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A study of the role of the secondary virtues in Uli der Knecht

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF Roland Minder for the Master of Arts in German presented May 6, 1986.

Title: A Study of the Role of the Secondary Virtues in Uli der Knecht.

APPROVED BY MEMBERS OF THE THESIS COMMITTEE:

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Laureen Nussbaum

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Louis Elteto

The thesis is a response to critics who interpreted Uli as being too "worldly." Specifically, it attempts to show, by way of exploring the role of a particular category of virtues present in the novel, how these critics misunderstood the novel as well as the intent of the author.

Following an introduction to the topic and problem of the thesis, two approaches are used in proving the thesis. In both, the virtues have been categorized into two distinct groups. One group, the

traditional theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity have been categorized with the term "primary virtues", basing their supremacy to other virtues on Christian doctrine and tradition. The second group includes all the remaining virtues, categorized with the term "secondary virtues."

The first approach is to use the text-immanent method of interpretation to show how the role of the secondary virtues has been misunderstood by certain critics. It examines the function and relevance of these virtues as they relate to the author's stated intentions and his actual product, the novel itself.

The other approach is to attempt to prove the thesis from a larger context, drawing upon secondary literature. Gotthelf's position in and on aesthetics, his views on matter and the material world, the influence of Biblical ethic and doctrine are all addressed in light of the role and function of the secondary virtues.

By examining the text, it was found that through the practice of certain secondary virtues, Uli acquires material well-being and respect. There is also, simultaneously, a spiritual level to the novel which some of his critics did not acknowledge or recognize. There appears an unmistakable correlation between Uli's material and spiritual progress.

It is found that Gotthelf's God is directly and immediately involved in human affairs and that the practice of the secondary virtues allows for a unification with God and eventual salvation. The practice of the secondary virtues is reenforced by material reward. At the same time, they help in acquiring patterns of behavior which

allow one to interact positively with one's fellow man and allow one to experience primary virtues. Faith is increased as one sees empirical proof of progress through thrift. Love is increased as loyalty develops. Hope is kindled as one is industrious in pursuit of betterment. These virtues continually reenforce each other and lead to a unity with a God that rewards virtuous behavior here and now, as well as in a later after-life.

It was this "sanctification process", which many have written about already, which was misunderstood by Gotthelf's aforementioned critics. This process is depicted in Uli.

A STUDY OF THE ROLE OF THE SECONDARY VIRTUES

IN ULI DER KNECHT

by

ROLAND MINDER

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

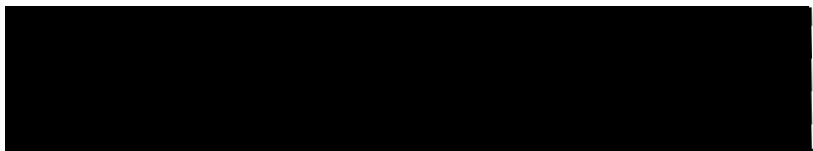
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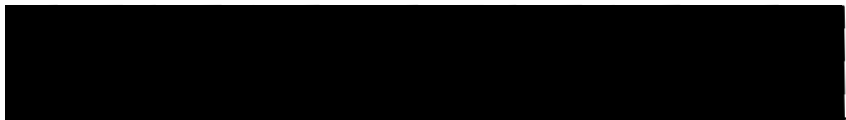
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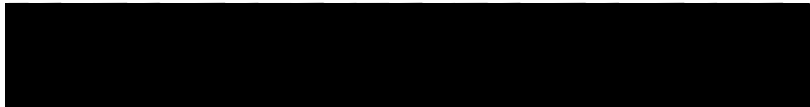
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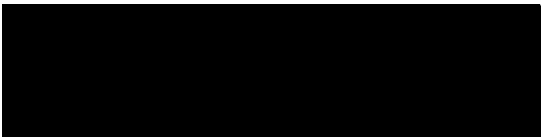


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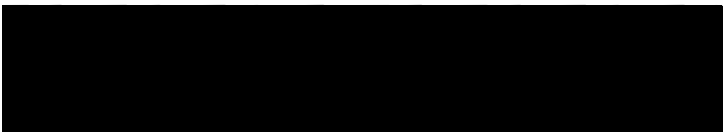


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As is the case with all of us, no man is an island and no work of any individual can disclaim the help and influence of others. I must, therefore, out of a sincere feeling of gratitude, make mention of such people as they relate to this work.

Foremost in my mind is the thanks I owe my wife, Jeanette, for the unrelenting support and understanding she has given me in completing this task. The time I have deprived my children of must also be acknowledged. Finally, the stylistic and organizational advice of Dr. Linda B. Parshall has contributed much to the completion of this thesis and is greatly appreciated.

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

Jeremias Gotthelf is the pseudonym of Albert Bitzius, a prolific Swiss writer. Born the son of a minister of Murten and citizen of Bern in 1797, he grew up in the canton Bern and experienced the revolutionary period of the Helvetik and its results.¹ Of this exposure, Gotthelf in an autobiography writes. "Als wilder Junge durchlebte ich dort die wilde Zeit der Revolution und Helvetik."² Describing himself as a wild boy living in a wild time, he is also, according to his own perception, a product of the time he was born in. His formative years gave him a sense for the instability and insecurity of the period. After a period of school and home study, Gotthelf began his formal studies at the Bern Gymnasium in 1812. Upon completion of two years at the Gymnasium, there followed studies in ancient languages, mathematics, and philosophy at the academy which was later taken up into the new University of Bern in 1834. Three years later, he commenced his study of theology, at the conclusion of which Gotthelf became vicar in his father's parish in 1820. Still feeling a basic restlessness and never having left his native land before, starting the following spring, he spent a year in

¹This Helvetik was the government set up on April 12, 1798 as a result of Napoleon's influence. It lasted five years and was a failure. For further reading see Peter Dürrenmatt, Schweizer Geschichte (Zürich: Schweizer Druck- und Verlagshaus AG, 1963), 382-402.

²Walter Muschg, Jeremias Gotthelfs Persönlichkeit: Erinnerungen von Zeitgenossen (Klosterberg, Basel: Verlag Benno Schwabe & Co., 1944), 23.

Göttingen, the haven of the Young Hegelians. After his return, he held other assistantships and positions in the church in canton Bern, finally settling in Lützelflüh, which he felt was in the most beautiful part of the Emmental. Having been made a minister there in 1832 by the new government, he married and remained in Lützelflüh for the rest of his life. This Emmental and its people, whom Gotthelf grew to love, became the focus of his work as a minister but also the focus and setting of most of his writings.³

Not only did Gotthelf hold the office of minister; he viewed it as the most important function of his life. He felt he was a minister first and a writer second, viewing his writing as an extension of his function as a pastor. Gotthelf was very productive as a writer. Hunziger and Bloesch have edited Gotthelf's works in 24 volumes and have added numerous supplementary volumes since.⁴ (One speaks of three meters Goethe and two meters Schiller; it would not be inconceivable to add a couple of meters Gotthelf in the quantitative sense.) Starting in 1841, with Uli der Knecht, Gotthelf also became a very popular writer throughout many of the German speaking lands.⁵ His house was continually

³Muschg, Persönlichkeit, pp.23-6; 33-4 contains an autobiographical sketch.

⁴Jeremias Gotthelf, Sämtliche Werke in 24 Bänden, ed. Rudolf Hunziger and Hans Boesch, (Erlenbach-Zürich: Eugen Rentsch Verlag, 1921). See also Herbert Morgan Waidson, Jeremias Gotthelf: An Introduction to the Swiss Novelist(Oxford: Blackwell, 1953; rpt. Westport: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1978), 218-22 for a list of Gotthelf's works based on Werner Günther, Der ewige Gotthelf.

