one "means it." It may seem paradoxical to speak of an affect that one could not thus mean; yet it is obvious that rituals, observances, and performances do evoke transitory affects which can be put on for the occasion and afterward hung in the closet with one's Sunday clothes. Man is able to ceremonialize, as he can "automatize" psychologically, the signs and behaviors that are born of the deepest reverence or despair. However, for an affect to have a deep and lasting effect, or, as Luther would say, be *affectionalis* and *moralis*, it must not only be experienced as nearly overwhelming, but it must also in some way be affirmed by the ego as valid, almost as chosen: one means the affect, it signifies something meaningful, it is significant. Such is the relative nature of our ego and of our conscience that when the ego regains its composure after the auditory condemnation of the absolutist voice of conscience we mean what we have learned to believe, and our affects become those of positive conscience: faith, conviction, authority, indignation—all subjective states which are attributes of a strong sense of identity and, incidentally, are indispensable tools for strengthening identity in others. Luther speaks of matters of faith as experiences from which one will profit to the degree to which they were intensive and expressive (*quanto expressius et intensius*). If they are more *frigidus*, however, they are not merely a profit missed, they are a terrible deficit confirmed: for man without intense convictions is a robot with destructive techniques.

It is easy to see that these formulations, once revolutionary, are the commonplaces of today's pulpits. They are the bases of that most inflated of all oratorical currency, credal protestation in church and lecture hall, in political propaganda and in oral advertisement: the protestation, made to order for the occasion, that truth is only that which one means with one's whole being, and lives every moment. We, the heirs of Protestantism, have made convention and pretense

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out of the very sound of meaning it. What started with the German *Brustton der Ueberzeugung*, the manly chestiness of conviction, took many forms of authoritative appeal, the most recent one being the cute sincerity of our TV announcers. All this only indicates that Luther was a pioneer on one of our eternal inner frontiers, and that his struggle must continue (as any great man's must) exactly at that point where his word is perverted in his own name.

Psychotherapists, professional listeners and talkers in the sphere of affectivity and morality know only too well that man seldom really knows what he really means; he as often lies by telling the truth as he reveals the truth when he tries to lie. This is a psychological statement; and the psychoanalytic method, when it does not pretend to deliver complete honesty, over a period of time reveals approximately what somebody really means. But the center of the problem is simply this: in truly significant matters people, and especially children, have a devastatingly clear if mostly unconscious perception of what other people really mean, and sooner or later royally reward real love or take well-aimed revenge for implicit hate. Families in which each member is separated from the others by asbestos walls of verbal propriety, overt sweetness, cheap frankness, and rectitude tell one another off and talk back to each other with minute and unconscious displays of affect—not to mention physical complaints and bodily ailments—with which they worry, accuse, undermine, and murder one another.

Meaning it, then, is not a matter of credal protestation; verbal explicitness is not a sign of faith. Meaning it, means to be at one with an ideology in the process of rejuvenation; it implies a successful sublimation of one's libidinal strivings; and it manifests itself in a liberated craftsmanship.

When Luther listened to the scriptures he did not do so with an unprejudiced ear. His method of making an unprejudiced approach consisted of listening both ways—to the Word coming from the book and to the echo in himself. "Whatever is in your disposition," he said, "that the word of God will be unto you."⁴⁵ Disposition here means the inner configuration of your most meant meanings. He knew that he meant it when he could say it: the spoken Word was the activity appropriate for his kind of passivity. Here "faith and word become one, an invincible whole." "*Der Glawb und das Worth wirth gantz ein Ding und ein unuberwintlich ding.*"⁴⁶

Twenty-five times in the Lectures on the Psalms, against once in the Lectures on the Romans, Luther quotes two corresponding passages from Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians. The first passage:

22. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom;
23. But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;
25. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.⁴⁷

This paradoxical foolishness and weakness of God became a theological absolute for Luther: there is not a word in the Bible, he exclaimed, which is *extra crucem*, which can be understood without reference to the cross; and this is all that shall and can be understood, as Paul had said in the other passage:

1. And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.
2. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.
3. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.⁴⁸

