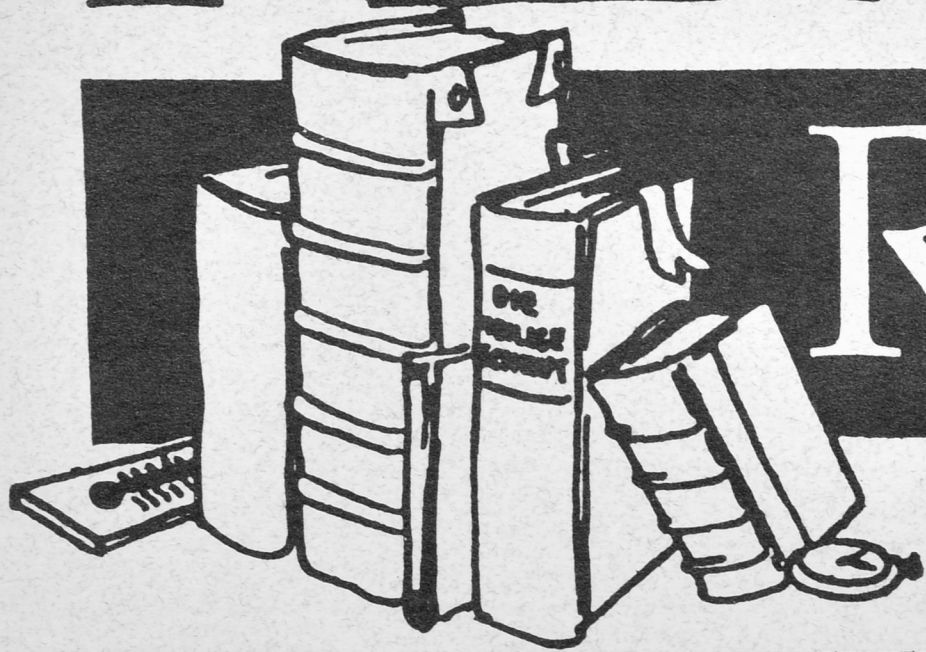


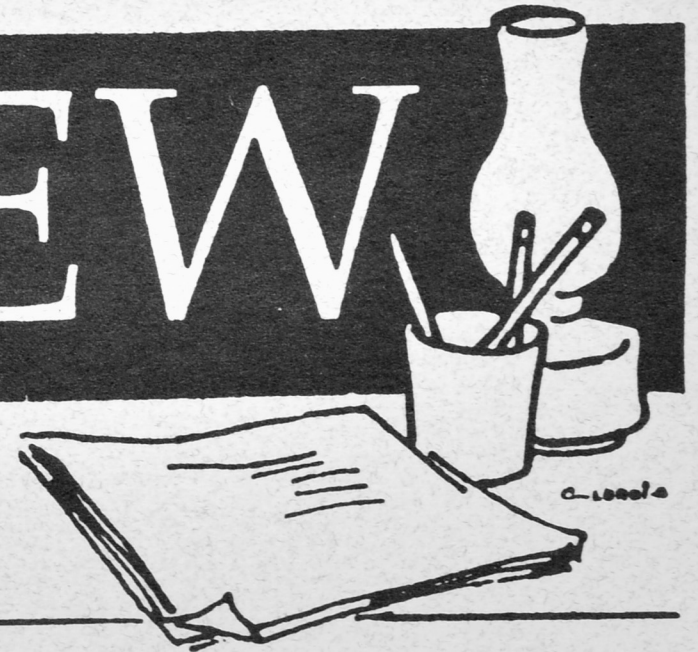
HERITAGE

REVIEW



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The Heritage Review is an annual publication of the Ohio Amish Library, 4292 SR 39 Millersburg, Ohio 44654. It is intended to provide information, past and present, about the Amish and Mennonites, especially in Ohio. We invite articles and information. Memberships to the Ohio Amish Library are \$20 annually. Single copies of The Heritage Review are available.

"LAWYER" YOST MILLER

Gleanings From his Collection of Documents
-by Edward Kline

Yost Miller (1776-1846) served the Amish community in Somerset Co., Pa. in many legal matters from ca. 1800-1816. After his move to the fledgling Amish community near Walnut Creek, Ohio in 1816, he continued to do extensive work as executor, administrator, guardian, and money collector. For this reason he became known as "Lawyer Yost." His son Benjamin (1813-1877) assisted in this work and continued it after Yost's death in 1846.

Throughout their lifetimes Yost and Benjamin collected a vast amount of documents: estate settlements, wills, maps, surveys, letters, and receipts for money and taxes. In the summer of 2005 several boxes of these documents were donated to Ohio Amish Library by Betty Miller Jeschke. One does not know how many documents perished, but 179 catalogued documents and one box of uncatalogued court records survived and are included in this collection.

These documents were found in a wooden, dove-tailed box, where Yost or Benjamin had placed them. In the late 1960s Oscar R. and Betty Miller acquired this box and its contents. Oscar was a great-great-great grandson of Yost Miller. After Oscar's passing, the papers went to Goshen, Indiana where Betty, now remarried,

now lives. There the collection of papers was listed and organized by the Mennonite Church Archives staff, after which they were brought to Ohio Amish Library.

Numerous historians and genealogists have in the past looked through these papers and taken information from them. They date from 1796 to 1865, with a heavy concentration of material from 1810- 1820, the early years of the Holmes County settlement. Many are legal documents, but letters, maps, and many tax receipts are included. They provide an insight not only into the lives of Yost and his son Benjamin, but also into the workings of the pioneer era, as well as later, of the Holmes County Amish settlement. This article discusses a number of points of interest gleaned from the papers.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Yost Miller, ML221, was born January 19, 1776 in Berks County, Pa., the oldest child of Hannes and Frany (Yoder) Miller. Hannas was the oldest son of "Indian John" Miller. Soon after Yost was born, probably the same year, Yost's parents moved from Berks County to Brothers Valley, Somerset County. They were in their lower 20s in age at that time. Yost grew up in Somerset County and in 1800 married Gertrude Yoder of the Glades area. In 1802 he bought a 302-acre farm alongside the Casselman River, across the river from his father Hannas' farm. In 1815, when preparing to move to Ohio, Yost sold this farm to his cousin Abraham Miller. (He was the son of Hannas' brother Peter, and a brother to Mose P. "Groß Mose" Miller.) In 1816 Yost moved to Ohio with his six children, where he was a pioneer in Walnut Creek Twp. His uncle Jacob (Yokkel) had been the first pioneer to move to that area, in 1809.

Before moving to Ohio, Yost had acquired the south half of Section 25, Township 9, Range 4 in Walnut Creek Twp., located midway between Walnut Creek and Sugarcreek along SR 39. After coming to Ohio, Yost sold this land to his brother Emanuel and in 1816 bought part of Section 16, Township 9, Range 4 from his cousin John J. Miller (Yokkel's son). On this property, located 1¼ miles east of Walnut Creek (where Roman Coblenz now lives), Yost lived and raised his family. Five more children were born to Yost and Gertrude in Ohio. Sometime before 1830 Gertrude passed away and on Sept. 8, 1836 Yost married Marie Follmer. Yost died

May 12, 1846, and Marie died the same year. Yost and both his wives are buried in the cemetery on his home farm. (Cemetery L-23 in Beachy, Cemetery Directory).

YOST'S FAMILY

Eleven children were born to Yost and Gertrude Miller, of whom only four married. Four died at a young age and three more grew to adulthood, but did not marry.

- 1.) Sarah, b. 1802, and married Peter C. Schrag, minister in the Oak Grove Church in Wayne Co.
- 2.) Jonathan, b. 1804, and died single.
- 3.) Isaac, b. 1806, and died young.
- 4.) Susanna, b. 1808, and died single. She was a dwarf.
- 5.) Elias, b. 1810, and married Barbara Hersberger.
- 6.) Benjamin, b. 1813, and married Mary Mast.
- 7.) Michael, b. 1816, and died young.
- 8.) Yost, b. 1818, and died young.
- 9.) Magdalena, b. 1820, and died single.
- 10.) Solomon, b. 1821, and married Magdalena Kauffman.
- 11.) Elizabeth, who died in infancy.

One Sunday in May, 1846, Sarah's husband Peter C. Schrag, SK3a, was stricken while preaching in the barn of his neighbor Jonas Smucker. He died 30 minutes later at the age of 50. A document in the collection, dated June 4, 1850, shows Christian S. Plank receiving \$17.42 from Benjamin Miller from the estate of Peter C. Schrag. Christian Plank was married to Peter's daughter Elizabeth. So it appears that Benjamin was executor of his brother-in-law's estate.

A puzzling document dated June 5, 1847 appears concerning Elias. It reads: "Rec'd of Benjamin J. Miller, thirty dollars for the use of Elias Miller, an insane man in my care as guardian, being part of the amount due said Elias Miller from the estate of his father Yost Miller." It is signed by the Justice of Peace—"Joel Hall, guardian of Elias Miller." Elias was married at this time and had three children. His father Yost had died the year before. Was the insanity a problem with alcohol?

Benjamin paid a "muster fine" of \$2.50 in the years 1837 and 1839. He would have been 24 and 26 years old at the time. This was probably a fine paid instead of serving in the military. Benjamin worked closely with his father and assisted in the legal work while Yost lived. After

his death he continued the work. An agreement dated April 21, 1841 shows Benjamin bought the home farm (S16, T9, R4) for \$1200. The agreement made provisions for Yost and Marie as long as they lived. Two years later they both died. On this farm Benjamin and Mary raised eleven children.

All nine of Yost's living siblings moved to and lived near Walnut Creek. Of Yost's 36 grandchildren, 21 remained in the area and lived and are buried here. These two factors have made the Miller name the most common surname in Holmes County among the Amish.

YOST'S LEGAL WORK

Although we do not know how Yost got a start doing legal work, he is a good example of one who developed self-taught skills to meet needs that arise. Yost must have shown interest and ability in such things early in life, for he

was 25 years old when he was named executor of his father's estate. From his work as executor he developed other skills in legal work.

Later, in Holmes County, Yost acquired a small book containing forms for various legal transactions, as well as instructions for self-taught penmanship skills. He signed the flyleaf of the 1822 book called "Pocket Companion or Every Man his Own Lawyer", shown below. This booklet is in the archives of the Holmes County Historical Society. Yost was proficient in both German and English and his legal documents were correct and accepted well both in Somerset and Holmes County.

HANNAS' ESTATE

Yost's father Hannas died an untimely death on June 13, 1802, at fifty years of age. He, with Joseph Speicher, had been executors of his father, "Indian John's" estate. "Indian John" died

THE Pocket Companion;

OR,

Every Man his Own Lawyer:

CONTAINING

A VARIETY OF PRECEDENTS,

Laid down in so plain a Manner, that

The Farmer, Mechanic, Apprentice, or School Boy,

CAN DRAW ANY

INSTRUMENT OF WRITING

Without the assistance of an Attorney.

By a Gentleman of the Bar.

PREFACED WITH

TWELVE PAGES OF SCRIPT,

Intended as a Copy for those Persons who wish to Improve their Hand Writing at leisure hours at home without the Instructions of a Teacher.

THE SEVENTH EDITION.

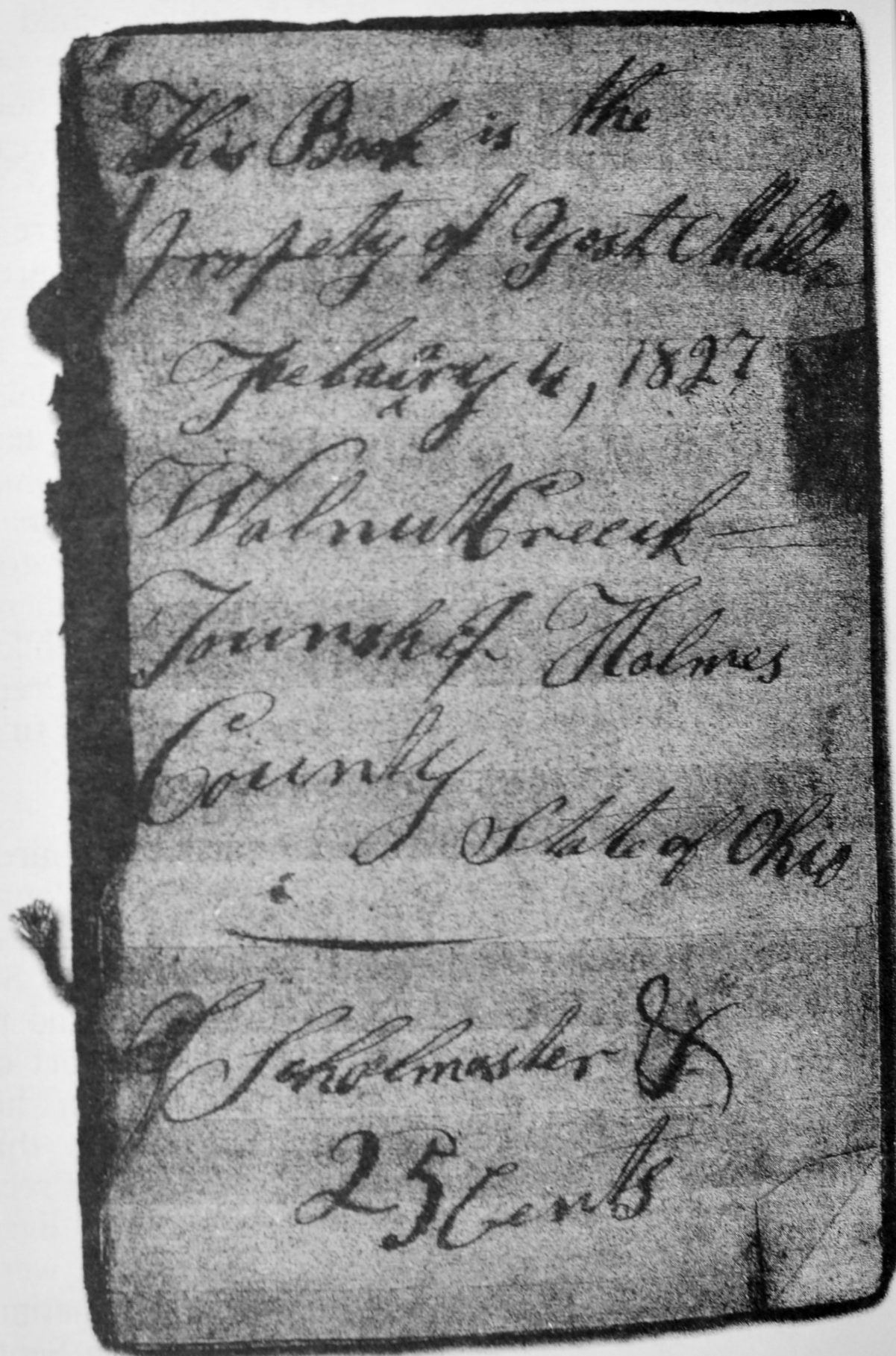
TO WHICH IS ADDED,

THE ART OF PENMANSHIP.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY S. ROBERTS.