⁵Friedrich Sengle, "Albert Bitzios, pseud. Jeremias Gotthelf (1797-1854)," in Biedermeierzeit: deutsche Literatur im Spannungsfeld zwischen Restauration und Revolution 1815-1848(Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1980), 3:895 writes, "...Auerbach und Gotthelf erreichten die Spitze der damals möglichen Verkaufsziffern."

full of guests. This popularity waned toward his death in 1854, as his works became increasingly didactic and political, returning to what characterized his early writings. He considered his writings a tool to help educate people toward a better Christian life. In his own perception, his work was a pedagogical effort. This is evident in his letters.⁶

In order to understand the education Gotthelf wanted to impart to his readers better, it is extremely important to note that his faith was protestant in character. To ask what type of Protestant he was could be a topic all of its own. There are aspects of Gotthelf's theology which could be argued to show a nearness to Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, or innumerable others who influenced the faith of the Bernese people. However, Gotthelf did not adhere to any one reformer's particular teachings. Guggisberg writes, "Die Reformatoren sind ihm lieb mehr wegen ihres begeisterungsfähigen Lebens als wegen ihrer Lehre."⁷ Hans Bayer identifies Gotthelf's theological sources as those of the Laienfrömmigkeit tradition, dating back to the Waldensians, the Baptists, the Bohemian Brothers, and the Radical Pietists, the latter taking a critical position toward the Amtskirche.⁸ Gotthelf's theology cannot easily be defined.⁹ In short, to become a minister in canton Bern,

⁶ Gotthelf, Sämtliche Werke, 390. One particular letter is to Reithart as cited by Hunziger and Bloesch.

⁷ Kurt Guggisberg, Jeremias Gotthelf: Christentum und Leben (Zürich und Leipzig: Max Niehaus Verlag, 1939), 253.

⁸ Hans Bayer, "Theologische Quellen und epische Gestaltung: Gotthelfs 'idealer Pietismus'," in Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte, 54 (1980), 423-63.

⁹ Kurt Guggisberg, a Swiss theologian, was the first to start

one did not have to be strictly a Lutheran, a Calvinist, or a Zwinglian, but instead had to be in good graces with the decision-making members of the Amtskirche whose opinions prevailed. Gotthelf was in any case a devout man.¹⁰

This devotion, however, was questioned by some critics. In spite of his stated intentions - he even saw himself as somewhat of a mystic - Gotthelf was attacked by some critics as being too worldly. Although there may have been other misunderstandings, this particular criticism is especially interesting in light of Gotthelf's perception of himself as a devout man. Gotthelf was aware of this critical viewpoint. In the foreword to Uli der Pächter (1848) Gotthelf writes: "Der erste Teil war den einen zu weltlich;..."¹¹ "Der erste Teil" refers to Uli der Knecht, the work which is the focus of this thesis. This idea of worldliness was not a contrived concern on Gotthelf's part; there was actual criticism to that effect. Particularly the more pietistic elements of Christianity, whose basic view of life is that it is a necessary, temporary evil to be endured, criticized Gotthelf's Lebensbejahung. Sengle writes:

researching Gotthelf's actual theology. He addresses the above mentioned issue: "Gotthelfs Geisteswelt kann unmöglich von einzelnen Einflusssphären aus - etwa von Mythologie, Idealismus und Biblizismus - ganz verstanden werden...Deshalb passt die Religion Gotthelfs auch nirgends ganz in den Rahmen einer Geistesbewegung seiner Zeit oder der Vergangenheit hinein." See Guggisberg, Christentum und Leben, 54.

¹⁰ "..., und die Ehrfurcht vor diesen Wundern veranlasst ihn, sich einen 'Mystiker' in 'gewisser Beziehung' zu nennen." Ibid., 97.

¹¹ Jeremias Gotthelf, Uli der Pächter (Zürich: Büchergilde Gutenberg, n.d.), 427. In this foreword Gotthelf never agrees that it was worldly but simply says he never claims to have "hit the mark" but to have strived after it.

Uli der Knecht war lange Zeit Gotthelfs berühmtester Roman, hat aber sogleich von pietistisch-christlicher Seite scharfe Kritik erfahren, was verständlich ist. Der Dichter versucht daher in anderen Romanen die allzu dichte, 'alttestamentarische' Synthese von Gott und Welt, Frömmigkeit und Reichtum aufzulockern.¹²

It was not only these Pietist-Christian critics, I believe, who, because of some undeniable Old Testament aspects, misunderstood Gotthelf's intention. Sengle himself seems to agree with those who criticized Gotthelf, as is evident from the above quote. Even such a prominent literary figure as Gottfried Keller says of Gotthelf's Uli der Knecht: "Diese Geschichte schmeckt mehr nach dem Judentum als nach dem Christentum."¹³ Realizing that such a quote could be explosive, I wish to qualify its detonator by relegating it to the religious sphere for which Keller intended it. He interprets Uli as Jewish in the sense of the God of thunder and lightning, the jealous God of the Old Testament.¹⁴

From the above criticism a real problem becomes evident. Here is a minister who considers himself a functionary of God, who views his writings as a tool in helping people to lead a more Christian life, being attacked as too worldly and unchristian. How did such a misunderstanding take place between the author's intention and his actual reception? In part this is explained by Gotthelf's realistic style of writing, not to be confused with "worldly", which from the word Reichtum in the above quote, has a definite materialistic focus. Realistic not

¹²Sengle, Biedermeierzeit, 3:914.

¹³Gottfried Keller, "Jeremias Gotthelf," in Sämtliche Werke und ausgewählte Briefe, ed. Clemens Heselhaus, (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1958), 3:928.

¹⁴Ibid., 3:928.

in the sense that he belongs to the school of realism, but when writing about his Emmental Bauern, he did not romanticize the Bauernleben like Auerbach. Keller writes: "Er vermag vielleicht noch tiefer herabzu- steigen in die Technik und die Taktik des Bauernlebens, gibt dasselbe mit der grössten Treue wieder...und scheint ohne Nachdenken und Mässigung zu arbeiten;..."¹⁵ Gotthelf's was not a glossed over, purely idealistic or romantic view of life.¹⁶ The realistic elements also led scholars like Bartels to mistakenly call Gotthelf the "father of naturalism." Bartels along with Muschg, a proponent of the psycho- analytical method of literary criticism, helped to contribute to this notion of unchristian worldliness.¹⁷

My intention is not to supplant the psychoanalytical insights Muschg gives us of Gotthelf, nor to blindly deny the realistic elements of Gotthelf's writing. I do wish, however, to examine an area which can add, I believe, another perspective to this issue of worldliness.

This criticism, i.e. of worldliness, is centered directly on Uli der Knecht, the work which brought Gotthelf onto center stage of the literary world. It took Gotthelf about three months, (August 1840 -

¹⁵Ibid., 3:921.

¹⁶For further information about Gotthelf's "realism" see Werner Günther, Neue Gotthelf - Studien(Bern: Francke Verlag, 1958), 65-73. Günther also cites Bartels who comments on the realistic aspects of Gotthelf's writings.

¹⁷See Walter Muschg, Gotthelf: Die Geheimnisse des Erzählers (München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1967), 403. For example, Muschg quotes Gotthelf: "Man wird erst recht miteinander ~~auf~~frieden, wenn man miteinander isst und trinkt." Muschg also quotes Keller from the latter's first criticism, "...es gründe sich bei Gotthelf alles auf 'eine tiefe Kenntnis des Bauers und dessen, was ihm mangelt, auf seine materiellen Interessen'."