Thus Luther abandoned any theological quibbling about the cross. He did not share St. Augustine's opinion that when Christ on the cross exclaimed *Deus meus, quare me derelquisti*, He had not been really abandoned, for as God's son and as God's word, He *was* God. Luther could not help feeling that St. Paul came closer to the truth when he assumed an existential paradox rather than a platonic fusion of essences; he insists on Christ's complete sense of abandonment and on his sincere and active premeditation in visiting hell. Luther spoke here in passionate terms very different from those of medieval adoration. He spoke of a man who was unique in all creation, yet lives in each man; and who is dying *in* everyone even as he died *for* everyone. It is clear that Luther rejected all arrangements by which an assortment of saints made it unnecessary for man to embrace the maximum of his own existential suffering. What he had tried, so desperately and for so long, to counteract and overcome he now accepted as his divine gift—the sense of utter abandonment, *sicut jam damnatus*,⁴⁹ as if already in hell. The worst temptation, he now says, is not to have any; one can be sure that God is most angry when He does not seem angry at all. Luther warns of all those well-

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meaning (*bone intentionarii*) religionists who encourage man "to do what he can": to forestall sinning by clever planning; to seek redemption by observing all occasions for rituals, not forgetting to bring cash along to the limit of their means; and to be secure in the feeling that they are as humble and as peaceful as "it is in them to be." Luther, instead, made a virtue out of what his superiors had considered a vice in him (and we, a symptom), namely, the determined search for the rock bottom of his sinfulness: only thus, he says, can man judge himself as God would: *conformis deo est et verax et justus*.⁵⁰ One could consider such conformity utter passivity in the face of God's judgment; but note that it really is an active self-observation, which scans the frontier of conscience for the genuine sense of guilt. Instead of accepting some impersonal and mechanical absolution, it insists on dealing with sincere guilt, perceiving as "God's judgment" what in fact is the individual's own truly meant self-judgment.

Is all this an aspect of personal adjustment to be interpreted as a set of unconscious tricks? Martin the son, who on a personal level had suffered deeply because he could not coerce his father into approving his religiosity as genuine, and who had borne with him the words of this father with an unduly prolonged filial obedience, assumes now on a religious level a volitional role toward filial suffering, perhaps making out of his protracted sonhood the victory of his Christlikeness. In his first Mass, facing the altar—the Father in heaven—and at the same time waiting to face his angry earthly father, Martin had "overlooked" a passage concerning Christ's mediatorship. Yet now, in finding Christ in himself, he establishes an inner position which goes beyond that of a neurotic compromise identification. He finds the core of a praying man's identity, and advances Christian ideology by an important step. It is clear that Luther abandoned the appreciation of Christ as a substitute who has died "for"—in the sense of "instead of"—us; he also abandoned the concept of Christ as an ideal figure to be imitated, or abjectly venerated, or ceremonially remembered as an event in the past. Christ now becomes the core of the Christian's identity: *quotidianus Christi adventus*,⁵¹ Christ is today here, in me. The affirmed passivity of suffering becomes the daily Passion and the Passion is the substitution of the primitive sacrifice of others with a most active,

most masterly, affirmation of man's nothingness—which, by his own masterly choice, becomes his existential identity.

The men revered by mankind as saviors face and describe in lasting words insights which the ordinary man must avoid with all possible self-deception and exploitation of others. These men prove their point by the magic of their voices which radiate to the farthest corner of their world and out into the millennia. Their passion contains elements of choice, mastery, and victory, and sooner or later earns them the name of King of Kings; their crown of thorns later becomes their successor's tiara. For a little while Luther, this first revolutionary individualist, saved the Saviour from the tiaras and the ceremonies, the hierarchies and the thought-police, and put him back where he arose: in each man's soul.

Is this not the counterpart, on the level of conscience, to Renaissance anthropocentrism? Luther left the heavens to science and restricted himself to what he could know of his own suffering and faith, that is, to what he could mean. He who had sought to dispel the angry cloud that darkened the face of the fathers and of The Father now said that Christ's life is God's face: *qui est facies patris*.⁵² The Passion is all that man can know of God: his conflicts, duly faced, are all that he can know of himself. The last judgment is the always present self-judgment. Christ did not live and die in order to make man poorer in the fear of his future judgment, but in order to make him abundant today: *nam judicia sunt ipsae passionis Christi quae in nobis abundant*.⁵³ Look, Luther said at one point in these lectures, (IV, 87) how everywhere painters depict Christ's passion as if they agreed with St. Paul that we know nothing but Christ crucified.⁵⁴ The artist closest to Luther in spirit was Dürer, who etched his own face into Christ's countenance.