1822.



Yost's Law Book

Yost's Signature On The Flyleaf

in 1798, only four years before his son Hannas.

Yost's papers include a document dated Jan. 20, 1801, in which a probate judge, Morgan Rhees, names "John Miller" executor of the estate of Jacob Miller, deceased. It is believed that Jacob was Hannas' uncle, a brother to "Indian John." Hannas died the next year, so probably Yost got this document in order to fulfill its obligations. When Yost and his younger brother David were named executors of Hannas' estate, they had to complete both of the above duties of their father.

A paper dated May 15, 1808 shows that John Miller, a younger brother to Yost—then 21 years old, "received of Yost and David, 83 pounds and 10 schilling, which is my share of the goods of Joh. Miller's estate." In another paper dated Oct. 25, 1810, he again states that he "received from Yost Miller, executor of the deceased younger Johannes Miller's estate, 2 pounds, 16 schilling, and 2 cents. This is the full sum which comes to me of the elder deceased Joh. Miller's estate."

These papers, as well as others, show that often moneys were not given to heirs until they turned 21 years old. This explains the lapse of 6–8 years since Hannas' death. In 1814, when Isaac, another brother, turned 21, he received \$137 from the estate.

On October 17, 1811, David Miller writes he "received \$7.71 from Yost from his grandfather Johannes Miller's estate. On January 28, 1812 Daniel Miler "received from Yost Miller \$7.81, from Joh. Miller, Senior's estate." Both David and Daniel were younger brothers of Yost. We see here that Yost dispersed money from both his father Hannas' and his grandfather "Indian John's" estates.

OTHER LEGAL WORK

Yost's papers show that he was executor of nine estates in Somerset from 1802–1816. Most, but not all, were estates of fellow church members. It is also known that he helped with the estate of immigrant Michael Troyer, and that of John Hochstetler. Probably he was involved in still more cases. A performance bond for a Christian Moyer of Somerset, dated April 18, 1808, is in Yost's handwriting, showing he prepared such documents..

Several of the more notable estate settlements

Yost was involved in were as follows.

In his will dated June 20, 1812, Christian Mast, of Ellick Twp., Somerset, in a very shaky German script, names "der alte Peter Bitsche und Yost Miller" as his executors.

A paper dated Nov. 19, 1814 shows Benjamin Hochstetler having received \$52.44 of Yost Miller from Solomon Miller's "hinterlassenschaft" (remaining estate). Benjamin was married to Yost's sister Catherine. Solomon was a younger brother to Yost, who was killed earlier in 1814, at 18 years of age and single. He was killed while felling trees at his brother Isaac's. A dead limb hit him, breaking his back. His was the first death in the Ohio pioneer community. He was buried in a coffin made with hand-split boards, as there was no sawmill in operation at that time in the area. Another paper dated the same day, shows another brother, Daniel receiving \$52.44. It is believed that each of Yost's nine siblings received this amount, making Solomon's estate worth \$471.96, which is substantial for an 18-year-old pioneer in 1814. What is not clear is how the estate was settled, since the death took place in Walnut Creek and Yost was living in Somerset County in 1814. Probably Yost came to Ohio and settled the estate in a short time, since both payments were on the same day.

In 1813 another tragic death, that of John Troyer, TY23, involved Yost in the estate settlement. John Troyers were one of the first four families who came to Walnut Creek Twp. in 1810. During the Indian scare of 1812–1813, Johns returned to Somerset, where he was killed in a barn raising accident. A document dated March 30, 1815 shows that Magdalena Troyer (the widow) received \$168.66, as a third of John's estate. The same day Yost also paid Peter and Joseph Miller (probably Magdalena's brothers) \$338.34, as guardians for the heirs of John Troyer. This was twice the amount Magdalena received. John and Magdalena had six children. It must have been difficult to face the rigors of pioneer life as a widow with six small children, the oldest being ten years old. Seven or eight years later Magdalena died in Ohio, when her youngest child was ten years old, leaving six orphan children under nineteen years old.

Yost's papers do not record many estate settlements in Holmes County, although it is known that he did quite a few. For example, he

was executor of the estates of Joseph Hochstetler in 1823, of Christian Gindlesberger in 1824, of John Blank in 1836, and of Peter Brenneman in 1844. A paper dated 1846 shows Benjamin dispersing funds from the estate of Albright Gindlesberger as agent for Yost Miller, deceased. Yost died on May 12 of this year, and apparently he was settling this estate when he died, and Benjamin completed the work. Many of Yost's papers dating from his time in Ohio deal with lending and collecting monies.

Five documents from 1818 and 1819 show Yost and John Schrock, Jr. as executors of David Hochstetler's estate. Included are David's will, in which he names his "trusty friends" as executors, and a list of chattel divided by David's three children, Joseph, David, and Elizabeth. Another paper shows that Joseph received the land he lives on (unspecified), valued at 100 pounds, as inheritance. Another lists nine household items, plus two beds and two cows which Elizabeth received as inheritance.

CIVIC INVOLVEMENTS

When Holmes County was organized in 1825, each township held elections for officers. The election for Walnut Creek Township were held at Yost's home on November 10, 1825, showing Yost's interest in the process.

The next year Yost was appointed school examiner for Holmes County. In 1827 Yost must have been teaching school, according to what he wrote on the fly-leaf of the "Pocket Companion" A document dated November 1837 shows Yost Miller involved in hiring William Gerber as school treasurer of Walnut Creek Township. Yost was well educated, probably self-taught, for his time and circumstances. He obviously took interest in the education of others.

Yost's work with estates and as guardian in various situations brought him into a working relationship with the legal offices of the county. Sometime in the 1830s he was prompted to make a plot map of the Walnut Creek area, showing by initials who owned the land. This map is at the Ohio Amish Library. Yost's papers also include land ownership maps dated 1923, of Sugarcreek, Hardy, and Berlin Townships in Holmes County. Also included are many Justice of Peace records, and box of dockets from the Holmes County courts. Most of them are not related to Yost or Amish people, but somehow Yost and Benjamin came to possess them.

FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS

Yost's papers give evidence that both he and his son Benjamin lent out money and collected notes as a service to the community. The notes collected were often for other people. It appears that Yost and Benjamin acted as sort of a clearing-house for lending and borrowing. It seems that if someone desired to borrow money, they would find someone wanting to lend it, make notes, and then collect the note when due. At times they lent out their own money. Following are examples:

"J. Williamson" signed the following: "Borrowed of Yost Miller \$6.30, Jan. 25, 1841, which I promise to return again 15th Nov. next"

In January, 1842, and again in April, 1845, a Samuel Porter "received of Yost Miller" \$3.52 and \$5.44 on the account of Jacob Holderman.

In 1829 a firm called Brobst and Graeter, probably bankers, "left for collecting into the hands and care of Mr. Yost Miller of Holmes County, Walnut K.T.S. the following notes and accounts." The list of 53 accounts were for amounts of \$1.00 to \$32.00, due within 21 to 90 days. Of these, thirty-four are marked "paid," after Yost collected the monies. After Jacob Mathes paid a \$10.00 account to Brobst and Graeter, he was given a document which said "We do hereby order Yost Miller, in Walnut K. T.S. where said note is for collection at the present time, to deliver it up... and consider this our receipt." There is no further explanation of this arrangement, but Yost was obviously collecting notes for Brobst and Graeter.

In 1852 Benjamin paid a Christian Steiner \$157.35 for an account owed by John Leichty. In 1853 Nicholas Mollet, administrator for the estate of Anna Leichty, obtained a judgment of \$105 against the same John Leichty in the Common Pleas Court in Millersburg. Benjamin paid this money to the court. Then the next year John Liechty, living in Clay County, Indiana sent a letter Benjamin. Addressing him as "Dear Friend Benjamin," he makes reference to the debts he had with Benjamin and had paid. He further asks if Benjamin would lend him several hundred dollars again. Here we see Benjamin lending and collecting money much like his father had done.

LAND OWNED BY YOST

Yost's papers contain many receipts of real estate taxes paid on various properties. He owned

numerous tracts in Holmes County and several in Wayne County during his lifetime. Yost must have been fairly secure financially and probably invested his money in properties. Most of Yost's properties are now owned, and have been owned by Amish people, so it appears he bought them and made them available to people in the Amish community. Following is a list of those properties, listed in his papers:

- 1.) The first land owned by Yost in Holmes County was the south half of Section 25, Township 9, Range 4. These 320 acres are located between Walnut Creek and Sugarcreek along SR 39. He bought this land while still in Somerset and sold it to his brother Emanuel soon after coming to Holmes County. This land is not listed in his papers, but it is known from other sources that he owned it.
- 2.) In 1814 Yost paid taxes on the following three tracts: On 160 acres of the SE Quarter of Section 16, Township 9, Range 4, which is the farm he lived on, east of Walnut Creek on TR 419, where Roman Coblentz now lives.
- 3.) On 104 acres of part of the NW Quarter of Section 16, Township 9, Range 4. This is the farm to the northwest of the home farm.
- 4.) On 172 acres of the NW Quarter of Section 6, Township 9, Range 4. This was land in the next bottom, north of CR 172, where Noah E. Miller and David A. Miller now live.
- 5.) In 1817 he owned 169 acres in the SE Quarter of Section 5, Township 9, Range 5. This land is north of Bunker Hill to the west of CR 77. It was then listed as in "Coshocton County." After Holmes County was organized in 1815, he paid the tax in Millersburg.
- 6.) In 1826 Yost paid tax on 136 acres in Wayne County- Section 18, Township 21, Range 14, located just north of the Wayne County line.
- 7.) In 1828, he paid taxes on additional 134 acres in Wayne County- Section 30, Township 21, Range 14.
- 8.) In 1843 Yost paid taxes on 160 acres in the SE Quarter of Section 3, Township 9, Range 5, in Walnut Creek Township. This land is located north of CR 168 and east of TR 401.

These tracts of land total 1355 acres, which Yost owned at one time or other. He probably sold some of the tracts before buying others, and probably did not own all of them at one time.

In 1869 Benjamin paid taxes on 81 acres east of Charm, on Section 7, Township 8, Range 5.

MISCELLANEOUS INTERESTING PAPERS

Papers from 1847 to 1854 show Benjamin Miller and John Schrock as guardians of the heirs of Michael Troyer. They were probably also administrators of his estate. According to the names of the children mentioned here, this was Michael Troyer (TY71), the son of Jacob, who was the son of immigrant Michael. (Yost had been appraiser of immigrant Michael Troyer's chattel in Somerset County, ca. 1807.) Michael (TY71) died in 1842 and left six children who were minors.

One paper shows Elizabeth (Troyer) and her husband Daniel J. Mast receiving \$13.11 soon after they married. She was 23 years old then.

A paper dated 1849 records that daughter "Magdalena Miller" received \$86.90 as "her share of rent for the farm" from the guardians of Michael Troyer's heirs. AAMG shows Magdalena as born in 1842 and later married to Abraham Miller. However here in 1849 she writes her name "Magdalena Miller," so she must have been married then. She probably was born around 1825 to 1827.

In a document of September, 1854, Christian Troyer, then living in Lagrange County, Indiana, received \$637.06 from John Schrock and Benjamin Miller, as the full amount due him from his father Michael's estate. This was twelve years after Michael's death, at which time Christian was 9 years old, making him 21 now. The paper lists rents from the farm for 9 years (plus interest). money from the estate, and cash. Christian's grandfather Jacob died in 1850, (8 years after his son Michael), and Christian received \$16.05 from Jacob's estate. Expenses deducted from the settlement show \$2.75 for "hauling his cloth[es] to Wooster and paid for a box," in 1853. This may have been when Christian moved to Indiana. The guardians also charged a fee of \$25.00, which reflected work over 12 years. So we see that Yost and Benjamin probably got paid for their "legal work."

In 1843 Yost wrote a contract to sell a "Segmühle und Wasserreif" (sawmill and waterwheel) from Abraham Hershberger to Heinrich Hershberger, for \$400. Written in German, it spells out the terms of payment. One hundred dollars were to be paid for the next two years and the balance when possible. The sawmill was located just north and east of Yost's home farm, along the Walnut Creek.

Empfangen von Marfſſindam
Froschauer das ziefammen
gulegt ist worden für
Samuel Speicher wie
folgt

	\$	Cts
Jonas Stutzman	2	
Isaac Miller	2	
Michael Troyer	1	
Christian Yoder		50
Jacob Stutzman	2	
Emanuel Miller	1	
Moses Miller Klein		62
Johannes Miller bezahlet an	75	x
Jacob Mast bezahlet an	50	x
Jacob Mast	1	
Abraham Hershberger alt	1	
Christian Hershberger	1	
Johannes Schrag	1	
Daniel Miller	2	

Collection List

An undated document (shown on the left), records a collection taken for Samuel Speicher. An early settler coming from Somerset, Samuel must have had financial needs meriting a collection. Interestingly, most of the contributors were among the first pioneers to the area. Moses J. Miller, ("kleine") is listed, who was born in 1811. So the document is probably from the late 1830s or 1840s.

The top of the document reads, "Received from various persons, that which was collected for Samuel Speicher, as follows." The first name is that of "White" Jonas Stutzman. The rest of the names are (from the top), Isaac Miller, Michael Troyer, Christian Yoder, Jacob Stutzman (Jonas' father), Emanuel Miller, Moses Miller kleine, Johannes Miller, Jacob Weaver, Jacob Mast, Abraham Hershberger-aged, Christian Hershberger, Johannes Schrag, and Daniel Miller. The money made up, \$16.37½, probably had as much buying power as \$800 would have today.

A receipt (shown below) dated March 10, 1859, shows Benjamin subscribed for the paper "Volksfreund und Beobachter" from John Baer's Sons in Lancaster, Pa. The note written across the top says, "We do not have any [New] Testaments in Froschauer's translation." It is interesting to note that in 1859 people were still asking for the old traditional German translation preferred by the Anabaptists- Froschauer's. There is another receipt from the next year when Benjamin renewed his subscription

Wir haben keine Testamente von Froschauer's Uebersetzung

Received, Lancaster, March 10, 1859, of
Mr. Benjamin J. Miller
One Dollar — Cents, for subscription to the
Volksfreund und Beobachter — Janry 27, 1860
John Baer's Sons

Drucker: Hebel,
Von jeder Art, auch in der Deutschen oder Eng-
lischen Sprache, auf kurze Kragel, schon
und billig angefertigt in der
Campf - Schnellpress - Druckerei des
Hofes in der
Stadthausstrasse.