November 1840), to write this novel which was initially intended to be no more than a "Lektur für Knechte und Mägde...aus ihrem Lebenskreis."¹⁸ Gotthelf states his intent in the full title of the work: Wie Uli der Knecht glücklich wird: Eine Gabe für Dienstboten und Meisterleute. It is clear that Gotthelf wrote with a definite goal in mind, a pedagogical one. I believe, contrary to those who accuse this novel of being too worldly, that it in fact is misunderstood by these critics. I am convinced it is intended as a model of how one ought to live, and yet keeps its artistic quality by not simply being a lengthy sermon.¹⁹

The secondary literature on Uli has not yet totally laid to rest the notion that Uli is worldly. In fact, the secondary literature on this novel is relatively scanty. Most of the Gotthelf scholars concern themselves with his writings as a whole. Gottfried Keller, Walter Muschg, and Werner Hahl are examples of those who deal directly with Uli. Others such as Maybaum, Fehr, Bayer, and Günther write mostly about Uli as part of a broader topic or area of study. One aspect of Uli has not yet been thoroughly explored, and that is the role of the virtues within the work. They have been mentioned and acknowledged to be present and play a definitely positive role, but so far, as is evident from the quotations, they have been seen as positive in a materialistic sense. A Christian minister - who in this case also happens to be a writer - in whose value system and works virtues would

¹⁸For a more detailed account of the history of the text and its editions see Gotthelf, Sämtliche Werke, 4:390-7.

¹⁹Gotthelf had a high regard for his fellow Bernese, Heinrich Pestalozzi, who was a great example to him. Gotthelf himself was in charge of a school for homeless boys in Trachselwald where he practiced many of the principles laid out in Uli.

not also play a spiritual role, seems unimaginable. Yet, to the best of my knowledge, an interpretation of Uli primarily from the perspective of the virtues has not been attempted.

Certain virtues are recognized in Uli, virtues which bring a servant to the status of master. Social advancement as well as materialistic gain are attained through the practice of these virtues. This interpretation alone is inadequate, however, for the lessons in Uli apply to a larger segment of society than just servant and master. Thus there is also a non-materialistic level to this work which in its relevance transcends time. That non-materialistic level becomes accessible through an exploration of the virtues.

We are aware of the seven virtues, the three theological virtues: faith, hope, and charity; and the four cardinal, or platonic virtues: temperance, prudence, fortitude, and justice. For the purpose of clarity, so that the reader and the writer have a common reference point, the virtues of faith, hope, and charity will be referred to as primary virtues. This decision is based on the Pauline epistle to the Corinthians. "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."²⁰ It is due to the Pauline tradition of regarding these three as the more important virtues that I choose to label them primary virtues. In addition to the four cardinal virtues there are, however, other virtues which are considered not only positive from a societal perspective, but imperative in the life of a Christian. Examples of these virtues are: loyalty, honesty, patience, obedience,

²⁰1. Cor. xiv. 13 of the King James version.

gratitude, humility, and others too numerous to list. These are the virtues that will be the special focus in this reading of Uli. All the virtues that are not primary virtues will be referred to as secondary virtues, including the four cardinal virtues. There is some precedence for this since the cardinal virtues are so called "...because other moral virtues, such as purity and patience, are 'derived' from them."²¹

I propose that there are also definite reasons why Gotthelf used these virtues beyond wishing to illustrate the way to gain social advancement and materialistic wealth. First, he saw them all as positive, as essential for a Christian life and eventual union with God. Furthermore, Gotthelf was a well-informed social and political activist. He saw this union with God threatened by a negative interpretation of the secondary virtues from sources such as socialism and radicalism and felt motivated to reaffirm the sanctifying powers of the secondary virtues by showing us a model Christian patriarchal order.²² I will show from the text of Uli a perspective not understood by many of its critics: namely, that the secondary virtues serve as a base for guiding a wild, undisciplined servant toward not only the status of master with its attendant material gain, but also toward heaven through a process of sanctification. Gotthelf shows how to lead a Christian life in this world without having to renounce the comforts of life, how to gain salvation without austere piety. The latter would, at least in

²¹ J.C.J. Metford, Dictionary of Christian Lore and Legend (London: Thames and Hudson, 1983), 256.

²² Joseph Maybaum, Gottesordnung und Zeitgeist: Eine Darstellung der Gedanken Jeremias Gotthelfs über Recht und Staat (Bonn: H. Bouvier u. Co. Verlag, 1960), 21-33. Maybaum examines Gotthelf's political views.

part, explain the criticism from the Pietist-Christians.

Furthermore, I will show that both secondary and primary virtues are actively present in Uli as examples for all readers. The secondary virtues exist, as will be evident from the text, to help one lead the Christian life in a concrete, tangible way. The practical application of religion was of central importance to Gotthelf. He considered the Pietists, having their birth in the Erweckungsbewegung, "zügellose Schwärmerei", and he fought against what he considered their affected piety.²³ The actual practice of the secondary virtues then leads one to the primary virtues, which in turn bring out the godliness in human beings. The acquisition and practice of these virtues bring not just hope for salvation in the next life, but also a state of happiness in this one.

The last two sentences of the above paragraph explain the perspective this thesis will take of Uli. In this interpretation the influence of Calvinism may seemingly become manifest in the work, and yet I do not believe that Gotthelf is arguing that those who have success in this life are the ones whom God favors and are thus assured salvation. Calvinism, with its teachings of predestination, didn't make much sense to Gotthelf, according to Guggisberg.²⁴ But, showing Old Testament influence, Gotthelf does argue in Uli that those who are virtuous will be blessed and prosper, while those who are sinful will not.²⁵ One can observe how Uli's inner transformation

²³Bayer, Theologische Quellen, 426. Further explanations, 426-31.

²⁴Guggisberg, Christentum und Leben, 104.

²⁵This is what Keller sees as Jewish rather than Christian.

is accompanied by outward, empirical evidence of his spiritual progress. As his faith in his master, himself, and God increases, so does his material condition. This, however, happens only after Uli has put certain secondary virtues to the test and found that they work. For example, his master tries to teach him thrift. After much struggling, Uli finds it beneficial and thereby gains faith. The material and the spiritual are intertwined. This is another aspect that, I believe, Keller observes as Judentum in Uli. Gotthelf makes the importance of this relationship very clear. Maybaum quotes Gotthelf:

Das Leben ist der Einsatz, den ich von Gott erhalten, den Himmel mit ihm zu gewinnen. Das Höchste, was dem Menschen auf Erden zu erringen gegeben ist, ist die Vereinigung des Himmels mit der Erde, ist die Gemeinschaft mit dem Vater droben.

Then Maybaum explains: "Der Mensch muss danach streben, die ewige Seligkeit im Himmel zu erringen. Das ist der Sinn des ganzen menschlichen Lebens bei Gotthelf immer wieder."²⁶ "Worldly" then is a false perspective that excludes the real role of the secondary virtues in the eventual salvation of Uli. Keller, in spite of his criticism, had to admit that this was a Christian notion of salvation. He writes: "Fragen wir nun nach dem Prinzip, zu welchem hinauf und durch welches Gotthelf seinen Uli gerettet hat, so finden wir ein strenges, positives Christentum."²⁷ It is Uli's salvation which is at

Gotthelf does see relevance in the Old Testament for Christianity. Guggisberg writes: "Gotthelf liebt das...Alte Testament..." (Ibid., 55.)

²⁶ Maybaum, Gottesordnung, 43-4.

²⁷ Keller, Sämtliche Werke, 3:927.

stake; those same virtues which lead to material well-being also lead to an acquisition of the three primary virtues and to ultimate salvation. Material gain is seen as a blessing from God; the reward for leading a virtuous Christian life is bestowed in this life as well as the next. In Uli, Gotthelf shows us a God who is not aloof from the affairs of mankind, but who is directly and immediately involved with the hero's salvation. Uli finds his happiness in the process of his being led to salvation. At the end of Uli, after Uli is married and has attained the mastership of the Glunge, the connection between the worldly and the spiritual is made clear:

Und es stunden wiederum die Sterne am Himmel, als nach recht innigem Abschied, wie er selten von Nichtverwandten genommen wird, der mutige Kohli ein glückliches Paar rasch davonführte - dem Himmel zu.²⁸

Happiness in this life and salvation in the next are found through the same means. They are both gained through leading a virtuous life. To further substantiate this from the text, there is a key quote, which will also be addressed in the second chapter.