The characteristics of Luther's theological advance can be compared to certain steps in psychological maturation which every man must take: the internalization of the father-son relationship; the concomitant crystallization of conscience; the safe establishment of an identity as a worker and a man; and the concomitant reaffirmation of basic trust.

God, instead of lurking on the periphery of space and time, became for Luther "what works in us." The way to Him is not the

effortful striving toward a goal by "doing what you can"; rather, His way is what moves from inside: *via dei est, qua nos ambulare facit*.⁵⁵ God, now less of a person, becomes more personal for the individual; and instead of constituting a threat to be faced at the end of all things, He becomes that which always begins—in us. His son is therefore always reborn: "*ita et nos semper oportet nasci, novari, generari*": It therefore behooves us to be reborn, renovated, regenerated.⁵⁶ To "do enough" means always to begin: "*Proficere est nihil aliud nisi semper incipere*."⁵⁷ The intersection of all the paradoxes of the vertical and the horizontal is thus to be found in man's own divided nature. The two *regna*, the realist sphere of divine grace and the naturalist sphere of animality, exist in man's inner conflicts and in his existential paradoxes: "*Die zwei Personen oder zweierlei ampt*,"⁵⁸ the two personalities and the two callings which a Christian must maintain at the same time on this earth.

It does not matter what these two personalities "are." Theologians, philosophers, and psychologists slice man in different ways, and there is no use trying to make the sections coincide. The main point to be made here is Luther's new emphasis on man in *inner* conflict and his salvation through introspective perfection. Luther's formulation of a God known to individual man only through the symbolism of the Son's Passion redefined the individual's existence in a direction later pursued in both Kierkegaard's existentialism and Freud's psychoanalysis—methods which lead the individual systematically to his own borders, including the border of his religious ecstasies.

Let us rephrase somewhat more psychologically what we have just put in theological terms. What we have referred to as the negative conscience corresponds in many ways to Freud's conceptualization of the pressure put by the superego on the ego. If this pressure is dominant in an individual or in a group, the whole quality of experience is overshadowed by a particular sense of existence, an intensification of certain aspects of subjective space and time. Any fleeting moment of really bad conscience can teach us this, as can also, and more impressively, a spell of melancholy. We are then strangely constricted and paralyzed, victims of an inner voice whispering sharply that we are far from that perfection which alone will do when the closely impending, but vague and unpredictable, doom arrives; in spite of that immediacy, we are as yet sinners, not quite good enough, and probably too far gone. Any temporary

relief from this melancholy state (into which Luther, at the height of his worldly success, sank more deeply than ever before) is only to be had at the price of making a painful deal with the voice, a deal which offers the hope that maybe soon we will find the platform for a new start; or maybe at the hour of trial we will find that according to some unknown scale we will prove barely but sufficiently acceptable, and so may pass—pass into heaven, as some proud minds have asked, by just *getting by*? In the meantime, our obsessive scrupulosity will chew its teeth out and exercise its guts on the maybe-soons, the already-almosts, the just-a-bit-mores, the not-yet-quotes, the probably-next-times. Not all minds, of course, naturally exercise themselves in this way; but everybody does it to some degree, and almost anybody can be prevailed upon to participate by an ideological system which blocks all exits except one, that one adorned with exactly matching symbols of hope and despair, and guarded by the system's showmen, craftsmen, and torturers.

To some individuals, however, such a state becomes, for personal reasons, habitual: from these people the religionists in any field are recruited. Whole peoples may elaborate this potential state into a world image. William James remarked that the Latin races seem to be able more easily to split up the pressure of evil into "ills and sins in the plural, removable in detail," while the Germanic races tend to erect one "Sin in the singular, and with a capital S . . . ineradicably ingrained in our natural subjectivity, and never to be removed by any piecemeal operation."⁵⁹ If this is true, climate may have much to do with it: the more decided retreat of the sun to the danger point of disappearance in the Nordic winter, the protracted darkness and the fatal cold which last over periods long enough to convey a sense of irretrievability or at any rate to enforce a totalistic adjustment to such a possibility. Just because Luther's periodic states of melancholy repeatedly forced him to accept despair and disease as final, and death as imminent, he may have expressed in his pessimistic and philosophically most untenable concepts (such as the total predestination of individual fate, independent of personal effort) exactly that cold rock bottom of mood, that utter background of blackness, which to Northern people is the condition of spring:

*Der Sommer ist hart fuer der Tuer
Der Winter ist vergangen
Die zarten Blumen gehn herfuer;*

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Young Man Luther

*Der das hat angefangen
Der wird es auch vollenden.*

This only says that winter is gone and summer is at the door, and that the flowers are coming up; and that Whoever has begun such a process will surely complete it.