Der Volksfreund und Beobachter
Wird jeden Dienstag herausgegeben von
Johann Baer und Söhnen,
In der Stadthausstrasse, Pa.
Der Subscriptions-Preis ist 1 Thaler 26 Cents
des Jahres; wenn derselbe in den ersten sechs
Monaten bezahlt wird, kostet der Jahrgang bloß
1 Thaler.

\$ 1 —

Receipt for Subscription

COSTS OF GOODS

Scattered throughout Yost's papers are costs of goods and lands, and taxes in the 1800s. Following is a selection of examples.

In 1843 Yost bought a suit of new clothes from D. Kelsey for 79 cents. From the estate appraisal of Peter Brennehan in 1844: 1 bucket= 25c; 1 oats cradle= 50c; 1 garden hoe= 37c; 2 auger bits= 20c; 1 draw knife= 25c; 1 handsaw= 75c; 1 sickle= 12c; 650 shingles (wooden)= \$1.62; 1 sausage machine= 25c; 1 iron kettle= \$2.75; 1 plough= \$1.00; 3 hogs= \$2.00; 9 sheep= \$3.37; 1 red heifer= \$5.50; 2-year colt= \$32.00; 1 old horse= \$20.00; 1 Dung fork= 50c; 1 windmill= \$5.00; 1 set horse geers (harness)= \$1.25; 1 saddle= \$2.50; 31 bushels wheat (50c each)= \$15.50; 17 bushels rye (30c each)= \$5.10; 1 small keg with whiskey= 45c; 3 pewter plates= 40c; 1 corn meal sifter= 30c.

1819: 1 cant hook= 69c; 5 planes=\$6.00; 1 Iron square= 52c; 1 crosscut saw= \$7.50; 1 chest with shoemakers tools= \$2.60; 1 pair saddlebags \$2.62; 1 cowskin= 7c; 1 flour barrel= 51c; 1 mouse trap= 25c; 1 rifle= \$18.19; 320 lbs salt (2½ bushels)= \$2.87; 1 faucet= 6c; 1 broom= 35c; 1 lb. chocolate= 25c.

1820: 1 bed= \$16.00; 4 new plates= \$2.25; 1 iron pot with lid= \$2.00; 2 cows= \$24.00.

In 1854 John Liechty wrote from Indiana quoting the following costs: wheat= \$1.00 per bushel; corn = 25c per bushel; rye= 40c per bushel; fresh pork= 8c per lb.; butter= 10c per lb.; a good horse= \$100; a good cow= \$15-25; land was \$3-4 per acre.

It is interesting to observe that animals, especially horses were relatively expensive compared to tools and equipment. Grains were also valuable by comparison. A rifle and a crosscut saw were expensive items.

In 1814 Yost sold his 160 acre farm to his son Benjamin for \$1200, which was almost \$8 per acre. In 1843 a sawmill and waterwheel were sold for \$400.

Real estate taxes on 436 acres in 1814 were \$7.63. In 1927 taxes on 432 acres were \$11.13. Taxes on 134 acres in Wayne County in 1828 were \$2.30. (Maybe with no improvements.) By 1847 taxes on 339 acres were \$50.27. In 1854 Benjamin paid \$11.40 IRS tax on \$380 income.

LETTER FROM ALSACE

Among Yost's papers is a letter dated March 10, 1839, addressed to Monsieur Christian Moser, "Walanscrick Taunschip," Holmes Co., State Ohio, Berlin Post Office. It was written by Benedict Moser, from Mülhouse, Alsace, France. Following are excerpts from the letter:

"There is no day nor hour that I do not think of you and this thought increases always more and more about coming to you in America, but one thing remains, that is the property in Schlonitz... Dear brother, I would like very much to know if you can't give me any news of our brother and sister, namely Hans and Bäbi. I beg you to write them or let them know that I would also very much like to come to America, and if they could be so good as to back me up a little. I will of course pay back everything that you and they will do to help me. I can tell you that I don't like it here anymore. I always have to work very hard and yet have hardly enough to live on, for here everything is expensive, and a person can't depend on the factory [for work]

I now have a large household and I would like very much to come to you in America where I hope to earn my bread more easily. But I repeat that I can't come before we have disposed of our property in the Schlonitz.

I have just discovered that one has to have a sponsor to go to America, that is, if they think one doesn't have enough money, but you can give me the best information about this. If it is so, I ask you to be my sponsor and if it is necessary, that you send me a document that shows you are willing to be my sponsor.

You could also let me know what bread and food costs and especially what daily wages are. This is the most important thing that I must know because I have to earn my living by working. Write me too, about how much it cost you until you arrived there, and what I must take with me. And how long we have to travel over the water until we get to America. All these things I would like to know.

I am wondering whether you didn't get the letter which I sent with Christian Kauffman. It has been a year now that they left, and I gave him a letter to take with him. I haven't got any answer to it. Greetings from your relatives and your faithful brother and his wife.

Benedikt Moser

*bey Herrn Kestner Vater u. Sohn
auf der Witswil Fabriken*

Muhlhausen, Oberrheinisches Dep't.

AN EARLY HOLMES COUNTY COURT CASE

Jonas Troyer vs. Christian Nisley
by Henry L. Erb

Court records in Millersburg, Holmes County, Ohio record an unusual lawsuit in 1842—one between two Amish men. While the Amish have traditionally refrained from using the courts to settle disputes among themselves because of religious convictions, there were a few cases, such as this one, where the courts were used.

In the spring of 1804, at the age of sixteen, Christian Nisley left his home in Europe and immigrated to America. He worked several years for Christian Zug, Jr. in Chester County, Pa., and then moved to Somerset County. In 1807 Christian married Sarah Miller, a daughter of minister Abraham Miller of the Glades settlement near Berlin, Pennsylvania. Christian and Sarah bought 432 acres near Davidsville, Pennsylvania soon after this. Sometime around this time Christian was ordained to the ministry of the Amish Church. The Johnstown settlement began to decline and by 1840 Christian and most of his family had moved to Holmes County. On April 13, 1840 Christian and Sarah bought 160 acres in Walnut Creek Twp, the SE quarter of section 18. This farm is located along CR 135, where Andy Raber now lives. They bought the farm for \$3,300. plus \$10 for water rights to a sawmill dam, from Jonas and Elizabeth Troyer. Christian Nisley is "NS" in AAMG, and died eight years after moving to Ohio.

Jonas Troyer was a son of pioneer Jacob Troyer and his second wife, Mary Wengerd. Jonas and Elizabeth married around 1830 and lived on this farm in 1840. Sometime in 1840 after Jonas sold the farm to Christian Nisley, he made a trip on horseback to McLean County, Illinois. He rode to Peoria, Illinois, where he sold his horse and walked 35 miles to Bloomington, Illinois. Sometime after the lawsuit Jonas moved to Illinois with his family. His youngest two children were born there. It is said that Jonas helped make the decision to build a church house for the Rock Creek Church, which took place in 1853. This was the "first Amish church house west of the Alleghenies." Jonas Troyer is "TY74" in AAMG, and # 568 in "Troyer Family History." The family records of the two books do not match exactly, and it is not certain when Jonas moved his family to

Illinois. Gingerich-Kreider says their last child born in Ohio was in 1848, but the family history says they moved soon after 1840.

Apparently Christian Nisley was not able to pay Jonas Troyer the full \$3300 in 1840 when he bought the farm, because on February 27, 1842 he signed a note for \$115.50, due in one day. It remains a mystery why they would make note that was due in one day.

In March, 1842, Attorney Hoagland appeared in the Holmes County Court for Jonas Troyer and filed a claim for judgment against Christian Nisley for the due note.. The suit also asked for \$50 in damages, but the court only awarded \$2.88, which is 2½ % of the amount due.

Christian Nisley also got a lawyer to represent himself before the court as the record below shows. Although Christian agreed in court that he owed the \$115.50 to Jonas Miller, the amount (which is 3½% of the purchase price) was probably a matter of dispute. We have no other record of the suit, but it is presumed that Christian Nisley did pay the amount due, plus \$2.88 in damages. Yet it is a very unusual case for one Amishman to take another to court for collection of a note and for damages.

Following is a transcription of the suit filed against Christian Nisley:

Jonas Troyer The Court of Common Pleas of
vs. March Term A.D.1842
Christian Nisley

Declaration of Debt
Jonas Troyer complains of Christian Nisley in a plea of debt, for that whereas the said Christian Nisley on the 27th day of March [should be February] AD 1842 at the County of Holmes aforesaid, made his certain writing obligatory of that date, sealed with his seal (and now to the court here shown). And then and there delivered the same to the said Jonas Troyer and thereby bound himself to pay, to the said Jonas Troyer on order one hundred and fifteen dollars and fifty cents, one day after the date thereof, which period has now elapsed. Yet the said Christian Nisley has not paid the said sum of money nor any part thereof.— To the damage of said Plaintiff fifty dollars and thereupon suit is brought.

*M. Hoagland
Att'y for Plft (Plaintiff)*

Following is the record of the reply made by Christian Nisley's lawyer to the suit:

Christian Nisley vs. Jonas Troyer
In the Court of Common Pleas
of March Term, AD 1842

Plea in Debt

And now comes that said Christian Nisley by his attorney duly authorized for that purpose, by warrant and for plea, says that he cannot deny

the action of the said Jonas Troyer, but that he did bind himself in manner and form as the said Jonas Troyer has above thereof declared against him. And confesses that he is indebted to the said Jonas Troyer in the sum of one hundred and fifteen dollars, and fifty cents, and that the said Jonas Troyer has sustained damages in the sum of two dollars and eighty-eight cents and costs of suit and does hereby release all error that may accrue in the rendition of judgement.

T. Avery
Att'y for Deft. (defendant)

\$ 115.38

One day after date, I promise to pay ~~Samuel Hill & Son~~ ^{Jonas Troyer} or order ^{one hundred and fifty cents} dollars; Value received.

And I do hereby authorize and empower any Attorney at-law in the STATE of OHIO, to appear in any COURT of RECORD in said State, at any time after this becomes due, and waive the issuing of process, and confess a judgement against me, and in favor of the holder of this obligation, for the amount due thereon, together with three per cent Attorney's collection fee, and costs of suit; and thereupon to release all error, and waive all right and benefit of appeal in my behalf.

This 27th day of February A. D. 1842

Christian Nisley
[Signature]

Note signed by Christian Nisley

THE ANABAPTIST THEOLOGY OF MARTYRDOM *

by Ethelbert Stauffer **

The background and tradition of the "Theology of Martyrdom"

During the time of the heavy persecutions of the Jews under the Syrian rule (175-164 B.C.) they arrived at the conviction that in this aeon or world epoch the persecuted ones are the very saints of God. And they understood this as the historical fact in the sense that it has always been this way in the course of history. In the great religious literature after the conclusion of the Old Testament canon, in the apocryphical and pseudepigraphical books, we find shorter and longer "martyrs' summaries," enumerating name and fate of the witnesses of God from Abel on as far as to "the three men in the furnace," concluding that thus will also be the fate of those today who are loyal to God. They have to hide in deserts and bleak valleys and yet eventually will suffer martyrdom for the sake of the Law. The apocryphal books with the sagas of the martyrs of the time of the Maccabees, the folktales of old Eleasar or of the mother with the seven sons, are illustrations in case. And, so they continue, it will remain thus to the end of the present aeon. The apocalyptic literature from that time onward always recognized in historical facts historical necessities. The main topic of this popular writing was the old antagonism between the divine and the devilish order, reaching its final climax in the persecution of the children or people of God. That is why those saints, martyred in arenas and public exhibitions, are the very fighters for God who, in the last analysis, Himself wrestles with Satan. Inasmuch, however, as this great battle is fought to the bloody end, death becomes victory, and the martyr who gives his innocent life becomes the expiating sacrifice for all the sins of his people, and the trail blazer of the new aeon. At the same time this death of the saints is the threatening testimony against the persecutors, pointing toward a reversal of the situation in a distant future. As soon as the last martyr will have died and the

number of those who paid their testimony with their blood will be full, the day of retaliation will dawn, a day of glory for the martyrs and a day of horror for the persecutors. Then they will recognize whom they actually have tortured and will experience in their own bodies the supreme power of God. Martyrdom is in truth a reflex of the cosmic battle between God and Anti-God, and the victory of the martyr forecasts the final victory of the spiritual powers.¹

In the New Testament this system of thought, here called "Theology of Martyrdom," found its very center in the Cross which gives meaning and order to all this suffering. Jesus himself recalls to his disciples this twofold meaning of suffering. The death of the Messiah is the climax of the persecution of all the saints; but at the same time this triumph of Evil means also its ultimate overthrow. In this sense Jesus explains his own death as the turning point of history toward the new era. "I must be baptized with a baptism..." (Mt. 20:22)

The fact of the Cross soon became the principle of the Cross which from now on determines the life and fate of the disciples. Also the existence of the disciples stands under the necessity of persecution; they too must accept that baptism of blood with which Christ himself was baptized; they too must drink the cup which the Master drank (Mt. 20:23); and they too shall, through suffering and death, reach the glory of the Heavens. Paul amplified these ideas; also for his system the Cross forms the center. The "imitation of Christ" is a leading concept of his moral teaching. And just as Jesus had called his dying a baptism, Paul called baptism a dying.

The Gospel according to John presents the old truth of the teleological necessity of all martyrdom in a new formula: it speaks of the "seed" which must die that the wheat will grow. The Epistle to the Hebrews pictures the *via dolorosa* (path of suffering) of the true believers throughout history in the style of the apocryphical martyrs' summaries, and then describes the sufferings of Christ and his disciples by the old figure of the ancient contest or race. The Book of Revelation finally places the fate of the martyrs of the early church into the great framework of cosmic happenings; the death of the Messiah means the first and decisive victory of the *Civitas Dei* [city of God] over the *Civitas Diaboli* [city of Satan]. In consequence of this, the old dragon which had fallen

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** Ethelbert Stauffer, son of a Palatinate Mennonite family, was a professor on the theological faculty of the University of Bonn, Germany in 1933 when this study was published in the *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, Vol. LII (1933) pp. 545-598 under the title "Taufertum und Märtyrertheologie." The translation is by Robert Friedmann. The translator has not followed the original footnotes unchanged, but has made certain editorial changes and additions. His contributions are indicated by the signature [R.F.]