Das Weltliche und das rechte Geistliche sind viel näher bei einander als die meisten Leute glauben. Sie meinen, um recht wohl zu sein auf der Welt, müsse man das Christentum an den Nagel hängen; und das ist gerade das Gegenteil.²⁹

The virtues then become, as a model in Uli, the means of leading everyone to both happiness in this life and salvation in the next. This novel is meant to teach us exactly that. "Merke dir das, lieber Leser!"³⁰

²⁸ Gotthelf, Sämtliche Werke, 4:387.

²⁹ Ibid., 4:376.

³⁰ These are Gotthelf's last words in Uli, Ibid., 4:387.

CHAPTER II

THE TEXT

This chapter will be an attempt to prove the thesis directly from the text. The character development of Uli is central to this proof. The development takes place chronologically from the beginning of the novel. This transition is the focus of the book. It is, after all, a story of "wie Uli der Knecht glücklich wird." Since it is Uli's development and actual process toward happiness and salvation that is being traced, it is necessary to follow the text sequentially rather than topically, i.e. examining different aspects of the novel separately. The latter will be done in a subsequent chapter.

The nature of Uli's development also does not allow us to construct a mathematical flow chart which would list all the secondary virtues next to all the primary virtues each one could lead to. The development is rather spiral, with many of the virtues interrelated. Each time Uli exercises faith, he makes some progress, but it takes that much more faith to go on with his next stage of development. He exercises more secondary virtues because his faith has increased. In turn, his faith has increased because he sees that the practice of the secondary virtues was rewarded.

By following the text from beginning to end, it will become evident why Gotthelf did not let Uli find happiness. Rather, Uli becomes happy. This becoming implies effort, hard work, having nothing

to do with luck. Uli, having practically no faith at all in the beginning, later develops faith and love through the practice of the secondary virtues. The faith and love he develops bring him not only the beautiful Vreneli, but also a strong, positive relationship with God.

The story begins when Johannes, the Bodenbauer, arises at 4:30 a.m. to do the feeding, because his farmhand, Uli, "ist erst nach den zweien heimgekommen und noch die Steige herabgefallen, als er ins Gaden wollte."³¹ We are introduced to an Uli who is wasteful, drinks too much, and spends time with a girl of loose moral character. Eisi, Johannes' wife, encourages Johannes to talk with Uli in the Stübli, which he fully intends to do.³²

Gotthelf then digresses into an explanation of the farmer aristocracy, of which Johannes is a part. In doing so, he reveals the character of Johannes. The reprimand Uli receives is given in a fatherly way, making sure that justice prevails. "Von der Selbstbeherrschung und ruhigen Gemessenheit in solchen Häusern vermag man sich kaum eine Vorstellung zu machen."³³ These three secondary virtues: justice, self-control, and temperance exercised by Johannes, set the atmosphere for the talk with Uli.

³¹ Gotthelf, Sämtliche Werke, 4:7.

³² According to Neuenschwander, there are certain places in the literature of Gotthelf where confidentiality, trust and faith can be built. The Stübli is one of those places, a room which by the very sound of its name conveys a feeling of warmth and security. See Martin Neuenschwander, Jeremias Gotthelf als Dichter der Ordnung (Zürich: Juris Verlag, 1966), 123.

³³ Gotthelf, Sämtliche Werke, 4:9.

Johannes' talk with Uli remains without success. Uli's head is still not clear from his drinking of the night before, and he is rebellious. Johannes, on the other hand, remains calm and composed. After Uli's head clears up, his conscience starts to bother him.

Here we clearly see that the seed for Uli's progress is planted through a role model of virtuous behavior. His master creates an environment in which Uli becomes acutely aware of his moral inferiority and therefore his conscience starts to bother him. This is especially the case in his premarital relations with Anne Lisi. His master makes it clear to him that the responsibility for an eventual pregnancy could fall on him just as well as any of the others she is having relations with.

Gotthelf now explains to the reader that passion and love are not necessarily synonymous. In fact, Uli was not capable of real love at this stage of his life. "Wem es vielleicht auffallen mag, dass Uli solche Angst vor Anne Lisi hatte, dass seine Liebe zu demselben so schnell vergangen schien, dem muss ich bemerken, dass Uli gar keine Liebe hatte."³⁴

Uli, the antithesis of Johannes, is now being prepared for Johannes' influence. An internal effect begins with an appeal to the individual's conscience, an internal system of measuring right and wrong. We need to note here, however, that Uli's repulsion of Anne

³⁴ Gotthelf continues: "Er gehörte unter die vielen, vielen Bursche, welche aus Grosstuererei die leidige Sitte des Kiltganges treiben so früh möglich; ...Bei ihnen wird nie Liebe sichtbar, sobald ein Mädchen sie anklagt; ..." Ibid., 14. The Kiltgang is the nocturnal visit to a girl by a young man. Gotthelf spoke strongly against this practice.

Lisi is still a self-centered one. His motivation is not to bear the fiscal and legal responsibility of a pregnancy which would be an insurmountable burden to him at this stage of his life. It, in fact, would mean his ruination.

Johannes' motivation lies therein, that he wants to help Uli get closer to God, and he does this out of his own love of God and his neighbors, according to Christian tradition the two greatest commandments. This point is brought out by the following quote concerning Johannes:

Aber wenn er des Uli gedachte, und wie der Liebe Gott ihn so fürstlich ausgestattet mit Gesundheit und Kraft, und wie Uli seines Schöpfers so ganz vergesse, so schände seine Gaben misbrauche, so wurde er ganz wehmütig und stund oft und lange still, sinnend, was er ihm wohl sagen sollte, dass er wieder werde ein Preis seines Schöpfers.³⁵

Whatever methods he applies, their ultimate goal is to lead Uli to a positive relationship with God. If this is kept in mind - that all the carrots being later dangled in front of Uli are motivational devices leading to this goal - then the pietistic claims of worldliness in the work become very questionable. It would seem rather that these Pietists, as well as anyone else who criticized this work as being too worldly, either didn't understand or rejected Gotthelf's notion of the relationship between the temporal and the spiritual. Gotthelf is also very realistic in showing that it generally takes more than mere sermons to convert a totally world-oriented, ungodly individual. There have to be methods. These methods are, in this case, the secondary virtues which can bring one to a condition of respect and well-being. The

³⁵Ibid., 16.

ungodly sees no further than the material reward for his application of the secondary virtues, but the true Christian knows that it is not the only reward. These virtues do not only lead to worldly success but also to God. "Das rechte weltliche Glück und das himmlische Glück werden akkurat auf dem gleichen Wege gefunden."³⁶

To further establish Johannes' role as a type of priest for his entire household, and especially for Uli, Gotthelf puts the following words in his mouth:

Und er wolle ihnen geradeaus sagen, dass kein Meister einem Dienst trauen könne, der Gott aus dem Sinn geschlagen habe und Gott untreu geworden sei, ob man dann erwarten könne, dass er Menschen treu sein werde?"³⁷

Two aspects are born out by this quote. First, the secondary virtues of trust and loyalty are introduced, the latter is of central importance as it establishes the positive relationships in Uli's future that allow him to exercise some of the other virtues.³⁸ The second aspect is the assumption that a relationship with God is more valued than one with fellow human beings. Therefore, if one does not have or breaks a relationship with God, how can that person be trusted in his

³⁶Ibid., 381.