A predominant state of mind in which the ego keeps the superego in victorious check can reconcile certain opposites which the negative conscience rigidly keeps separate; ego-dominance tends to be holistic, to blend opposites without blunting them. In his state of personal recovery, Luther (like any individual recovering from an oppressive mental state) had recourse to massive totalisms from which he derived the foundation stones for a new wholeness. The whole person includes certain total states in his balances: we are, Luther proclaimed, totally sinners (*totus homo peccator*) and totally just (*totus homo justus*), always both damned and blessed, both alive and dead. We thus cannot strive, by hook or by crook, to get from one absolute stage into another; we can only use our God-given organs of awareness in the here and now to encompass the paradoxes of the human condition. Psychologically speaking, this means that at any given moment, and in any given act or thought, we are codetermined to a degree which can never become quite conscious by our drives and by our conscience. Our ego is most powerful when it is not burdened with an excessive denial of our drives, but lets us enjoy what we can, refute what we must, and sublimate according to our creativity—always making due allowance for the absolutism of our conscience, which can never be appeased by small sacrifices and atonements, but must always remain part of the whole performance. Luther thus said in his terms what Freud formulated psychologically, namely, that only on the surface are we ever entirely driven or completely just; in our depths we are vain when we are most just, and bad conscience can always be shown to be at work exactly when we are most driven by lust or avarice. But this same inner psychological condition saves God (theologically speaking) from that impossible characteristic for which Martin had not been able to forgive him, namely, that of being The Father only in certain especially meritorious moments, rather than for all eternity, as he should be. To the ego, eternity is always now.

Luther's strong emphasis on the here and now of the spiritual ad-

vent, and on the necessity of always standing at the beginning, (*semper incipere*) is not only a platform of faith, it is akin to a time-space quality dominating the inner state which psychoanalysts call "ego-strength." To the ego the past is not an inexorable process, experienced only as preparation for an impending doom; rather, the past is part of a present mastery which employs a convenient mixture of forgetting, falsifying, and idealizing to fit the past to the present, but usually to an extent which is neither unknowingly delusional nor knowingly dishonest. The ego can resign itself to past losses and forfeitings and learn not to demand the impossible of the future. It enjoys the illusion of a present, and defends this most precarious of all assumptions against doubts and apprehensions by remembering most easily chains of experiences which were alike in their unblemished presentness. To the healthy ego, the flux of time sponsors the process of identity. It thus is not afraid of death (as Freud has pointed out vigorously); it has no concept of death. But it is afraid of losing mastery over the negative conscience, over the drives, and over reality. To lose any of these battles is, for the ego, living death; to win them again and again means to the ego something akin to an assumption that it is causing its own life. In theological terms, *creaturae procedunt ex deo libere et voluntarie et non naturaliter*:⁶⁰ what lives, proceeds from God freely and voluntarily, not naturally, that is, not by way of what can be explained biologically.

Luther's restatements about the total sinfulness and the total salvation which are in man at any given time, can easily be shown to be allogical. With sufficient ill will they can be construed as contrived to save Martin's particular skin, which held together upswings of spiritual elations and cursing gloominess, not to speak of lusts for power and revenge, women, food, and beer. But the coexistence of all these contradictions has its psychologic—as has also the fury of their incompatibility. Martin's theological reformulations imply a psychological fact, namely, that the ego gains strength *in practice*, and *in affectu* to the degree to which it can accept at the same time the total power of the drives and the total power of conscience—*provided* that it can nourish what Luther called *opera manum dei*,⁶¹ that particular combination of work and love which alone verifies our identity and confirms it. Under these conditions, apparent submission becomes mastery, apparent passivity the release of new energy for

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active pursuits. We can make negative conscience work for the aims of the ego only by facing it without evasion; and we are able to manage and creatively utilize our drives only to the extent to which we can acknowledge their power by enjoyment, by awareness, and through the activity of work.