1. The references to this introductory section will be found in Ethelbert Stauffer, *Gott, Welt, und Geschichte, eine theologisch-geschichtliche Studie zur jüdischen Apokalyptik*, 1934.

from Heaven rages with doubled ferocity, and the prayers of the martyred saints rise up to Heaven until the number of these martyrs shall be full.

The early church meditated upon these thoughts further. The first Clemens epistle contains a martyrs' summary in the style of the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The *Shepherd of Hermas* looks at martyrdom as the most powerful testimony to the hostility between God and the "world", and for that reason it is the fulfillment of the Christian life. Next, the idea of the "imitation of Christ" becomes dominant in the martyrbook of Polycarp. (d.155): the passion of Christ becomes the prototype for the path of suffering of all loyal disciples, even to the smallest detail. And thus teach all those early books of the developing Christianity. The church of the first centuries interpreted the work of Christ by means of the concept of the "Theology of Martyrdom," and vice versa understood the fate of the martyrs through the fate of the Master. However, Christ himself is never presented as a martyr; rather, all the martyrs stand under the sign of the event on Calvary. Christ is not a model in a moral or symbolical sense but he is the archetype in a genuine sense of destiny.

In the main, two lines of thought come to the fore in the figurative speeches of the old martyr texts. The first is that of the fight through suffering, as it appears particularly prominent in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Christ is here the great *athletes* [participant in Greek contests or races], and accordingly those who continue his fight against Satan and who walk his path of passion, are the contestants crowned with the wreath of Eternity even as the runners of Greece were crowned with a wreath of laurels. Each victory of a martyr is a victory of the *Civitas Dei* over the *Civitas Diaboli*. The second idea is that of the analogy between baptism and death as taught by Jesus and Paul. Baptism is a dying—because it a descent into the waters of Hades.² And, since baptism with water already serves the expiation of sins, how much more will this be achieved through the "second baptism," the dying for the sake of Christ.³ For instance, one book presents the martyrdom of the two women, Perpetua and Felicitas, as a straight "baptism with blood." Eventually both lines of ideas find their combined expression in the thought of Tertullian, the church father of the end of the second century. As

2. The concept of the "stream of death" in Hades is the pre-Christian, Greek concept which was the link in that comparison between baptism and death.

3. We omit here numerous scholarly references to early Christian literary works. [R.F.]

long as the Christian church remained a church of martyrs, this "Theology of Martyrdom" remained alive. At the end of this great epoch of persecution (about 300 A.D.) this system of thought received its well balanced expression in the great *Church History* of Eusebius, which not only collected facts and records about persecution but also tried to work out their meaning in the history of salvation.⁴ Eusebius sees the visitation by God but he sees also the hatred of the Antichrist; he sees the selection of the chosen ones of God and their renewal; he sees the victory of the fighters of Christ and at the same time the miserable end of the persecutors and tyrants.⁵ Thus for Eusebius the path of the church from Christ to Constantine, the emperor, is in a sense but one single path of suffering or passion. In other words, the Eusebian *Church History* is the history of the "church under the Cross."

The church of the Roman empire, as well as later the church of the Papacy, were no longer churches of martyrs. After Constantine the great tradition of the true and, for that reason, persecuted church of Christ was adopted and handed down by new "heretical" bodies. It seems that in these circles all this thinking persisted underground up to the late Middle Ages. In the age of the Reformation it revived in a new and mighty upsurge. It is the intention of the present study to follow the hitherto little noticed signs of that upsurge, connected as they are by their inner meaning.

The early years of the Reformation seem loaded almost to the point of explosion with these ideas of the "Theology of Martyrdom." The arguments against persecutors, and the concept of the imitation of Christ are revived. The apocalyptic vision of a fight between God and Antichrist finds its reflection, for instance, in the painter Albrecht Dürer's *Diary* of 1521, where he sides with Luther in his extremity after being outlawed by the Diet of Worms. The path of martyrdom leads *per crucem ad lucem* [through the cross to the light], but the day of revenge is imminent. Luther himself is taken hold of by these ideas and moods in those first years of the struggle for his church reforms. In the summer of 1523, when he learned of the burning at the stake of two young Augustinian monks in Brussels, he exclaimed, "I thought I myself should be the very first one who should be martyred for the sake of the Holy Gospel; but apparently I was not worthy of that."⁶ The loyalty of those young

4. Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiae*, V,4. On baptism by fire, VI,4,3

5. Eusebius, *op cit.* VII.

6. *Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica*, VIII, 3; or Luther's works, *Wiener Ausgabe*, XII, 74.

confessors meant to him a victory of God over Satan. Under the impact of that he composed a martyr hymn, *Eyn habsch Lied von zweyen Marteren Christi zu Brussel von den Sophisten zu Loven verbrannt* (1523).⁷ At that time Luther does not think of the typological relationship between the fate of the martyrs and that of Christ himself. Later on, however, Luther carries out this comparison almost in the same style as it was done in the early Christian writings. This Luther did primarily in the book on the history of *Bruder Henricus in Diedmar verbrandt*, published in 1525.⁸

One can hardly grasp, renew, and evaluate more genuinely the ideas of the "Theology of Martyrdom" than Luther did in the beginning of the Reformation. In those early years Luther was truly the leader and speaker of a popular religious movement which had taken hold of the most different social groups and strata.⁹ But, since 1525 things changed with Luther when he started establishing a state church which, as in the day of Constantine, ceased to be a martyr's church.¹⁰ To be sure, Luther still opposed the persecution of Anabaptists in Catholic countries,¹¹ but at the same time he passionately fought what he called "false" martyrdom (in Protestant countries), speaking disparagingly of "falsche Märterer... Rotten-geister, Widerteuffer, und dergleichen."¹²

Again, as in the time of the old church, the apocalyptic of martyrdom became the peculiar doctrine of the *Ketzer*, the heretical brotherhoods and communities. The old ideas of martyrdom found a new and genuine revival particularly among the Anabaptists where they remained alive as long as their brotherhoods remained martyr-minded, in general far into the seventeenth century, and in certain places, even beyond that century.

7. Luther, W.A., XXXV, 91, 411

8. Luther, W.A., XVIII, 215

9. What mattered at that time for Luther was God's mighty power and rule revealed also in the deeds of the martyrs. They die for the "truth," as long ago Eusebius had also claimed. And the polemic of the young Luther turns against the authorities, for the "poor miserable crowd, prodded against the martyrs, do not know what they are doing." W.A., XVIII, 238, 18.

10. In 1527 when Leonhard Kaiser was burned at the stake, Luther's old sense for martyrdom flared up once again. At that time he wrote the pamphlet, *Von Herrn Leonhard Keiser in Baiern umb des Evengelii willen verbrent*. W.A. XXIII, 443. But later he stressed more the viewpoint that not everybody who ends at the stake must necessarily be a martyr.

11. *Von der Wiedertauffe, an zwei Pfarrherrn*, 1528 W.A. XXVI

12. W.A. LI, 401

The earliest principal statement of an Anabaptist leader on this subject seems to be a passage in the noted letter of Conrad Grebel to Thomas Müntzer, September 5, 1524. "True Christian believers are sheep among wolves...and must be baptized in anguish and affliction, tribulation, persecution, suffering, and death."¹³ Balthasar Hubmaier next coined the most concise formulation of the basic idea of the "Theology of Martyrdom" in his motto, *Die Wahrheit ist untödlich* [Truth cannot be killed]—the very essence of his *Taufbüchlein* of 1525.¹⁴ Again we meet it in the writings of Menno Simons. Considering the increasing number of martyrs in his brotherhood he saw the imminence of the day of vengeance and glorification. In this frame of mind he wrote his significant tract, *Van't cruys Christi* [Of the Cross of Christ].¹⁵ By means of a great number of Bible quotations he first makes it clear that the recent persecutions were necessary, viewed both from their causes and from their final goal; then he has all the martyrs of the Old and New Testament and of Eusebius' Church History pass by, each one with his particular story of suffering. Finally he concludes with a vision of the coming glory of the martyrs founded on the victorious sayings of the Book of Revelation.

Compared with these basic teachings of outstanding Anabaptist leaders, the numerous hymns of the Anabaptists of all shades reveal the great passion for martyrdom in a still stronger and richer form and with the fullness of the first-hand experience. In the main one can distinguish three great lines of tradition in this hymnody: the Dutch tradition, represented, at the earliest, in the second part of *Het Offer des Heeren*,¹⁶ the Swiss tradition, for which the *Ausbund* [1564] is the earliest collection,¹⁷ and finally the Hutterite tradition. Their hymns were collected between 1600 and 1660, and published in print in 1914.¹⁸ To be sure, not all these hymns are of

13. Christian Neff in *Gedenkschrift zum 500 jährigen Jubiläum der Mennoniten* (Karlsruhe, 1925); English translation by Rauschenbusch in *The American Journal of Theology* (1905) 95.

14. C.F.C. Sachse, *Balthasar Hubmaier als Theologe*, Berlin, 1914

15. *Complete Works of Menno Simons* (Elkhart, 1871) 179-212; *On the Cross, A Consoling Admonition Concerning the Sufferings, Oppressions, and Persecutions of the Saints for the Word of God and His Testimony*, abb. *The Cross*.

16. Reprinted in *Bibl. Ref. Neerlandica*, II, pp. 499-614, (The Hague, 1904). Cf. also Rudolph Wolkan, *Die Lieder der Wiedertäufer*, (Berlin, 1903) 59. The hymns originate about 1562-3.

17. The last edition of the *Ausbund* was published by the Amish in Lancaster Co. Pa., in 1941. Regarding the earliest edition of 1564, see Harold Bender in *Menn. Quart. Review*, 1929, P. 147.

18. *Die Lieder der Hutterischen Brüder* (Scottsdale, 1914)

authentic Anabaptist origin. For instance, the very first hymn in the *Ausbund* is by Sebastian Franck. Another goes back to the Waldensian tradition, while five hymns seem to originate with the Bohemian Brethren, thus proving the spiritual interrelationship of all these "heretical" groups. Some hymns even reveal Luther's influence, true of his earliest time, but to which he was violently opposed to in later times.¹⁹ It is the common religious attitude, the mood of passion in the martyrs' church, which makes all these hymns one in style and spirit although coming from very different sections, countries, and times. The majority of all the hymns are martyr's hymns, that is they are either composed by the martyrs themselves shortly before their execution,²⁰ or they deal with the last hours of the martyrs or with the manifold persecutions of the church at large.²¹ Also the great witnesses of faith of the past, above all of Jesus Christ himself, are the subject of many hymns.²² By using these hymnals year after year, the church became strongly aware of being surrounded by a host of great martyrs and of living in an atmosphere of witnessing. *Ihr Ende schauet an und folget ihrem Glauben nach*, says the title page of the Hutterite hymnal.

Besides the doctrinal teachings and the hymns there is still a third source for the study of the Anabaptist mind and its "Theology of Martyrdom," namely the chronicles. Of these only the two outstanding examples will be used here: the Hutterite *Geschicht Buch*, and the Dutch-Mennonite *Martyrs' Mirror*. Both reveal their basic intention already on the title page. The title of the Hutterite Chronicle contains the following:²³

Geschicht Buch und kurtzer Durchgang von Anfang der Welt, wie Gott sein Werk in seinem Volk auf Erden angericht, gehandelt, und getrieben hat; demnach unser Gemein Geschicht Buch....Demnach, was schwere Verfolgungen, Kreuz, und Trübsal die Gemein erlitten. Viel hingericht worden, und von Etlichen sonderlich, wie sie mannlich gewesen, was mit ihnen gehandelt worden...

19. *Ausbund*, 434. "Das 80. Lied, stanza 7" Ob sich die Welt Gleich grausam stellt, reminds one strongly of Luther's "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott." See Wolkan, *of.cit.*, p.145. The "22.Lied", (p.131), "Ein anderes Marterlied von Georg Ladenmacher..." is in many lines almost a complete copy of Luther's hymns of the two Martyrs of Brussels. The same is true also of the hymns on p.116 and 127; all three are of Dutch origin.

20. Eg. *Ausbund*, 235, the "42. Lied".

21. Eg., the "125. Lied" with 71 stanzas.

22. Eg. *Lieder der Hutterischen Brüder*, p. 670.

23. *Die älteste Chronik der Hutterischen Brüder*, herausgegeben von A.J.F. Ziegelschmid (Philadelphia, 1944). [R.F.]

By way of introduction a brief history of the true church of God is presented from its earliest days to 1525, in which reference is made to Eusebius' scheme of the ten stages of persecution of the old church.²⁴ Most significant is further the double index of the Chronicle: the first contains "allerlei Sachen und Handel, was ergangen ist," while the second lists "the history of those who lay in prison and who testified as Christian heroes to their faith in the Divine truth with their blood in fire, water, and through the sword." Here lies the emphasis of the text, as the first chronicler, Kaspar Braitmichel, most clearly points out in his foreword. The history of the Hutterite brotherhood is thus understood as the story of suffering of the people of God in the present aeon.

The same tendency is dominant in the Dutch martyrs' chronicle of Tieleman Jansz van Braght, *Het Bloedig Tooneel of Martelaers Spiegel der Doopsgezinde of Weerloose Christenen*, Amsterdam, 1660.²⁵ This title uses the old figure of speech of the early "Theology of Martyrdom" which compared the fight in the arena (or theater) with the fight of the martyrs against Satan. As Van Braght says in the preface, he plans to lead his readers to the bloody scene where the "true" Christians of all times, always "baptist-minded" and defenceless, have taken upon themselves torture and death for the sake of the testimony for Jesus, a spectacle for the whole world. For this purpose Van Braght composes first a history of martyrdom from Jesus Christ to the end of the Middle Ages, partly taken from Tertullian and Eusebius.²⁶ Then he presents the multifold fate of the Anabaptists from 1524 to 1660, using a great number of confessions, letters, hymns, and other records. The conclusion of the whole work is formed by the letter of intercession of the States General (Netherlands) on behalf of the Swiss Anabaptists of 1660. The times of persecutions, and with them the great time of the Anabaptist apocalypse of martyrdom, was declining toward its end;—the history of Anabaptism eventually

24. *Chronik*, p.32-33. The author (Stauffer), however, does not mention that this introduction is almost a verbatim copy of a part of Sebastian Franck's *Chronica* of 1530, as already von Beck had pointed out in his edition of *Geschichts Bücher* etc., 1883, p.9, note. (R.F.)