³⁷Ibid., 17. Karl Fehr explains this role in these terms: "Die Familie ist nicht nur eine biologische oder soziale Organisation, sondern ein religiöses Phänomen." Karl Fehr, Das Bild des Menschen bei Jeremias Gotthelf (Frauenfeld: Verlag Huber & Co. A.G., 1953), 265. Maybaum enlightens us further: "In einem christlichen Hause dagegen ist der Vater der Priester und das Haus sein Altar." See Maybaum, Gottesordnung, 78.

³⁸Gotthelf's own analysis of Uli credited this virtue as the central virtue of the work. In the foreword to Uli der Pächter he writes: "Der erste Teil dieses Buches enthielt die Geschichte eines Knechtes, welcher durch Treue aus einem Knechte zum Meister wurde." See Gotthelf, Pächter, 427.

or her relationship with other people? This seems to be an axiomatic twist to an aphorism well-known to the Christian world: "Denn wer seinen Bruder nicht liebt, den er sieht, wie kann er Gott lieben, den er nicht sieht?"³⁹ Gotthelf here seems to stand that argument on its head and say, if one is not loyal to God whom one hasn't seen, how can one be loyal to a brother whom one has seen.

This loyalty between a person and God is what Johannes would like his entire household to have. It is obvious, however, that Uli is not even close to that ideal. It is this process of getting there that makes up the storyline of this novel.

While Johannes and Uli wait for a cow to give birth to a calf, an opportunity presents itself to speak privately. Uli expresses his conviction that he will never amount to anything in this world and that one will not allow him to experience the only joys he can afford in life. Uli feels that smoking, drinking, and the Kiltgang are the only pleasurable aspects of life he will ever be allowed to experience. Johannes is quick to explain to him the errors of his perception of those experiences as joyful.

Aber, Uli, was ist das für eine Freude, wenn man darauf eine ganze Woche nirgends sein darf, es einem nirgends wohl ist? Was ist das für eine Freude, die einem für das ganze Leben elend und unglücklich machen kann? Solche Freuden sind des Teufels Lockvögel.⁴⁰

Johannes makes allowances for joy and pleasure in life, but admonishes Uli to find joy in things which are good and allowed. Johannes is not teaching austerity or feigned piety, but temperance and self-control,

³⁹1. Johannes iv.20.

⁴⁰Gotthelf, Sämtliche Werke, 4:28.

virtues which he already possesses.

He wants to awaken the faith in Uli. Since Uli does not as yet have a trust relationship with God, his master will serve as God's proxy, or better said, his priest. Uli, seeing that the way he has lived so far has not gotten him anywhere in life, has concluded that he'll never amount to anything. He is now asked to exercise a primary virtue, faith, in his master. Johannes tells him his situation is not as bad as he thinks, "Wenn du es nur glauben wolltest."⁴¹ Furthermore, he tells him to change his lifestyle so he can become a man. He tries to motivate him by telling him that there have been many who haven't had more than Uli and now have "Haus und Hof und Ställ und War."⁴² Faith is what eventually brought these people to success, but being a primary virtue, it is precisely what Uli is still lacking. His master's telling Uli that the latter's primary problem is a lack of faith and were he to change his belief the outcome would also be different, is still too abstract for Uli. Uli insists on the element of luck in the success stories of Johannes. Johannes, in turn, becomes resolute to help Uli achieve the virtue of faith. This is progressively achieved through the secondary virtues.

Uli insists he earns too little, needs too many clothes, and has debts. His conclusion is that in such a situation saving will amount to nothing. Johannes now recalls what he has learned from a minister that will be helpful in changing Uli's attitude. It is significant that Gotthelf puts the advice for conquering life in the words of a

⁴¹Ibid., 29.

⁴²Ibid., 29.

minister. The central theme is still loyalty and serves to enlighten us as to the role of this secondary virtue. The master, paraphrasing the minister of his youth relays the following:

Alle Menschen empfangen von Gott zwei grosse Kapitale, die man zinsbar zu machen habe, nämlich Kräfte und Zeit. Durch gute Anwendung derselben müssten wir das zeitliche und ewige Leben gewinnen.⁴³

Uli now hears an explanation that many have nothing on which to exert their strength or with which to occupy their time productively. These people then lend their strength and time to those who have too much work but not enough strength and time. They do this for payment and that is the meaning of serving. Most servants, however, regard this serving as an unfortunate situation and perceive their master as an enemy and suppressor. These servants then deem it an advantage to do as little as possible and waste as much time as possible. Thereby they become disloyal, because they are keeping from the master that which he bought, namely their time. This disloyalty brings its own punishment. When one is disloyal toward a master, one is also disloyal toward oneself. Habits and attitudes are formed which keep such a person from making any progress and amounting to anything.

From this explanation we can see that Gotthelf's world is not compartmentalized into economics, family life, and religion. They are integral parts of life. Here again the linking of Earth with Heaven can be observed. Earthly and eternal life are won the same way, by the application of time and strength. In other words, what one does with the capital God has endowed makes the difference between

⁴³Ibid., 30.

success and failure. Loyalty is central to this application because loyalty determines the actions and attitude of the servant. It develops a pattern of behavior which can bring success both in the temporal and the spiritual realm. If one is disloyal, or if transferred into the primary virtue level, unfaithful, the consequences stay with such a person "bis vor Gottes Richterstuhl."⁴⁴ These habits don't only determine our temporal existence but also our potential salvation, according to Gotthelf.

The virtues which make someone into a good Christian are the same ones that bring us success and rightful recognition, i.e. respect in the world. Such a synthesis of Earth and Heaven, although widely recognized by critics, is still cause of much confusion.⁴⁵ Yet this is exactly what Johannes is trying to teach Uli.

What the master says, i.e. words alone, do not make enough of an

⁴⁴Ibid., 31.

⁴⁵Maybaum writes: "Auch wendet er sich scharf gegen Sensualismus und Diesseitsfreude...Gotthelfs Weltanschauung bleibt aber fest im Jenseits verhaftet,..." See Maybaum, Gottesordnung, 26. Yet Fehr sees a break with a Jenseitsorientierung starting with Uli. Looking at the factor of antimaterialism he writes: "So hebt Gotthelf mit dem Uli-Roman den Eindruck eines einseitigen Antimaterialismus...auf," (see Fehr, Das Bild, 256.) It is interesting that whether it is an issue of materialism, piety, or any number of other items, there usually seem to be two divergent perceptions of where Gotthelf stood. Somehow a synthesis seems to be difficult to accept. One has to believe in either evolution or creationism; one is either materialistic or antimaterialistic. For this work such a black and white perspective is inadequate. This can be seen in the various labels attached to Gotthelf. He's been called a naturalist, a realist, a proponent of Heimatsdichtung, of Dorfliteratur, and yet romantic aspects are found in his writings. Timewise, Gotthelf belongs to the Biedermeierzeit, but quite frankly, many scholars don't know where he fits. It is the same with the topics of his writing. Much of the confusion comes from trying to find a single label for Gotthelf.

impact on Uli. He is given an ultimatum to change or find another job. After this talk, both of them assume that Uli is staying without another exchange of words. Uli thinks about his master's words, but not until confronted with the possible reality of potential outcomes of his past actions do they make a strong impact.

Anne Lisi appears out in the field where Uli is working. "Wie von einer Schlange gebissen fuhr Uli auf...Er gedachte seiner möglichen Waterschaft und...hatte ein böses Gewissen gegen ihns."⁴⁶ Uli is still totally in the worldly realm and sees the potential consequences from this perspective. He is very uncomfortable now and breaks off his relationship, thereby gaining additional secondary virtues. He becomes chaste and undergoes a moral purification, and even though his behavior is secularly motivated this has positive spiritual consequences. From here on Uli engages in no more premarital sexual relations. Although the impetus to change came out of fear of a pregnancy that would be ruinous for Uli, the acquired virtues of self-control and chastity will later be continually supported by other virtues. The original warning of Johannes has now assumed a degree of reality in Uli's mind and forms a base for a small amount of trust on which Uli can later build some faith in his master, thus setting the stage for his spiritual progress.