If the ego is not able to accomplish these reconciliations, we may fall prey to that third inner space-time characterized by the dominance of what Freud called the *id*. The danger of this state comes from what Freud considered biological instincts which the ego experiences as beneath and outside itself while at the same time it is intoxicated by them. Dominance by the *id* means that time and space are arranged in one way—toward wish fulfillment. We know only that our tension rises when time and circumstances delay release and satisfaction, and that our drivenness is accelerated when opportunities arise. The self-propelled will tends to ignore all that has been learned in the past and is perceived in the present, except to the extent to which past and present add fuel to the goal-directedness of the wish. This *id*-intoxication, as Luther formulated so knowingly, can become total poisoning especially when it is haughtily denied.

Some monastic methods systematically descend to the frontiers where all ego dangers must be faced in the raw—where an overweening conscience is appeased through prayer, drives tamed by asceticism, and the pressure of reality is itself defeated by the self's systematic abandonment of its identity. But true monasticism is a late development and is possible only to a mature ego. Luther knew why he later said that nobody under thirty years of age should definitely commit himself to it.

Luther's redefinitions of work have probably been more misunderstood than any other of his formulations, except, naturally, those pertaining to sex. In both these sensitive areas, theory and practice have become completely separated. In trying to decide what a great man meant by his original formulations, it is always good to find out what he was talking *against* at the time, or what previous overstatement he was trying to correct, for greatness is based on an excessive restatement of some previous overstatement, usually made by others, often by the master himself. To the extent that the restatement momentarily sharpens our perception of our own frontiers, it will live, even though the concepts themselves become the

focus of the next period's overstatement. When Luther spoke about works and work, he was speaking against a climate of opinion which, in matters of religion, asked a man how much he had done of what there was in him (or in his pocketbook) to do. When Luther spoke against works, he spoke against holy busywork which has nothing whatsoever to do with the nature or the quality of devoted craftsmanship.

Luther felt that the Christianity of his time had forgotten St. Paul's and Christ's Christianity and had reverted to "Jewish, Turkish, and Pelagian" notions, particularly in putting so much emphasis on the fulfillment of prescribed rituals. We need only remember his own obsession in Rome with the collection of free and not so free coupons to heaven to know what he meant. He later caricatured this attitude: "He runs to St. James, Rome, Jerusalem, here, there; prays to St. Brigit, this, that; fasts today, tomorrow; confesses here, there; asks this one, that one—and yet does not find peace."⁶² He considered this a regression to "the law" in Judaism, in which he felt there was an excess of righteousness expressed in meticulous observances. In the obsessive fulfillment of detailed rituals, as he knew only too well, the negative conscience takes over, dividing every minute of the day into a miniature last judgment. The small self-salvations thus gained come to count as virtue—a virtue which has no time for faith and leaves not a moment's peace to others, if it can help it. Much is in the language here, in English as well as German: those who *do* what is right (*richtig*) think that they *are* right (*recht*) and claim that they *have* the right to lord it over others (*rechthaben*).

Against this inner psychic sequence Luther, in accord with his whole new space-time configuration, re-emphasized the spirit in which a thing is done from the start for its own sake. Nobody is just, he said, because he does just works; the works are just *if* the man is just: *quia justus, opera justa*. As he says in one of his teutonic restatements of a biblical saying: "What would it avail you, if you did do miracles, and strangled all the Turks (*alle Turcken erwurgt*) and yet would sin against love?"⁶³

In matters of sex and work misquotation is easy. Even Nietzsche misunderstood Luther in the matter of work, claiming that exercise and practice are every bit as necessary for good work as is faith, and often are the forerunners of faith. Nietzsche was writing against

Substance over a spiritless dominating form

Schopenhauer's asceticism and pessimism at the time, and was intent on reinstating will and action as prime virtues. He ignored the fact that Luther was against works, but very much for work; and that he sanctified even such activities as piling up manure, washing babies, and cleaning up the house, if they were done with faith.

As far as Luther's attitude toward his own work is concerned, only when he was able to make speaking his main occupation could he learn to know his thoughts and to trust them—and also trust God. He took on the lectures, not with pious eagerness, but with a sense of tragic conflict; but as he prepared and delivered them, he became affectively and intellectually alive. This is not works; it is work, in the best sense. In fact, Luther made the verbal work of his whole profession more genuine in the face of a tradition of scholastic virtuosity. His style indicates his conviction that a thing said less elegantly and meant more truly is better work, and better craftsmanship in communication.