25. *The Bloody Theater or Martyrs's Mirror of the defenceless Christians who suffered and were put to death for the testimony of Jesus, the savior, from the time of Christ until the year A.K. 1660.*

26. In fact, Eusebius was very well known to a good many Anabaptist martyrs as we know from many trials recorded in both chronicles at discussion.

merges into the general history of the world.²⁷

Already this rapid survey of Anabaptist literature permits the recognition of the common historical background, the wide spread, the manifold interrelation, and finally the uniform development of the Anabaptist "Theology of Martyrdom" in the most different circles and times. For that reason one can readily study this theology as a more or less uniform historical phenomenon without violating facts. In this sense the following chapters will sketch the three great themes of this "Theology of Martyrdom" which again and again are discussed in the basic statements of the leaders of Anabaptism: (1) The path of martyrdom of the people of God through history; (2) the apocalyptic interpretation of the persecution of the Anabaptists; and (3) baptism, confession, and defencelessness within the framework of the "Theology of Martyrdom."

The path of Martyrdom of The People of God Through History

The true church of God has been a suffering church (*Märtyrergemeinde*) at all times; this is the basic conception of the Anabaptist theology of history. The path of the people of God through history is a path of passion: that is proven by the Bible itself. "All of the Holy Scriptures seems to be nothing else but a book of martyrdom."²⁸ Eusebius and entire history of the church are witnesses thereof.²⁹ At the present time, however, it is the Anabaptists who suffer the truth of this statement in their own life. The Hutterite Chronicle reports for 1540 already more than fifteen hundred Anabaptist martyrs, and erects to them a modest monument in the form of the old martyrs' lists (therewith using as texts: Mt. 10:16; 24:9; John 16:2; Mt. 23:24; 23:37; Romans 8:36; Mt. 21:35; Rev. 17:16; Daniel 11:33).³⁰

The Anabaptists felt themselves as heirs of a very old martyrs' tradition, and for that reason collected all available martyrs' stories of the past, using them for encouragement in the days of affliction. In the main one can distinguish three groups of literary expressions of the aforementioned philosophy of history from the angle of a "Theology of Martyrdom": (1) the martyrs' lists, listing name and fate of the martyrs, the atrocities of persecutions, the mighty deeds of God,

and the deaths of the persecutors; (2) the rarer martyrs' stories, descriptions of individual sufferings (in the early period usually rhymed); and eventually (3) the martyrs' books of later periods, externally martyrs' lists of great size, but essentially collections of martyrs' stories.

Occasionally the influence of the late Jewish models becomes very obvious; again and again we meet the motives for martyrdom of the prophets (e.g. *Ausbund*, p.10). The story of the three men in the furnace, the saving miracle in Alexandria, and the death of the mother with the seven sons, appear in the great Hutterite hymnal in rhymed form.³¹ The *Martyrs' Mirror*, on the other hand, quotes with particular emphasis the summary of the book of Judith 8:20,³² while the great martyrs' list of I Maccabees 2:49 finds a poetical version in Kaspar Braitmichel's hymn, *Merkt auf, herzliche Brüder mein*,³³ with the concluding formula lifted verbatim from the text (I Macc. 2:61, in stanza 10).

Mostly, however, the old lists are enlarged and the stories amplified, primarily by adding the fate of those "confessors" who had been loyal to their faith without giving the supreme sacrifice.³⁴ In this manner the martyrs of the Old Testament from Abel to Zachariah are presented.³⁵ But the martyrs' history does not narrate only the fight and victory of the witnesses but also of the maraculous saving interference of God ever since the days of Joseph.³⁶ Other lists report of the great tyrants of history, of Pharaoh, Sennacherib, Antiochus Epiphanes, Holofernes, and the like; of the persecutions they brought upon those who were faithful to God; and of the terrible end they passed through.³⁷ These two lines of tradition: martyrdom and fate of the persecutors, finally blend together to an

31. *Die Lieder der Hutterischen Brüder*, 365, (Dan.3), 237 (II Macc.6), 286 (III Macc.6)

32. *Martyrs' Mirror*, 746

33. *Lieder der Hut. Brüder*, 98f.

34. The *Martyrs' Mirror*, p.21, distinguishes two groups of heroes of faith in the O.T. "Some of them suffered and fought much but not unto blood or unto death, their victories are therefore not represented of the highest degree. Others, however, suffered and fought not only unto blood and death for the Lord, but even to the greatest pain and most bitter death." The list of confessors runs from Abraham to Amos, the list of martyrs from Abel to the heroes in the time of the Maccabees. At the end is the list of the Epistle to the Hebrews 11:36-38.

35. *Ausbund*, 10,675,728; *Lieder d. Hut. Br.*, 91f, 669f. Menno Simons, *The Cross*, 210; *Martyrs' Mirror*, 748.

36. *Lieder der. Hut. Br.*, 723f.

37. *Ibid.* 105,552, also 644.

27.Cf. on this change R. Friedmann, "Anabaptism and Pietism," in M.Q.R., XIV, 1940 (R.F.)

28.Martyrs' Mirror 11f.

29.Ausbund, 9.

30.Chronik, 232-235.

antithetical picture or history as a whole, as for instance in Menno Simons' tract, *Of the Cross*, where Cain stands against Abel, Esau against Jacob, Saul against David, the godless kings against the prophets.³⁸ "The pious prophet and true servant of God must be regarded as their betrayer, a partisan and heretic."³⁹ In an analogous manner the saving miracle stands over against the punishing miracle.⁴⁰ The same antithetical summaries appear later in Dutch martyrs' letters.⁴¹ Van Braght finally brings this concept of contrasts in history into a basic formula which he follows through the centuries. "As there are two different peoples, two different congregations and churches, the one of God and from Heaven, the other of Satan and from the Earth, so there is also a different succession and progression belonging to each of them."⁴² This is the essential dualism of the Anabaptist theology of history. History is the contest between the people of God and the powers of this world, a contest which presses to a final decision through the suffering of the martyrs.

It is the old opposition between the *Civitas Dei* and the *Civitas Diaboli* which we meet here again, the antithetical philosophy of history of St. Augustine or of the Apostle John's Book of Revelation. But, in contrast to the latter, the Anabaptists included also the entire Israelite history in this dualistic frame, and in contrast to St. Augustine they related the whole of world history to the one great fact of Christ.⁴³ The people of God suffering ever since the first attack of the Serpent from the hatred of the "world", are in truth the people of Christ. Abel is the first advance in the direction of Christ, and all suffering of the martyrs since is in fact the "Cross of Christ" itself.

Von Anfang sind die Heiligen all
Umb Christi willen gestorben hie.⁴⁴

Christ himself suffers in them, his members, or as Menno Simons calls them in view of Hebrews 11, "the holy limbs of Christ," who by those wicked tools of Satan were ruthlessly "imprisoned, tortured, crucified...from the beginning of the world."⁴⁵ The

Anabaptists' theology of history is from the very outset centered on Christ; that is, the Son who in obedience to his Father takes the Cross upon himself, is the very hub of the world and history.

O Herre Gott, der Weg, den bistu gangen,

Der ist so schmal un ligt so voller Schlangen.⁴⁶ Therefore, the Cross is the measure and center of all Anabaptist "Theology of Martyrdom," and therefore, Christ is called captain of the hosts of the martyrs.⁴⁷ Menno Simons concludes his martyrs' chronicle with a meditation on the theme, "how not only the servants suffered but also how the Lord and Prince himself had to endure much, to again enter into his glory."⁴⁸ The *Ausbund* has a "Trostdied" about the suffering of the children of God from Abel to the present time in which the path of passion of Christ himself is the very center piece.⁴⁹ The first hymn in *Het Offer des Heeren* deals with the story of the Lord's passion. And so do the chronicles, which place Christ at the very inception,⁵⁰ "because he is the head of all the holy martyrs through whom they all must be saved."⁵¹

As leader and head, the Son of God becomes archetype of all those who are persecuted for the sake of God, and his life is consciously pictured as a life of martyrdom. All his life "he was considered a fanatic and a vagrant,"⁵² and his end was the death meted out to all heretics.⁵³ The cross, finally, is not only the last act in the life of Jesus, but also the concluding expression of the law by which he had started his life. "He was born under the cross, brought up under the cross, walked under the cross, and eventually died on the cross."⁵⁴ In this manner the *Martyrs' Mirror* characterizes the life of Jesus. And Menno Simons concludes with the antithetical phrases taken from Paul, "Thus he, who was eternally rich, for our sakes became poor (2 Cor. 3, Phil. 2); the eternal Glory was dishonored, eternal Righteousness was persecuted, eternal Truth blasphemed,...eternal Life was made to suffer a shameful death. (Gal. 3)."⁵⁵

Why did things come to pass in this way? Because wherever God wants to build his work, the Antichrist concentrated his destructive power, and wherever the

38. Menno Simons, *The Cross*, 186

39. *Ibid.*, 188 40. *Ibid.*, 187-8

41. *Martyrs' Mirror*, 990.

42. *Ibid.*, 21.

43. *Ibid.*, 21. "After the fall, divine service had respect altogether to Christ. Truly God promised His Son to men, represented Him by types, and finally gave Him to them. In the meantime, the fathers who were before the advent of Christ, hoped in Him, longed for His coming, and ordered and founded all their divine services, according to the time, and the command of God, on His only and eternal reconciliation." *Martyrs' Mirror*, 21b.

44. *Lieder der Hut. Br.*, 670, *Ausbund*, 11, 26f.

45. Menno Simons, *The Cross*, 194.

46. *Ausbund*, 663.

47. *Lieder der Hut. Br.*, 106, 12, *Martyrs' Mirror*, 990.

48. Menno Simons, op.cit., p. 192

49. *Ausbund*, 731, stanza 14-16, of the "124. Lied."

50. *Chronik*, LIII and 28.

51. *Martyrs' Mirror*, 67.

52. *Ibid.*, 68.

53. *Lieder d. Hut.Br.*, 275ff, has a rhymed story of Jesus' death

54. *Martyrs' Mirror*, 67-68.

55. Menno Simons, *The Cross*, 194.

light presses forward to victory, darkness once again gathers all its demonic potency. In this sense the hatred which raged against the head of all martyrs is not only the hatred of the children of this world against the people of God, but the very hatred of Darkness against Light. Yet, in Anabaptist tradition it crystallized solidly around the concept of the "Truth" in contrast to the Lutheran concept of the "Word" as the challenge to the world and its final conquest. Anabaptists also speak occasionally of the Word, thinking of the Johannine prologue, yet in the decisive moment when they visualize the dualistic background of the martyr's fate, they use only the concept of "Truth."

Dieweil das Wort die Wahrheit war,
So mochts die Welt nit leiden.⁵⁶

The hidden and yet deep difference between Paul and John is once again revived in the relation between Luther and the Anabaptists.

However, the question as to the causes [and the why] of suffering is only a preliminary issue. The final emphasis also with Anabaptists rests with the question as to the "what for?" of Jesus' death. First, all the agony of death is for Christ himself only a passing stage to a new and higher form of life.⁵⁷ The triumph of evil prepares the path for an overwhelming victory of God according to the law of paradoxes. And that is true also for the divine work of Christ. The martyrdom of God's Son is the victory of God in weakness and the indictment of the persecutors who perish in their last manifestation of power. Thus God's work becomes through this catastrophe a power by which the originators of this catastrophe break down. The hymns of the Hutterites in particular develop this paradox logic.⁵⁸ Where the power of death has come to a self-annihilation there the force of life breaks through for the salvation of the world.⁵⁹ Christ's work of salvation always has a twofold meaning: the end of Satan's rule, and the beginning of a new era of Grace. Christ, therefore, means the decisive turning point of the ages. In one of the Hutterite "Hymns of joy," Christ is called the sun which rose over the creation and its needs.⁶⁰ The Anabaptists understood Christ's fate in the light of the fate of the martyrs. But— and this must be emphasized— in spite of this they never forgot the uniqueness of Christ and his life, thus evading a dangerous snare.

The fact of Christ, his life, his death, means to the Anabaptist the turning point of the ages which, however, by no means implies that all suffering has now come to an end. Rather, the extremity of God's children will become more acute in taking on new forms. The new aeon which started with Christ stands altogether under the sign of the Cross because the old enemy who once had brought Christ into disgrace and anguish now directs all his wrath upon the confessors of Christ.⁶¹ And the hostility of the world, far from lessening under the impact of the Christian teaching, becomes only "the longer the worse."⁶² But the martyr's death of Stephen, which for the first time revealed this situation, not only shows that the confessor has to accept suffering and death according to the archetypal passion of Christ, but shows also how he is supposed to carry this out. "Stephen kneeled down and cried...after the example of his master on the cross, 'Lord, lay not their sin to their charge for they know not what they do' (Acts 7)."⁶³ This is the new attitude by which the saved ones conquer their own fate and, at the same time, their opponents.

However, even the intercession of the martyrs cannot stop the advancing crisis of the world. The struggles of the two realms take ever bloodier forms. Here the martyrs die in the name of Christ, there the persecutors fall, stricken by God's vengeance.⁶⁴ Also the peace under the Christian emperors after Constantine was illusory. The old antithesis between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world, formerly revealed in the persecutions of the Christians comes now to the fore in the struggle between the secularized state church and the people of God viewed as "heretics." In each century the good rises against the evil in new variations only to become exterminated and delivered up to the curse.⁶⁵ As a matter of fact, the popes with their use of force are but the trustees of the devil, and the Roman Church is understood as "die grosse Babylon, eine Mutter aller Gräuel auf Erden, trunken vom Blut der Heiligen und der Zeugen Jesu."⁶⁶ The tradition of the true, that is

61. *Ausbund*, 225, also 12 and 24.

62. *Lieder d. Hut. Br.*, 820a, *Ausbund*, 116, 225.

63. Menno Simons, *On the Cross*, 190.

64. Josephus Flavius already spoke in this way of the death of John the Baptist, and his view is quoted in the *Martyrs' Mirror*, 70. Eusebius is quoted in *Lieder d. Hut. Br.*, 673f, stanzas 34 and 44; the "9. Lied" of the *Ausbund* is a rhymed history after Ambrose.

65. *Chronik*, 38, see Ecclesiasticus, 33:15

66. *Chronik*, 41.

56. *Lieder d. Hut. Br.*, 214; see also p. 437, and the above quotation from Menno Simons

57. *Ibid.*, 215a.

58. *Ibid.*, 214-5, and 321a.

59. *Ibid.*, 279a; *Ausbund*, 116, 225.