Now that Uli has become chaste, he starts to think about the words of his master regarding loyalty. Thrift now joins the already mentioned virtues. Each secondary virtue can degenerate and become negative by being carried to its extreme; in the case of thrift, the

⁴⁶ Gotthelf, Sämtliche Werke, 4:37.

extreme is avarice. Generosity is the balance which Johannes uses to show goodwill toward Uli. After a day's work they stop at an inn and Johannes buys good wine, not the cheapest. Thereby Uli becomes conversational. The topic of discussion is Uli's earnings. Uli has never understood how to save money. No matter how he added it up, he needed all his money plus some more. He tells Johannes that his former minister may have known a lot of things but couldn't have had any idea what an ordinary farmhand earns. His master now shows him how he can be thrifty. The ten Kreuzer which Uli usually spends for pleasure should not be spent at all. Johannes demands a commitment to a total change. He explains that just cutting back a little won't do any good. Soon he would find himself back in his old habits.

Dann kommt der Nachdurst, und du musst andere Abenden nachbessern und verlierst immer mehr allen Glauben, dass du dir je aufhelfen könntest, wirst alle Tage liederlicher und verzweifelst immer mehr an dir selbst.⁴⁷

To build faith in oneself or someone else requires action, a total commitment, not a halfhearted trying. Gotthelf's idea of faith is not one of a naive pietistic belief. Faith is made to happen; it is built. Built on what? The secondary virtues. Thrift will result in actual savings. The result shows that the initial little trust was not misplaced and thereby increases one's faith.

Johannes keeps enough distance to allow Uli to make his own decisions, because the action has to originate with the person needing to gain the faith. Fehr also substantiates this. "Denn die Art, wie Johannes seinem Knecht gegenübertritt wird allein von der christlichen

⁴⁷Ibid., 4:41.

Agape bestimmt...was da als geistiger Leib geboren werden soll, ist kein Aufzwingen eigenwilliger Gedanken."⁴⁸ Although Fehr mentions this in conjunction with the symbolism he sees in the birth of the calf, an earlier instance, and Uli's spiritual rebirth, this is part of Johannes' insight throughout. He can only be a catalyst for change; Uli has to do the actual changing.

If Johannes also represents God, then Jespersen's comments also become very meaningful.

Although God may intervene in the lives of men, he does this only to chastise and to direct, never to determine. The decision to accept or reject this divine assistance is always, in the final analysis, man's decision. This means in effect that the determining factor in man's salvation is not irresistible divine grace.⁴⁹

Free will then plays a very significant role in Uli's development.

Even though Johannes confronts Uli with choices and decisions to make, he is never coercive.

Just like loyalty is connected with faith, Johannes' generosity is linked with the Christian love of one's fellow human being. To teach Uli this idea, Johannes tells the story of a man he met on the road to a market and quotes this man to illustrate the balance between being a spendthrift and greediness.

Du musst nicht glauben, dass ich dabei ein wüsster Cythung sei. Es ist schon mancher z'leerem von grossen Bauernhäusern weggegangen und hat bei mir erhalten, was er nötig hatte. Ich habe nadisch nicht vergessen, wer mir den Segen zu meiner Arbeit gegeben hat, und wem ich bald Rechnung ablegen muss.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Fehr, Das Bild, 260.

⁴⁹ Robert Clifford Jespersen, "Jeremias Gotthelf and the Christian Order: a Study of Gotthelf's Social Philosophy as it Relates to his Theology." Diss. Stanford 1966, 60.

⁵⁰ Gotthelf, Sämtliche Werke, 4:42-3.

This "Abgabe einer Rechnung" has its theological foundation in that one is accountable to God for all one's worldly possessions, since they are only given us on loan for this lifetime. Thrift is here used to enable a person to better exercise neighborly love, not as an end in itself, or to gain riches for riches' sake. Again a secondary virtue, thrift, supports a primary virtue, love, leading one closer to God. This is especially the case when considering oneself a steward over things God has entrusted one with for a brief lifetime.

Johannes knows that he has to help Uli increase his faith. He therefore asks Uli to follow his advice. Obedience can now be added as an additional secondary virtue; not unquestioning servility, but a conscious decision to place trust in someone else that they will lead one in a way that is best for oneself. As extra encouragement for obedience there is again a material reward waiting. Johannes tells Uli that if he will believe and obey him, he will be out of debt by the end of the year, and the following year he will have a surplus. Furthermore, Johannes says that if Uli will believe and obey him, there is no reason why he couldn't give Uli a raise in his earnings. "Denk daran Uli: je besser die Gewohnheit, je besser der Name, desto besser auch der Lohn."⁵¹ Although the reward Uli has in mind at this point is strictly material, he will, of course, also gain spiritual rewards in the process. Uli is doubtful about his own ability to be believing and obedient. Consequently, Johannes challenges him to try it for a month.

This seemingly worldly bait, i.e. the promise of better pay and

⁵¹Ibid., 4:44.

freedom from indebtedness, is not only Uli's motivation materially but also leads him closer to God.

Und es ging recht ordentlich manchen Sonntag lang. Der Uli ging wieder zKilchen und dachte daran, dass er ein Mensch sei, und dass er auch selig werden möchte. Er fing an zu glauben, dass der Meister doch etwas recht haben möcht!; denn wenigstens zwei Neutaler hätte er früher in dieser Zeit für nichts ausgegeben, die er noch im Sack hatte.⁵²

Uli has empirical proof in his pocket that what his master tells him is true. Yet his faith in his master is still qualified with the word "etwas". The sentence is furthermore in the subjunctive mood, connoting doubt. The growth in faith is definitely evident, however. His faith in himself increases and with it comes a feeling of self-worth that causes him to think of higher goals than the material, he concerns himself with his possible salvation and starts going to church again. Through the prospect of worldly success the prospect of spiritual salvation becomes a simultaneous and connected concern of Uli. Uli wants to be saved, but he needs tangible proof that what his master says is true. For Gotthelf faith is not limited to Christian mysticism. Faith, for him, is a power, or energy, toward sanctification. In matters of faith he doesn't distinguish between worldly and spiritual spheres; they are closely tied together.

As soon as Uli lets the already mentioned virtues operate as positive forces in his life, other people try to interfere and lead him away from his new path. Johannes is not an obtrusive individual; he does not involve himself in other people's business without being asked, yet he is wise and not naive. As a weapon against the attempts

⁵²Ibid., 44-5.

of others to make Uli hostile toward him, he uses the virtue of love.

"Es braucht viel Kraft und viel Klugheit, solche Komplotte zu zerstören, und viel Liebe und viel aufrichtige Wohlmeinenheit, sie nicht aufkommen zu lassen," says Johannes.⁵³ It again is the exemplification of the virtues that are to influence Uli in a positive way.

Uli's faith is not yet strong and he begins to listen to those unfriendly forces. While they are influencing him, he becomes dissatisfied and ill-humored. The classic Faustian struggle ensues within his own breast. But perhaps a more apt description would be that of the basic human struggle between two different dispositions. On the one side is his good master who has proven to Uli that if he would listen to him there would be hope in store. On the other side those who want to sow discord between Uli and his master by trying to convince him that Johannes is only using him, that through Uli's efforts, it is Johannes who is the real beneficiary. But Uli has sufficient experience now that he does not immediately succumb to the negative influences. His character has acquired a certain degree of independent strength at this point.