There is a psychological truth implicit in Luther's restatement. People with "well-functioning egos" do good work if they can manage to "mean" the work (for whatever reason or for whoever's sake) which they must do. This is not always easily arranged, by any means, and we should not be too glib with the term "strong ego." Many individuals should not do the work which they are doing, if they are doing it well at too great inner expense. Good work it may be in terms of efficiency; but it is also bad works. The point is, not how efficiently the work is done, but how good it is for the worker in terms of his lifetime within his ideological world. The work's individual goodness will be reflected in some technical goodness which is more than the sum of mastered procedures. In his insistence on the importance of the spirit of work Luther antedated Marx; but, of course, neither politically nor economically did he foresee progress as a new dimension of ideology, although he helped to make man free for it. His was a craftsman's point of view; and he considered one craft as good a way to personal perfection as another; but also as bad a potential lifelong prison as another.

We live always in all three space-times; certain alternations of emphases differentiate us from one another. We are all alternately driven and conscience-stricken some of the time; but usually we

manage to live in a dominant ego space-time, despite the world-image which totalitarian powers of spirit, sword, or dollar may continuously try to impose on us. Each historical period has its lacunae of identity and of style; each best of all possible worlds has its tensions and crazes which attest to its peculiar excesses of drivenness and constriction. Man never lives entirely in his time, even though he can never live outside it; sometimes his identity gets along with his time's ideology, and sometimes it has to fight for its life. But it is only when an overwhelming negative conscience like Martin's is linked with the sensitivity and the power-drive of a Luther that a new positive conscience arises to sow ideological seeds into fresh furrows of historical change. And perhaps all such fresh starts have in common the ego qualities which I have tried to circumscribe in this discussion.

Luther's theology contains an unsolved personal problem which is more accessible to psychoanalysis than is the theology itself. This unsolved personal problem becomes obvious later, when the suddenly changed course of his life endangers the identity which he had won as a lecturer and preacher; and even more obvious when the crisis of middle age brings to the fore again that inner store of self-hate, and that murderous intolerance of disobedience which in the lectures on the Psalms had been relatively balanced—within Luther's identity as a lecturer.

God himself thus joins the benevolent paternal images. Luther interprets Psalm 102:13, "Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion," in these words: "This arising, this standing up, means the sweetest and most gracious becoming human on the part of God, for here He has come to us so that He may lift us up to Himself."⁶⁴

The study of Luther's earliest lectures shows that in his self-cure from deep obsessive struggles he came, almost innocently, to express principles basic to the mastery of existence by religious and introspective means. As he stated in his notes for the lectures on Romans, in which he came much closer to perfection as a professor and to clarity as a dogmatist: "Perfect self-insight is perfect humility; perfect humility is perfect knowledge; perfect knowledge is perfect spirituality."⁶⁵ At the same time Luther crowns his attempt to cure the wounds of this wrath by changing God's attributes: instead of being like an earthly father whose mood-swings are incom-

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prehensible to his small son, God is given the attribute of *ira misericordiae*—a wrath which is really compassion. With this concept, Luther was at last able to forgive God for being a Father, and grant Him justification.

Only a very independent mind could thus restate the principles of pre-Roman Christianity; and only a righteously simple man could delude himself into believing that if he let the Roman Church live, she would let him preach. This self-deception had not ended when Luther nailed the ninety-five theses on the church door in Wittenberg—not a defiant gesture in itself, but rather scholastic routine. But circumstances, to be recounted in the concluding chapter, used his theory of the spiritual negligibility of works as the backbone of an economic revolt. All of Northern Germany jumped at the opportunity to limit Roman taxation on what seemed like sound theological grounds; in the argument, the Germans began to hear the voice that argued, and it sounded like the kind of voice they had long been waiting for.

Luther grew elatedly into his role of reformer. How he thus changed identities—he who had denied his father's wish that he should become a secular leader by choosing monastic silence instead—we can only sketch. It is clear, however, that the negative conscience which had been aggravated so grievously by Martin's paternalistic upbringing had only waited (as such consciences always do) for an opportunity to do to others in some measure what had been done to him.

Negative (superior) conscience which is
domestic & dominating cause. Martin Luther
to not with him became an independent
mind & then that how the domestic dominating
conscience is bad and that what is together
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did to him.