60. *Ibid.*, 870f, This hymn begins like a folk song but then develops toward these ideas.

the defenceless and "baptist-minded" Christians,⁶⁷ is pursued by the Hutterite Chronicle⁶⁸ from Donatus to Adelbert, Clemens (the opponent of S. Boniface), John Scotus, the Waldensians, Wycliff and Hus, up to the two martyrs of Brussels.⁶⁹ "Weil aber Gott ein eigenes Volk, abgesundert von allen Völkern, haben wollet, hat er den wahren, rechten Morgenstern, das Licht seiner Wahrheit, in völligem Schein wieder herfür wollen bringen in letzten Alter dieser Welt, besonders in deutscher Nation und Landen."⁷⁰ With these words the Hutterite chronicle begins its narration of the origins of the Zurich brotherhood (Anabaptists).⁷¹ All those crises, secessions, excommunications, of which the Chronicle relates abundantly, are but stages of the principle of purifying the church.⁷² The brethren were exclusive. An ecumenical ideal was a rather remote thought to them. The strength of the true church of God lies alone in purity and concentration.

On the other hand the Hutterites emphasized particularly tradition and succession. They had their own bishop list, sung in the renowned Väterlied,⁷³ whose first forty stanzas tell of the ways of the children of God from the times of the Israelites to the days of the Reformation, while in the remaining eighty-five stanzas they list the heads of the brotherhood chronologically with brief characteristics in each case, beginning with Jacob Hutter.

Die Gemein, die christliche Mutter,
Hat viele Söhn verloren
Bis auf den Jacob Hutter,...

A great array of reports, histories, summaries, and other records tell us of the martyrs' death of the leaders,⁷⁴ of the persecutions under which the church had to suffer through centuries, of cursed, plundering, and exiles. "Here is the patience and the faith of the Saints (Rev. 13:10)," this phrase is used again and again by hymnwriters and chroniclers to describe the very foundation of this way.⁷⁵

The Anabaptists took this fate upon themselves in the absolute certainty that theirs is the historical task to go the path of martyrdom as it was the path of God's people from the beginning and to go it to its very end. For that reason most of the martyrs' lists conclude with at least a glimpse of the bloody persecutions of the present times.⁷⁶ Many present the story of persecution of God's people up to 1525 only as an introduction to the martyrdom of the Anabaptist brethren. A new "cloud of witnesses (Heb.12:1)"⁷⁷ surrounds the saints today not less than in the times of the Epistle to the Hebrews. In this sense a Dutch woman martyr, Anneken of Rotterdam, says to her judges:

Ich gehe auf der Propheten Weg,
Der Mertrer und Apostel Steg.⁷⁸

In this sense the martyrs of the Anabaptist brotherhood renew the polemic of old about persecutors: Cain is again the prototype,⁷⁹ the city of Vienna, which saw burnings at the stake, becomes the new Sodom,⁸⁰ the Catholic emperor Ferdinand is the new Pharaoh,⁸¹ Philipp II of Spain is the new Antiochus.⁸² But just as the tyrants of the past could not escape God's wrath, in the same way the judgment upon the new persecutors will not tarry. In fact, it is already working.⁸³ The *Martyrs' Mirror* reports in the style of the Second Book of Maccabees the terrible end of the tyrants and their accomplices in the Netherlands.⁸⁴

Yet, the Anabaptists never forgot Christ and his members in all this: it is always the sign of the Cross under which they understood their fate. The idea of discipleship [*Nachfolge*] becomes paramount for the appreciation of their own lot. A fine example in this line is the outstanding hymn of Hans Büchel in the *Ausbund*, "Das 45. Lied. Ein neu geistlich Lied, darin sich ein Nachfolger Christi klagt, so ihn die Trübsal um des Wortes willen getroffen hat; der Herr antwortet ihm saftmütig, mit Erzählung, wie es ihm in dieser Welt auch ergangen sei."⁸⁵ This hymn (which should be examined in its entirety) offers as few others an

67. *Martyrs' Mirror*, 16.

68 Taken from Sebastian Franck's *Chronik* of 1530. [R.F.]

69. *Chronik*, 35-44, and *Martyrs' Mirror*, 219-338.

70. *Chronik*, 45.

71. Cr. *Ausbund*, 238, stanza 9 and 10 of "42. Lied."

72. *Chronik*, 885.

73. *Lieder d. Hut. Br.*, 770ff, with 105 stanzas, goes as far as 1662. A later postscript, 887ff has 19 more stanzas to 1734.

74. See also the end of the "Fifth Article" of the *Schleitheim Confession* of 1527, "But should it happen that through the cross the pastor should be banished or led to the Lord (through martyrdom) another shall be ordained in his place in the same hour so that God's little flock and people may not be destroyed."

75. *Lieder d. Hut. Br.*, 19f.

76. *Ausbund*, 49, 675.

77. Quoted in *Chronik*, 326, and *Ausbund*, 181.

78. *Ausbund*, 110f, taken from *Het Offer des Heeren*. The full text of the Testament of Anneken Jans used for this hymn is found in *Martyrs' Mirror*, 453.

79. *Ausbund*, 663, 383.

80. *Chronik*, 160.

81. *Ausbund*, 236f, 380; *Lieder d. Hut. Br.*, 69.

82. *Martyrs' Mirror*, 1095, *Chronik*, 236.

83. *Chronik*, 239.

84. *Martyrs' Mirror*, 1095ff.

85. The "45. Lied," *Ausbund*, 247f. Wolkan, *Lieder der Wiedertäufer* (Berlin, 1903,) 142. Büchel was one of the leaders of the Swiss Brethren delegation to the "Frankenthaler Gespräch, 1570.

excellent insight into the endless tribulations which Anabaptist brethren had to go through long before they could conclude their life in martyrdom, tribulations particularly hard to people who shunned all public show and all irregular life. This also gives at the same time an insight into how they read their Bible in such situations. This picture could be further amplified by features taken from many other texts and hymns.

Gar viele in Unschuld starben,
Wie Christus auch getan.⁸⁹

Again and again they compare their fate with that of their master. And in the same way as Christ himself had prophesied a catastrophe to the city of Jerusalem, and the writers of the apocalypses prophesied the same to the city of Rome, Wilhelm von Keppel sings of the new centers of Satan:

O Cöllen, Cöllen, an dem Rhein⁹⁰

In general, the texts restrict themselves to a demonstration of the external conformity between the passion of Christ and the suffering of his disciples, both having the same causal background.

Wenn Christus selbst gleich noch einmal
Zu uns auf Erden kommen soll...
So geht ihr Ärger mit ihm um
Als die Pfaffen im Judentum.⁹¹

The "works" character of martyrdom is but slightly touched.⁹² More emphasis is put on the consequences of martyrdom for the eternal fate of the martyr. He is not only the disciple on the way to the cross, but through death also on the way to glory.

Die Braut muss wie der Bräutigam
Durch Leiden in die Freud eingahn.⁹³

The Anabaptists understood the Cross in a twofold way: (1) as the event which centers all history, and (2) as the principle that guides the way of God's people through history. The Cross is always both, the sign of victory established by God once for ever, and the law which comes true in the lives of the faithful to God, over and over again; it is the deed by which God made a new start, and the form by which he will consummate his work. This twofold understanding of the Cross was conclusively formulated by Balthasar Hubmaier in his great motto which implies the entire cross-centered theology of the Anabaptists: *Die göttliche Wahrheit ist untödlich, und wie wohl sy sich etwan lang fahen lasset, geyseln, kronen, kreutzigen, und in das Grab legen, werdet sy doch am dritten Tag*

wiederumb siegreich auffestan und in Ewigkeit regieren und triumphieren.⁹⁴

The Apocalyptic Interpretation of Persecution of the Anabaptists

Through all Anabaptist texts on martyrdom one perceives one note: the present extremity is not just one stage on the path of martyrdom through history but it is its very last stage, it is the last act in the apocalyptic drama between God and Satan.⁹⁵ God assembles his people now for the decisive attack, but Satan, too arms with all his forces for counter attack.⁹⁶ All the forces of the *Civitas Diaboli* are let loose now upon the *Civitas Dei*: the old dragon and the great beast, the Antichrist, and the false prophets.⁹⁷ These anti-forces have come to historic significance in all those powers which have united against the little flock of brethren.⁹⁸ Once the pope is looked upon as Antichrist,⁹⁹ once the emperor,¹⁰⁰ sometimes also the monk whose tonsure fits so well to the bald head of the old picture of Antichrist.¹⁰¹ The Hutterites fight Luther as the "false prophet",¹⁰² yet reject with the same fervor also the Münster experiment as the devil's work.¹⁰³

To be sure, the people of God do not stand alone in their extremity. The tribulation of the saints in these ages is but the most intense form of the world extremity at large. The Anabaptist writers on the "Theology of Martyrdom" have in a peculiar way renewed the Pauline appreciation of the suffering of all creation. This becomes obvious, for instance, in the renowned hymn of the martyr George Grünwald, *Kommt her zu mir, spricht Gottes Sohn*.¹⁰⁴ Stanza 5 reads as follows:

Alle Creatur bezeugen das
Was lebt in Wasser, Luft, und Gras
Durch Leiden muss es enden.

The martyr knows that his suffering is the suffering of the innocent for the sin of the world and its hostility

94. Johann Loserth, *Balthasar Hubmaier* (1893), 196.

95. *Ausbund*, 116, 125, 148f, 254, 285, 382, 554, 562; *Lieder d. Hut. Br.*, 178, 842; *Chronik*, 227.

96. *Ausbund*, 38, 225, 262, 117f.

97. *Ausbund*, 132, 166, 364; *Lieder d. Hut. Br.*, 19 (Behemoth)

98. *Ausbund*, 338, 636; *Chronik*, 156; Menno Simons, *the Cross*, 184, 186.

99. *Ausbund*, 57; *Chronik*, 159.

100. *Chronik*, 113, 459.

101. *Ausbund*, 543-4.

102. *Chronik*, 43.

103. *Chronik*, 144.

104. *Lieder d. Hut. Br.*, 47; see Wolkan, *Lieder*, 17.

89. *Ausbund*, 382.

90. *Ausbund*, 138.

91. *Lieder D. Hut. Br.*, 818a.

92. *Ausbund*, 286, 686, 691.

93. *Ausbund*, 128, 263, 731.

against God.¹⁰⁵

Der Christ hat keinen Platz auf Erden,
Er muss verfolgt und ausgestossen werden.¹⁰⁶

The Anabaptists are fully conscious of standing at a critical point both of history and of creation. That is their peculiar apocalyptic position. Thus the martyr understands his suffering as the sign of divine election.¹⁰⁷ It has always been so, that God elected his saints in martyrdom and tested them like gold in the fire.¹⁰⁸ The martyr knows that the hairs of his head are numbered and he is assured that the most spiteful plots of the enemy eventually must serve his best welfare.

Ob sich die Welt gleich grausam stellt,
Und will uns gar verschlingen,
Seind doch all unser Haar gezählt,
Es soll ihn doch mislingen.¹⁰⁹

For this reason one must be steadfast when he is in trials [*wenn wir in die Prob kommen*¹¹⁰], and loyal unto death in an age of sifting and great apostasy.¹¹¹ Love, says Solomon, is strong as death. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it.¹¹² This is the love of those who have sealed their faith with water and with fire.

The martyr offers his life as a sacrifice before God¹¹³ for love's sake. The stake is "the altar of burnt-offering", *wie Moses tut beschreiben*.¹¹⁴ God will lend his succor that the sacrifice be a pure one.

Dass uns, Herr, mög gelingen,
Dir ein rein Opfer darzubringen.¹¹⁵

It is but a sacrifice of glorification, excluding any other possible interpretation. The martyr sheds his blood as a seed which will bring forth fruit in its time,¹¹⁶ to wit not only at the end of all times but in history proper. Out of the innocently shed blood of

Christians grew up fellow-believers in many places here and there. *Ohne Frucht gings nit ab*, says the Hutterite Chronicle.¹¹⁷ The truth which they tried to kill becomes through this very act invincible, and the persecutors come into despair on account of this uncanny law. "What shall I do?" asked the Burggraf Altzey in the Palatinate (1529). "The more I sentence and have executed, the more numerous they become."¹¹⁸ The martyr is the "true soldier of God" fighting against the power of darkness.¹¹⁹ No other concept found such a ready and general echo among the Anabaptists as this one of overcoming Satan by the extreme sacrifice.

In those early years of the Reformation the knight became, so to say, the heraldic figure of all champions of the Truth.¹²⁰ This explains why the old ideas of the "Theology of Martyrdom" about the battle with Satan were revived in those days with but slight alterations. In place of the "athlete" in the Greek comes now the knight on his charger, and in place of the arena the tournament or the battlefield. In this sense the Anabaptists speak of "life on earth as an incessant warfare,"¹²¹ a warfare of the Cross, as Menno Simons calls it, which must be carried out to its very end. Martyrdom is, of course, never an affair of weakness but rather of strength. Only a hero is able to walk the path of martyrdom.¹²¹ It comes like a battle cry from the lips of the saints who ready themselves for the chamber of torture:

Her, her, ihr lieben Brüder,
Und greifets tapfer an.¹²³

And then, when everything is over, others testify to his courage in this last battle: "he fought like a knight."¹²⁴

Very often this fight of the martyr is understood with Hebrews 12:1 as a race.¹²⁵ Or they speak of knightly warfare, leaning on 2.Tim. 2:15,¹²⁶ and compare martyrdom with a spectacle for the world.¹²⁷

105. *Martyrs' Mirror*, 128, "innocence before men."

106. *Ausbund*, 25.

107. *Martyrs' Mirror*, 5; Menno Simons, *The Cross*, 206b.

108. *Lieder d. Hut. Br.*, 10, 282; Menno Simons, 250b. (The meaning of Cross is detachment from the world.)

109. *Ausbund*, 434. This entire "80.Lied" is remarkable and should be consulted in the present context. Wolkan, *op.cit.*, ascribes it to Christoph Baumann, one of the great hymn writers of Anabaptism. The same idea is also in Menno Simons, *The Cross*, 185.

110. *Ausbund*, 109; *Chronik*, 156.

111. *Ausbund*, 59, 398, 70; *Chronik*, 82, 104, 783.

112. Menno Simons, *op.cit.*, 209.

113. *Ausbund*, 133.

114. *Ausbund*, 175.

115. *Ausbund*, 235.

116. *Ausbund*, 130f.

117. *Chronik*, 238.

118. *Chronik*, 81.

119. See R. Friedmann, "Concerning the true soldier of God, A hitherto unknown Anabaptist tract," *MQR* V (1931), 87-99. [R.F.]