Er sah doch, dass auf des Meisters Seite die grössere Gutmeinenheit sei, und dass wenn er diesem gehorche, es ihm besser gehe, und wenn auch der Meister Nutzen hätte von seiner guten Aufführung, so hätte er selbst doch noch den grössten und bleibenderen davon.⁵⁴

This is quite a different disposition than at the beginning of the novel. Uli is now accepting the additional responsibilities he is

⁵³Ibid., 4:46.

⁵⁴Ibid., 4:46.

entrusted with as an opportunity for his own benefit. He is able now to see hope for the future. What else could be meant bei "bleibenderen Nutzen" than qualities and experiences to be used sometime in the future. If one anticipates something being useful in the future, there is an implicit expectation of a positive experience, a conquering, an overcoming of some challenge. Uli is now strongly considering such a positive future, and it would not at all be amiss to assert that at this point Uli is acquiring the primary virtue of hope. By now Uli has already undergone a great change.

His faith is not yet complete, however, and as Gotthelf writes: "Es kam ihm vor, als ob zwei Mächte sich um seine Seele stritten, fast gleichsam ein guter und ein böser Engel, und jeder ihn haben wollte."⁵⁵ This struggle continues on through still many events.

Uli is not yet convinced of his master's propitiousness and allows himself to be talked into a Hurnussspiel by old friends. Johannes counsels against it but Uli's old friends lead him to believe that his master wants to keep him at home to get more work out of him. Uli plays. His team loses and has to pay the bill at the tavern for the other town's team. A fight breaks out and Uli's clothes get destroyed. Because of that and the big bill at the tavern, he feels that frugality was not worth the trouble. "Er hatte allen Mut verloren,..."⁵⁶ Uli, who had up to this point practiced the virtue of frugality now misunderstands why it doesn't work for him. His faith is still linked to empirical proof. The others who took part in the fight now want

⁵⁵Ibid., 4:46.

⁵⁶Ibid., 4:63.

to make Uli solely responsible for that fight by taking advantage of his illiteracy and making him sign a statement, blaming him for all the damages and in effect financially destroying him. Uli does not believe that people could possibly be so bad. Johannes, although somewhat angry and indignant, continues his goodwill toward Uli; he remains the example of positive virtues. What follows is an "I told you so" lecture, in which Uli receives the exhortation to be obedient and have faith in Johannes. However, Uli only believes later when he discovers the actual content of the letter.

Uli is now ready to promise loyalty to his master in return for which Johannes helps him out of his predicament. Just as God can only help and influence those who accept him, so Johannes exposes Uli to the virtues of faith, loyalty, and goodwill by making his help theoretically conditional, knowing full well that Uli had nowhere else to turn to for help. This is expressed in the following quotation:

'Das kommt darauf an,' sagte der Meister; 'wenn du mir diesmal glauben willst, dich nicht willst misstreu machen, aufreisen lassen, so verspreche ich, dir hinauszuhelfen. Willst du aber den anderen wiederum mehr glauben als mir, so kannst du meinethalb; siehe dann, wie es dir geht! Ich habe es dir im voraus gesagt, wie das Ding auslaufen werde; aber du hattest zu den anderen mehr Glauben als zu mir.⁵⁷

Johannes sets up a situation in which Uli has to make a total commitment. This he does and Johannes functions as an intermediary for Uli, who finally acknowledges his error and increases his faith in his master. The level of faith which Uli reaches is attained through Johannes' patience and goodwill. He is the catalyst who, with the use of the secondary virtues leads Uli to the primary virtues.

⁵⁷Ibid., 4:68.

Uli now betters himself progressively. He utilizes the secondary virtues, especially frugality, to his benefit. He begins to read, specifically the Bible and the calendar, the two literary staples of the Emmentaler farmer. Johannes allows Uli to visit the Stube, the sanctuary of the farmhouse, and becomes more and more a father figure, not only spiritually, but also temporally. He teaches him about agriculture and everything attendant to it and gives Uli increasingly more responsibility. Uli does not feel taken advantage of but perceives it as an apprenticeship and recognizes elements of his own character development.

Through Uli's now virtuous living, he is continually brought closer to God by a Christian master. Uli's change also has its effect on the other servants. They all start to have an "appetite" for the word of God and like to hear the sermons. Bible study becomes an integral part of their activities, including discussions at table, perhaps following Luther's model. If someone feels the urge to mock, he is quickly reprimanded by the others.

Sie wurden dabei sich immer mehr bewusst, dass es doch etwas Hohes und Bedeutendes sei, ein Christ zu sein, und dass ein christlicher Knecht doch viel besser daran sei als ein heidnischer König, der nicht recht wisse, warum er auf der Welt sei, während der christliche Knecht doch wisse, dass er da sei, um ein Kind Gottes zu werden und das Himmelreich erblich zu erwerben.⁵⁸

In this way Gotthelf now describes not just Uli, but all of Johannes' servants on whom Uli now has a positive effect. Uli, through his virtuous behavior, now becomes a Christian and steps on the path toward salvation.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 4:81.

Uli becomes loyal, thankful, thrifty, industrious, and humble, all secondary virtues. Everything goes well with Uli and, "Er hätte nie geglaubt, dass das Geld so darhalten könne;..."⁵⁹ Uli's humility and gratitude is also evident in his change of attitude toward his salary. Whereas before he complained about not making enough money, now it seems to him he doesn't earn what he gets. "Uli meinte, der Meister hätte ihm schon zuviel gegeben, und alles dürfte er nicht nehmen, er hätte es nicht verdient."⁶⁰ Uli has acquired many secondary virtues which are of great benefit to his progress. As he practices them he gains an immediate reward which reenforces his faith that he has placed in their efficacy.

Yet Uli still makes mistakes. His trust in his master is not yet complete. He wants to increase his monetary worth and lends out his money against the wise counsel of Johannes. He is impatient and seeks to become rich immediately now that he has experienced some success. Naturally, he doesn't see any of his loaned money again, excepting a small portion which his master collects for him after Uli pleads with him to do so. Uli now makes his acquaintance with the secondary virtue of patience. He has seen some of the fruits of his labor and is now impatient, anxious to get on in life. Still having to learn the proper balance, Johannes counsels him. "...diese Ungeduld ists, was so viele Menschen um Hab und Gut bringt...Warte nur einige Jahre, lege immer zu, so wirst du sehen, zu welchem Kapital du kommen wirst."⁶¹ The secondary

⁵⁹Ibid., 4:85.

⁶⁰Ibid., 4:85.

⁶¹Ibid., 4:91.

virtues in and of themselves, if carried to their extreme, can turn negative. To keep thrift from becoming avarice and greediness, patience is required as a balancing factor. Gotthelf's realism again comes through in the recognition that it will take years for Uli to achieve his goal. This is not one of those Horatio Alger stories in which an unrealistically good protagonist fights against the odds and "chance, or let us say Providence, brought him a liberal patroness."⁶² Nor is there any of Alger's melodrama, overnight rags to riches, superficial characters or statements such as: "He looks honest."⁶³ Gotthelf does not write unrealistically moralising stories such as Alger will be doing later in America. He doesn't give the reader any false notions of getting rich quickly. It is a long, arduous process during which many virtues have to be acquired. That in and of itself also attests to the spiritual level of the novel. It is not the end of getting rich that is the focus of Uli; it is the process through which Uli is transformed that makes the novel what it is; namely, a pedagogical effort on the part of Gotthelf.

Further evidence of a link between the worldly, i.e. temporal, and the spiritual is found after Uli has a negative experience in lending out his money. In response to Johannes' advice, Gotthelf narrates: "Und Uli tat so. Er blieb sparsam, ward immer anschl giger und emsiger und wuchs zugleich an Weisheit und Verstand und an Gnade

⁶² Horatio Alger Jr., The Train Boy (Leyden: Aeonian Press, Inc., 1975), 67.