120. This is true both for the Lutherans, e.g. in Ulrich Hutten's famous *Reiterlied*, and for Anabaptists, as the tract mentioned in note 119 proves. [R.F.]

121. Menno Simons, *The Cross*, 211.

122. *Ausbund*, 88. 123. *Ausbund*, 236.

124. *Chronik*, 48, "er hat sich ritterlich geschlagen."

125. *Lieder d. Hut. Br.*, 282.

126. Menno Simons, *op.cit.*, 208. Menno says, "fight like a knight," while the Bible text says, "fight lawfully." [R.F.]

127. *Ausbund*, 415, following I Cor. 4:9 and Heb. 10:33. Here fits also the figure of the "bloedig tooneel," i.e. "bloody theater."

to which crowds of people throng.¹²⁸ And they speak also of the trophy promised to the conqueror, namely the heavenly crown of honor.¹²⁹ Mostly, however, the Anabaptists compare their struggle with a real battle in the field, and here they are rather lively in the amplification of the figure. The *Martyrs' Mirror* extolls the Cross as an "ensign of those who serve and follow Jesus, the captain of the faith, and calls the martyrs "the soldiers under the bloody banner of Christ."¹³⁰ The hymns of the *Ausbund* live, so to say, in this figurative world. The life of those faithful to God is a permanent warfare,¹³¹ for the field, although conquered, has to be held in unceasing alertness and readiness for fight and sacrifice.¹³²

The opponent with whom the knight has to fight or to wrestle, appears in many figures. Sometimes he is called merely "the enemy and adversary,"¹³³ sometimes it is "the world," sometimes it is tyrants and "Papists"; but in the last analysis it is always Satan who rages in his members and who tries to crush down the squad of Christ.¹³⁴ The martyr stands right in the center of a battle of two worlds.¹³⁵

This apocalyptic position is at the same time the all important starting point for answering the question of a theodicy [i.e., the vindication of God's justice in view of the existing evil], the last great problem of an apocalyptic interpretation of the contemporary world situation.¹³⁶ Injustice and madness, force and hatred of God, are still to rage on earth since the number of the saints and also the measure of sin of the enemy of God is not yet full.¹³⁷ Not until the last of the saints will have fallen by the hands of the persecutors, will God reveal his justice. Until then men cannot solve such queries; until then, history can be understood only as an advancing process of selection, or a separation of minds, which prepares the final separation of destinies. In this sense every murder of a saint means crisis and the separation of two paths.¹³⁸ The path of death through martyrdom is the surest

way to life; tribulation will be turned to joy, and joy cannot be gained otherwise but through tribulation.¹³⁹

Dass wer zu Gott will kommen
Durch Trüsal muss eingahn.¹⁴⁰

To be sure, with death the last gate has not yet been passed, and the martyr cannot enter the last glory at once. But this is certain in any case: he is at peace and assured of the future.¹⁴¹ On the other hand those who so cruelly oppressed the saints will have a horrible end. "In a moment they go down to Hell," writes Menno Simons, quoting Job 21:13.¹⁴² And this end is but an indication of the perennial fate which awaits them. For God has promised

Wenn er (auch) nachliess alle Sünd
So wolte er ihnen das nit schenken;
Mit Feuer und Schwefel tränken
Das mörderisch gottlos Gesind.¹⁴³

In their polemic against the persecutors, the Anabaptists appeal constantly to this threat. Thus, for instance, writes Jacob Hutter in his well known letter of 1535 to the governor of Moravia, "Ach wehe, und abermals wehe allen denen, die uns ohne Ursach verfolgen, vertreiben, hassen, denn ihr Verderben, Staf und Verdamnis nahet sich herzu und wird erschrecklich über sie kommen."¹⁴⁴ It is interesting to note which texts they think of in this connection. At one place in the Hutterite Chronicle the writer collects all the pertinent texts, naming Joel 3; Deut. 32; 4th Ezra 15 Judith 8; Gen 9.¹⁴⁵ The *Ausbund* adds to these Old Testament threats one more reference from the N.T.

Christus spricht auch, merck eben,
Wer den Kleinsten was tut
Und denen, die an mich glauben,
Er sei böse oder gut,
Dasselbige hat er mir gethan.
Drum, o Mensch, merch eben,
Lass Gott sein Kinder gahn.¹⁴⁶

The Hutterite martyr Hans Oberecker thrice envisions in his dungeon-prison the Day of the Last Judgment, and sees with his inner eye how mighty and awful this day turns out for the godless, so that he prays, "O mein Gott, lass uns nimmer in deinen Zorn fallen, der

128. *Ausbund*, 153, Cf. IV Maccabees 17:14.

129. *Ausbund*, 128, 236; *Chronik*, 703.

130. *Martyrs' Mirror*, 357.

131. *Ausbund*, 334.

132. *Ausbund*, 216, by Hans Langenmantel. "Hilf uns das Feld erhalten."

133. *Lieder d. Hut. Br.* 209b.

134. *Ausbund*, 392.

135. *Ausbund*, 425, the "78. Lied."

136. Menno Simons, *The Cross*, 208b, a most important section of the book which should be consulted in its entirety. [R.F.]

137. *Ausbund*, 111f, 199.

138. Menno Simons, *op.cit.*, 208-9.

139. *Ausbund*, 246.

140. *Ausbund*, 733.

141. Menno Simons, *op.cit.*, 209; *Ausbund*, 178. The heavenly Jerusalem is mentioned in *Ausbund*, 433.

142. Menno Simons, *op.cit.*, 208. In fact, Job 21:31 says, "down to the grave." Hell is Menno's word. For other examples, see *Lieder d. Hut. Br.*, 885. [R.F.]

143. *Lieder d. Hut. Br.*, 646b.

144. *Chronik*, 150.

145. *Chronik*, 240. Note that no New Testament texts are mentioned.

146. *Ausbund*, 678.

so gross ist und schrecklich über die Kinder der Bosheit."¹⁴⁷

As a matter of fact, in all these quotations the brethren do not look for satisfaction of a primitive urge for vengeance, nor for fulfillment of a moral demand. They look rather for an answer to the problem of theodicy.¹⁴⁸ Not for the sake of the martyrs but for his own sake God must disclose his power and his justice, must prove that he, God, has the last word in history, namely the word which gives to all history its meaning and without which there could be no serious appreciation of that history. This is the deepest motive of the apocalypse of martyrdom as of all apocalyptic writing at large: the extremities of history can find their answer only in the last redeeming event of history itself. It is the thought that the theological problems of reality as experienced here and now can be overcome only through the belief that in the end God will be true to himself[sich selbst verwirklichen.] Here is no escape into a religion of pietism [Innerlichkeit] or of a super-historical dimension, neither can there be an evaporation of the historical realities into a vague eschatology of the Spirit. And this is also the background of their passionate rejection of all mystics and "spiritual reformers" who tried to intrude into the brotherhood and who "have a perverted mind as if there were no angel nor devil."¹⁴⁹ Such people were unhesitatingly expelled from the church of God. This explains the recurring question as to the path and the end of the godless in the historic world, and explains also the recurring eschatological conclusion: God gave them their reward, "some with terrible fright and a bad end, that they became aware of what they actually have done like Judas who betrayed the Lord. On the Day of Judgment their hair will rise."¹⁵⁰

"Shortly you will see that we have spoken to you the Divine truth," thus writes Jacob Hutter to the governor of Moravia in his aforementioned letter of 1535. And in the same way Menno Simons comforts the heavy laden ones: "all our persecutors shall then be as ashes under the soles of our feet, and they shall know too late that emperor, king, duke, prince, crown, scepter, majesty, power, sword, and mandate, are but earth, dust, wind, and smoke."¹⁵¹ The *Ausbund* also

prophesies in this fashion:

Dann werden sie erkennen,
Wider wen sie sich gesperrt.¹⁵²

The Anabaptist apocalyptic of martyrdom is the testimony of a theological realism to which God is more real than anything called "world." For this reason the fellowship of martyrs forms the race of the future, and therefore their persecutors must be shattered as soon as God's reality becomes manifest. For this reason the eschatology of the Anabaptists culminates again and again in the old triumphant phrase of the "Theology of Martyrdom": "They shall see whom they have pierced (Rev. 1:7)."¹⁵³

Baptism, Confession, and Defencelessness in the Frame of the "Theology of Martyrdom"

The "Theology of Martyrdom" is the hidden sanctuary of Anabaptist Christianity. Externally Anabaptism became known for peculiarities in practical matters, primarily by its challenging attitude regarding baptism, confession of faith, and rejection of use of force. The last question in our present study is whether the motives of the "Theology of Martyrdom" are also discernable in these more external features.

The Anabaptists not only renewed the mode of baptism of the early Christians, they also renewed the old ideas of baptism as death [Tauftod] and death as baptism [Todestaufe]. Often baptism is understood with Paul as a dying with Christ. Thus, for instance, writes Conrad Grebel in his "Protestation and Schutzschrift"; "Wer die Tauf hat, der is im Tode Christi gepflanzt worden."¹⁵⁴ And the *Ausbund* sings

Der Tauff noch ist hie in der Frist
Mit Jesu Christ verleiben.¹⁵⁵

Oftener, however, the martyr's death for the sake of Christ is understood as a baptism, apparently following the word of Jesus, "I have a baptism to be baptized with" (Luke 12:50; Mk. 10:38; Mt. 20:22). Thus Anneken of Rotterdam begins the testament which she handed to her son on the morning of her execution (January 24, 1539) as follows: "My son, hear the instruction of your mother; open your ears to hear the words of my mouth. Behold, I go today the way of the prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and drink of the cup they all have drunk. I go, I say, the way which Christ Jesus...himself went...and who had to drink of this cup even as He said, 'I have a cup to drink of

147. *Chronik*, 160.

148. *Ausbund*, 226.

149. *Chronik*, 139. See also Friedmann, "Reason and Obedience, A letter of Peter Walpot (1571) and its Meaning," *M.Q.R.XIX*, (1945), 27 [R.F.]

150. *Chronik*, 142: "Am Gerichtstag Gottes aber werden ihnen die Haare erst gen Berg stehen. Blut werden alsdann schwitzen solche Schalk, und wünschen, das sie nie geboren wären."

151. Menno Simons, *The Cross*, 205.

152. *Ausbund*, 384.

153. *Chronik*, 705 and *passim*; Menno Simons, *op.cit.*, 211.

154. Neff in *Gedenkschrift*, 1925, 131, 10f.

155. Meaning: "ihm einverleibt." *Ausbund*, 607, also p. 608.

and a baptism to be baptized with. And how am I straitened till it be accomplished.' Having passed through, he calls His sheep, and His sheep hear His voice and follow Him whithersoever He goes. This way was trodden by the dead under the altar...In this way walked also those who were marked by the Lord (Ez. 9:6)." In this tone the testament proceeds in words of apocalyptic greatness and a seriousness derived from the world. "For, where you hear of the cross, there is Christ; from there do not depart."¹⁵⁶ Thus, Jesus' word of baptism through death shines like a distant beacon-light over the paths of those faithful to him.

In the same sense, in his preface to the *Martyrs' Mirror*, Van Braght speaks of Christ's death, even amplifying the figure of Luke 12 to a bold picture: Good Friday is the day when "all the fountains of the great deep broke forth over Him and the floods of suffering overflowed Him, to swallow Him up altogether."¹⁵⁷ And then he draws the line from Christ to his disciples and followers, quoting Matthew 20:22 in a peculiar interpretation.¹⁵⁸

Following these words of Jesus, Anabaptism developed, apparently rather early, a fixed formula of speech. In his letter to Thomas M ntzer of September 1524, Conrad Grebel already used this figure in speaking of the Christians who must be baptized "in suffering and death."¹⁵⁹ The Hutterite Chronicle reports of Jost Wilhelms, executed about 1618, "Obwohl er die Wassertauff, wie herzlich (er) auch darnach geeifert, nit erreichen konnte, hat er doch nach seinem W nschen und Begehren den Tauff des Bluts erlangt."¹⁶⁰ Still further goes the hymn composed in memory of the Hutterite martyr Christine Br nnerin, who was put to death with Jost Wilhelms.

Der Tauff des Heiligen Geists
Ward ihnen von Gott gegeben,
Sonst h tt'n sie nit g'habt solch Kraft,
Den Tauff des Bluts zu erlangen,
Mit so grosser Standhaft.¹⁶¹

156. *Martyrs' Mirror*, 453-4. This statement was first printed in *Het Offer des Heeren* of 1570 which also contains her farewell hymn. From there the hymn was lifted into the *Ausbund* ("18. Lied," 110). This is a very good case in point for the Anabaptist tradition of martyrdom and the history of Anabaptist martyrbooks. Cf. Wolkan, *Lieder*, 65 and 129. On Anneken Jans see also Ronald H. Bainton, *David Joris*, Leipzig, 1937, 26. [R.F.]

157. *Martyrs' Mirror*, 68.

158. *Ibid.*, 72.

159. *Journal of American Theology*, IX, (1905), 91ff.

160. *Chronik*, 701f.

161. *Lieder d. Hut. Br.*, 820, Cf. *Chronik*, 704, where the story of these two martyrs is told.

The *Martyrs' Mirror* quotes a verse by Prosperus, Sanctify, baptism will indeed,
But the martyr's crown doth all complete.

And comments on it as follows, "He means to say that those who were then baptized had to expect martyrdom."¹⁶² Balthasar Hubmaier seems to have the earliest reference to this thought and he tried to prove its truth by the pattern of Christ's life: if a man is baptized and now witnesses the truth, "tribulation, temptation, persecution, and the cross will follow and all the trials such that man has no comfort and support whatsoever but the Word of God as it happened to Christ after his baptism. (Mt.3)."¹⁶³

The idea that baptism stands at the beginning of the way whose end is martyrdom found deep roots in Anabaptism.

Wer den Tauff nimmt, zu Hand ihm kommt
Kruez, Tr bsal und das Leiden,
sings Hans Betz, one of the prisoners in the castle of Passau, 1535, where the *Ausbund* originated.¹⁶⁴ He, too, had a theological foundation for this combination of baptism and martyrdom. He recognized the necessity of this sequence from I John 5:8, the well-known expression, "spirit, water, and blood."

Drei Zeugnisse sind uns hier beschieden,
Die zwei man heisst Wasser und Geist,
Der dritte, Blut, das ist Leiden.¹⁶⁴

A later Hutterite hymn elaborates this idea further: whoever will enter into a covenant with God needs three witnesses in Heaven, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and three witnesses on earth, spirit, water, and blood. The first baptism is the baptism with spirit, the second the baptism with water, but the third is the baptism with blood.¹⁶⁵ The interpretations change somewhat but the basic idea remains: the right baptism of Christ entails the Cross.¹⁶⁶

The Anabaptists know this and therefore accept consciously baptism as a pledge of faith to follow their master devotedly unto death.¹⁶⁷ It is expressed briefly and concisely by the outstanding early martyr,

162. *Martyrs' Mirror*, 190, and 198.

163. *Vom Tauff*, fol.1.

164. *Ausbund*, 608. Wolkan, *Lieder*, 31-35, calls him a true poet.

165. *Lieder d. Hut. Br.*, p.557f; a hymn by the well known Hutterite missionary in the Rhineland, Hans Raiffer (d.1558).

166. Cf. *Chronik*, 44, "Die Kindstauffer...liessen den rechten Tauff fahren, der das Kreuz gewiss mit sich bringt."

167. *Ausbund*, 534, by Hans Haffner, another Anabaptist who was imprisoned in Passau, where the first hymn collection was composed which forms the core of the *Ausbund*. Haffner is the author of the tract *Concerning the true soldier of Christ* excerpts whereof were published by R.Friedmann in M.Q.R.V., (1931) [R.F.]

Hans Schlaffer (d. 1528):

Denn er sich hat durchs Wiederbad
Ergeben gar bis in den Tod.¹⁶⁸

And Anneken of Rotterdam sings in her hymn, interpreting her above-mentioned testament,

Diesen Weg auch gangen sind
All die frommen Gottes Kind,
Die den Tauff hond empfangen,

An ihren Stirnen versiegelt,
Folgen dem Lamm, wo es hingeht,
Dienen ihm mit Verlangen.¹⁶⁹

Baptism is the "dubbing of the retainer of Christ" on the march to the Cross. It cannot be otherwise, for baptism is the seal of the covenant [*Bundessiegel*]¹⁷⁰ of the faithful with God, which seals our allegiance to Christ and our membership in his church.

This leads us to the second issue, the relationship between confession and martyrdom. Often the Anabaptist brotherhood has been held to be a church without confession,¹⁷¹ but this viewpoint is not longer defensible.¹⁷² On the contrary, the Anabaptists are most ready to confess their faith and give account of it [*Rechenschaft*]. They had their disputations and their synods,¹⁷³ their doctrinal norms and boundaries, and they did not refrain from excommunication in case of doctrinal discordance. Yet, their confessions are definitely different from those of the established churches, they have their own color, conditioned by their historic and religious background. This means, they are confessions of martyrs. The old words "confessor" and "confession" regain in Anabaptism their original seriousness.

It cannot be otherwise since the Anabaptists were in the same situation as the early Christians who had to formulate and defend their faith before courts. As in those early "Acts of Martyrs", the testimony of faith of the Anabaptists has an all important place in their trial records. The *Martyrs' Mirror* and Hutterite

Chronicle contain many examples of this, beginning with the record of Michael Sattler's trial (1527) which carefully enumerates the eight points of indictment.¹⁷⁴

The same can be said of the Anabaptist hymns which tell of the manly testimonies of the confessors, often in moving words. A particularly outstanding example of this is the 14. Lied in the *Ausbund* [taken from *Het Offer des Heeren*] which contains the story of the last disputation between Joos Kind and the "Sophists" who then burned him at the stake (1553). Joos concludes his testimony, which in the hymn runs through eighteen stanzas, as follows:

Für diese Lehr wahrhaft und theuer
Will ich gehen willig in das Feuer,
Dieselbe frei bekennd.¹⁷⁶

In a similar way Conrad Grebel writes in his last letter to his brother-in-law Vadian, "If God permits I shall testify the truth unto death."¹⁷⁶ To be sure, Joos Kind knows all too well that arguments will be of no avail at all: it is only martyrdom which will seal his testimony, as he writes in his farewell letter: "I hope that the seal of this letter will be the putting off of my body."¹⁷⁷ The postscript to the testament of Anneken of Rotterdam speaks similarly, "Thereupon she sealed this with her blood and as a pious heroine and follower of Jesus Christ she was received among the number of the witnesses of God who were offered up."¹⁷⁸ In the Hutterite Chronicle such formulas have a fixed style: *Sie haben, was sie mit dem Mund bekannten, mit dem Blut bezeugt.* [What they confessed by mouth, they testified by blood.] In this way, "confession" becomes almost synonymous with "passion." Also those prisoners, who had not yet been baptized upon confession, also "endured in all tribulations, and confessed well, as all the others, before many witnesses."¹⁷⁹ In these confessions a power and reality is revealed which is not of this world.

For this reason the congregations are passionately on the alert to see whether the brethren will hold on when they are tried out [*wenn sie in die Prob kommen*], and keep to their confessions. Their deepest hymns of thanks are those in which they can sing of

168. *Lieder d. Hut. Br.*, 23.

169. *Ausbund*, 112.

170. According to I Petr. 3:21 in the German translation, "Die Taufe ist der *Bund* eines guten Gewissens mit Gott." The English has, "answer of a good conscience toward God." This verse of I Petr. became a basic text in all Anabaptist theology. [R.F.]

171. Mainly among the liberal Doopsgezinden of the Netherlands

172. E.g., 1527: The Seven Articles of Schleithem, drawn up by Michael Sattler; Riedemann's *Rechenschaft* (1540); Pilgram Marpeck's great *Verantwortung* of 1542; also Peter Walpot's *Five Articles* and the great *Article Book* of about 1545. Famous synods: 1538, Augsburg (so-called martyrs' synod), 1555, Strasburg. Disputations: Bern, Switz., 1538, Frankenthal, 1570, etc. [R.F.]

174. *Chronik*, 55.

175. *Ausbund*, 81. The model for this hymn was apparently two letters of Joos Kind, later printed in *Martyrs' Mirror*, 540, 543.

176. Neff, in *Gedenkschrift*, 1925, 20.

177. *Martyrs' Mirror*, 546.

178. *Ibid.* 454.

179. *Chronik*, 202. The brethren had I Tim. 6:12 in mind, "Fight the good fight of faith...and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."

how a brother held faithful unto the end.¹⁸⁰ When Balthasar Hubmaier went to the stake (1528), so tradition has it, he promised his wife that he would lift up his finger as a sign that he still stood true to his faith. The flames went up, and he lifted his hands three times before the fire took his life.

Here we meet again the Anabaptist concept of "Truth" with its tremendous implications. Christ was persecuted and crucified because he is the truth.¹⁸¹ He remained invincible and rose again on the third day, because he himself is the truth. Whosoever professes the truth must not expect nor desire any other way.

In a world which shuts itself off from the truth by every means, with contradiction and scholarly sophistication, with deafness and dullness, with overbearing and hatred, as the *Ausbund* sings:

Wer die rechte Wahrheit lehrt,
Den kann die Welt erdulden nit,
Weil ihr' Gelehrten sind verkehrt.¹⁸²

In such a world there is no chance to bring truth to victory than through catastrophe.¹⁸³ Truth cannot manifest itself otherwise than through the loyalty of the confessors; therefore the sneering triumph of the world when "through tyranny" some brethren "fell back from truth"; therefore the deep passion of a Hutterite brother, Thomas Hermann, minister of the Gospel, who in such a moment pressed through the crowd and joyfully exclaims, "It is the truth what I taught you and I shall testify it with my blood" (1527).¹⁸⁴ Thus it is ever a triumphant report when the chronicles can record, "He, too, has knightly testified to the Divine truth with his blood."¹⁸⁵ This was the proof delivered by unconquered suffering and death: *Die Wahrheit ist untödlich*.

More, this truth rises out of the blood of its confessors with increased strength. In this sense Sigmund Hassauer, another Hutterite minister of the Word, sings in his powerful hymn about Hans Pürchner's death:

Noch tut die Wahrheit schallen,
Macht ihren Anschlag hallen,
Ihr Blut, das red' und schreit.¹⁸⁶

180. *Ausbund*, 88.

181. *Lieder d. Hut. Br.*, 214b, 437.

182. *Ausbund*, 25, also 247. Also *Chronik*, 50.

183. *Martyrs' Mirror*, 523; *Chronik*, 399; *Ausbund*, 284, which hymn, however, is not of Anabaptist origin.

184. *Chronik*, 57; *Lieder d. Hut. Br.*, 27; see also the above, (n.74) quoted conclusion of Article V of *Schleitheim Articles*.

185. *Chronik*, 104.

186. *Lieder d. Hut. Br.*, 437.

Of course, the Anabaptists did not stop at such individual confession. When Peter Riedemann draws up a *Rechenschaft unseres Glaubens* (1540), it is done "in the name of the church."¹⁸⁷ The *Martyrs' Mirror* contains a number of formulated confessions of faith upon which different groups agreed, such as the Dortrecht confession of 1632, or Jansz Twisk's great Thirty-three articles.¹⁸⁸ Riedemann's *Rechenschaft* was written in prison, and it is no mere chance that Van Braght included confessions of faith in a martyrs' book. With this he wanted to say: this was the foundation of those, "who did not spare their dear lives but gave them unto death for their God and Saviour."¹⁸⁹ These confessions of faith are not doctrinal systems of an established church which enforced acceptance by burning at the stake. Joos Kind formulated this in his farewell letter more pointedly than anyone before him.¹⁹⁰ One faces here confessions of a martyrs' church which testified to faith at the stake.

This leads us to the third and last issue to be discussed in this connection, the Anabaptist demand of defencelessness.¹⁹¹ The religious starting point of the Anabaptist practice of defencelessness is the idea of what the Dutch Mennonites called "lijdzzaamheid" [readiness to suffer], and the German and Swiss brethren called "Gelassenheit: [resignation, yieldedness], an old idea of the "Theology of Martyrdom." It is the Anabaptist term for that attitude which Jesus asked of his disciples when he sent them out on a mission or which he taught in the Sermon on the Mount or in the apocalyptic chapters of the Gospels as a requirement of all those who are persecuted for his name. The disciples of Christ [*Nachfolger*] are sent out like sheep among wolves. But they shall suffer the hostility of the world according to the example of their master, without resistance, and shall not return hatred with hatred, wrath with wrath, injustice with vengeance. Rather they shall love their enemies and pray for their persecutors. Whosoever remains faithful to the end, will receive the heavenly crown. The culmination, however, of this attitude of "Gelassenheit" is the intercessory prayer of the dying martyr for his persecutors, in which even the last word of the old polemic against persecutors, the cry to God for vengeance, may be suppressed.¹⁹³

187. *Ibid.*, 450.

188. *Martyrs' Mirror*, 373-410

189. *Ibid.*, 327f, prefacing Twisk's *Confession*.

190. *Ibid.*, 450, and 453.

191. *Wehrlosigkeit*, sometimes also called *Gewaltlosigkeit* or *Non-resistance*. The term "non-violence" is not fitting for this attitude.

192. *Martyrs' Mirror*, 750, 757,

193. Menno Simons, *The Cross*, 184-5 (most imp't passage).

Up to this point, readiness for martyrdom and defencelessness are almost identical concepts, merely two different expressions for the demands of the Sermon on the Mount. In this readiness for suffering, and rejection of personal vengeance and use of force, all Anabaptists are one. Yet, the great majority of the brethren went one step further and demanded conscientious objection to war. Conrad Grebel said it unequivocally enough: "True Christian believers.... neither use worldly sword nor war, since all killing has ceased with them altogether."¹⁹⁴ And Peter Riedemann repudiates in his *Rechenschaft* not only service in war, but also the making of arms, "auf dass die Heiligen Gotes nit frembder Sünd teilhaft werden (1 Tim.5:22)." On this point the Anabaptists brethren deny obedience to the authorities because of religious principles. And they are but consistent when they, vice versa, also refuse all protection by the authorities both in religious matters and otherwise. "The gospel and its adherents are not to be protected by the sword nor are they thus to protect themselves."¹⁹⁵

All important, of course, is the foundation of this conscientious objection on a theology of history. "Moses and his successors with their iron sword have served their day since Christ has now given us a new command and another sword," says Menno Simons clearly.¹⁹⁶ Therefore use of force is no longer valid, and if the tyrants, and in particular the Lutheran church, still wage war under the pretense of the promotion of their creed, then the true people of God have nothing to do with these pre-Christian abominations.¹⁹⁷ "For we have, by the manifest grace of God, beaten our swords into ploughshares and our spears into pruning hooks. And we shall sit under the true Vine, Christ, under the Prince of eternal peace, and will never take part in bloody wars."¹⁹⁸ While the world outside perishes practicing hatred and force, the church of God already had carried into practice the coming order of peace. "For, understand, the prophecy is fulfilled which said with reference to this time that such people have beaten their swords into ploughshares and their spears into sickles...Hence, Christians now may not wage war any more."¹⁹⁹ The objection to war is practiced in the certainty that the

practice of war has been overcome through Christ, and that therefore at least the church of God must not have anything to do with these practices of by-gone times. Conscientious objection to war is but the practical expression of a basic criticism of war at large. Jacob Hutter writes in his oft-mentioned 1538 letter to the governor of Moravia, "Wir sagen und wollten, dass alle Welt wäre wie wir, und möchten jedermann zu diesem Glauben bringen und bekehren, so würde alles Kriegen und (alle) Ungerechtigkeit ein Ende haben."²⁰⁰

No doubt this statement goes somewhat beyond the "Theology of Martyrdom" proper. In words like this the apocalyptic vision seems almost to have vanished, namely that the need of creation is unconquered and that the perversion of creation is its certain fate. Vanished is the idea that all history is conflict even after Calvary. But very soon these rudiments of a millennial theology in Anabaptism died out, and history necessitated a concentration of all strength upon the genuine heritage, that is the "Theology of Martyrdom." The Anabaptists paid for their peace testimony with increased persecutions. They accepted them and by that testified that the peace of the Kingdom of Christ has no abode on earth in this aeon. Conflict is the main feature of this aeon, and the path of discipleship of Christ remains for the entire span between Calvary and the end, a way of martyrdom.

[N.B. The last two pages of the original German article have been omitted from this translation inasmuch as they are not relevant to the subject. R.F.]

200. *Chronik*, 152. "We say and wish that all the world would be as we are. It is our desire to bring and convert everybody to this faith; then, all warfare and all injustice would come to an end."

194. *Journal of American Theology*, IX, 95.

195. *Ibid.*, 95.

196. Menno Simons, *The Cross*, 198.

197. *Ibid.* According to K.Vos, *Menno Simons* (Leiden, 1914), 295, this passage is an allusion to the Schmalkald War of 1546.

198. *Ibid.*, 198.

199. Hendrik Alewyns' farewell letter of 1569, in *Martyrs' Mirror*, 754b.