⁶³ Ibid., 97.

bei Gott und den Menschen."⁶⁴ This is an obvious reference to a Bible passage. These very words were used in describing Christ.⁶⁵ It becomes evident that Gotthelf did not use these words by chance. They are written with a definite intention. Based upon the transformation we have seen so far, it is safe to propose that Uli is here portrayed as a true follower of Christ. The same words that were written to describe Christ in his youth is now written to describe Uli in his spiritual youth, underscoring Uli's growing relationship to a Christian God.

What we are seeing is the inner spiritual development of Uli. But how does one measure spirituality? By the amount of prayers one says? By the amount of alms given? What is evidence of spirituality? How can one teach someone as tied to the earth as an Emmentaler farmer how to gain spirituality? It cannot be done by abstract ideas. It cannot be done by metaphor or allegory, not by a negation of the concrete world of the farmer. His dependency on the God of nature necessarily ties his temporal world to his spirituality. For Gotthelf it is the virtuous life which shows spirituality. Because secondary virtues are seen as positive, their product is also positive. This product is both physical well-being and a growth in spirituality. In fact, if the former and the latter come through the same application of the same virtues, they are necessarily dependent on each other. The material progress becomes a manifestation of the inner spiritual progress. Consequently, material progress becomes the measuring tool of spiritual progress.

⁶⁴ Gotthelf, Sämtliche Werke, 4:91-2.

⁶⁵ Luke ii. 52.

Gotthelf now describes Uli as a man whose outward appearance reflects this inner change. It is now that Uli stands erect like a real human being, writes Gotthelf. He further comments that Uli is often mistaken for a farmer's son and not perceived as a servant. This is not due simply to the clothes and the silver watchchain he is wearing but also his demeanor and his civil behavior. Uli's perspective changes as he gains possessions. He begins to feel a peaceful security which comes from higher self-esteem and a growth toward financial independence. Gotthelf again shows us the balance and, in fact, the connection between the material and the spiritual in the following description. He uses Uli as a model for all.

Es kömmt so eine Art ruhige Sicherheit, die bei vielen in dummen Stolz ausartet, über den Menschen, wenn er angehängt hat an der Welt, das heisst, wenn er Früchte seiner Arbeit, Ertrag seiner Kräfte vorgespart, Vorrat gewonnen hat auf künftige Jahre...und in dem Masse, als er wirklich zufrieden in seinem Inwendigen wird, wird er auch zufrieden mit seinen Meisterleuten. Und je mehr er zu etwas kömmt, umsomehr erkennt er den Wert der Dinge, huset (spart) nicht nur für sich, sondern es reut ihn überhaupt, etwas zu vergeuden, er huset also auch den Meisterleuten, um so zufriedener werden diese auch mit ihm. Es stellt sich sein Name fest: er ist ein hauslicher (sparsamer), arbeitsamer Bursche.⁶⁶

It is made very clear here that the peace and contentment that makes the fertile soil of spirituality is derived from the secondary virtues, in this case thrift and industriousness. These two, as well as other secondary virtues, are now comprehended by Uli. Gotthelf makes sure the reader does not miss this point. He in essence tells the reader how Uli has achieved his degree of success with an expectation that the reader will take this example to heart and perhaps apply it in his or her own life.

⁶⁶ Gotthelf, Sämtliche Werke, 4:92-3.

Uli has now certainly increased in faith but is still lacking in charity, which is considered the supreme primary virtue. So that Uli can learn this virtue of pure love, the novel presents a seemingly worldly condition. Uli thinks about marriage. Two of Johannes' maids would like to have him, since he is now a respected person. The one, Stini, is described as ugly but industrious and thrifty. She would have loved to have a husband but could only show her love through rough behavior and criticism. The other one, Ursi, was frivolous in both her behavior and appearance. She was constantly primping, didn't like to work or practice thrift.

These two women recognize each other as rivals in their quest for Uli and are constantly at odds with one another. The whole matter becomes ludicrous as both girls vie for Uli's favors and attention. They are literally at war with one another, continuously undermining each other's efforts. This hampers the work as well as the cooperative spirit on the farm. The whole matter is finally finished when the two, dripping with liquid manure, are wrestling in the dirt. This farcical situation brings Uli to the realization that neither one of them would be desirable as a wife and could not bring him happiness.

Stini portrays the negative aspect of the secondary virtues. She carries them to extremes without any relation to the primary virtues, especially in this case the virtue of love. "Er werde noch anders müssen husen lernen, sagte Stini."⁶⁷ For Stini thrift is an end in itself and there is no trace of a real feeling of love toward

⁶⁷Ibid., 4:94.

Uli. Here Gotthelf shows that the secondary virtues in and of themselves cannot bring happiness nor consequent salvation, yet they are still essential.

Ürsi likewise possesses no real sense of value for the secondary virtues and therefore only a warped idea of love, a fanciful, unrealistic notion of what love really is. Neither she, nor Stini really understand what brings true happiness: namely, the use of the secondary virtues to attain the primary virtues and gain salvation. Through the embarrassment these two women caused themselves and Uli, he learned there was more to choosing a wife than he had thought and again he has to have patience. Love cannot be forced nor should it be superficial.

With Johannes' help Uli receives a more profitable position as foreman on a farm by the name of Glungge. This, as the name suggests, is a very chaotic place. Uli, after ten years with Johannes, now has a new master, Joggeli, a cousin of Johannes. This Joggeli is the antithesis of a Christian master and trusts no one. Through various devices he constantly tries covertly to tempt Uli into acts of disloyalty, but he fails. He doesn't support Uli, even though the other servants cheat Joggeli out of goods and time. Several times Uli considers quitting but ends up bringing order to the Glungge. Above all, he remains totally loyal to his new master, in spite of that man's treacherous behavior.

Two of Joggeli's servants are let go after Uli gives an ultimatum: either he goes or they. These two were lazy, rebellious, and disloyal. Through these characters Gotthelf shows us once again that without

secondary virtues there is no reward. After their dismissal, they wait around the area, believing that everything would fall apart without them on the farm. However, no one comes to ask them back. "Der alte Karrer und der Melcher wanderten endlich in die Weite hoffnungslos, nachdem sie in der Nähe umsonst Platz gesucht."⁶⁸ Without the secondary virtues they are also without the primary virtue of hope. The positions promised them by others who incited them against Uli never materialize. Gotthelf makes it quite obvious here that what these two had was not faith but a false belief. What then constitutes the difference between true Christian faith and a false belief for Gotthelf? True faith is based on virtuous behavior. Consequently, the servants' belief was false since it was not based on virtuous behavior. Their belief in others was totally misplaced. Just as Uli, who based his faith on the positive outcomes of virtuous behavior, had realized positive results therefrom, so, on the other hand, had the Karrer and Melcher realized negative results from their placing their less than Christian faith in unvirtuous behavior. No farmer wants to hire people who fall so readily into disloyalty and rebellion. There is no future for them in this region. In short, they are Uli's antithesis, they do not value or practice any secondary virtues, consequently the primary virtues are lost to them, and certainly any positive relationship with God and salvation is out of the question.

Uli also has his faults still, especially when material progress is a consideration. He is preoccupied with the possibility of marrying

⁶⁸Ibid., 4:199.

Joggeli's daughter and thereby inheriting the farm. The daughter is a foolish, self-centered, clumsy, and lazy girl. And yet the money lures Uli toward her. This develops for some time and it appears that Uli will achieve his goal. However, Elisi, the daughter, only uses Uli to satisfy her vanity until someone else, who in Elisi's eyes is Uli's better, comes along and takes advantage of that selfsame vanity for his own benefit. This is a scheming cotton merchant who wants to abuse the farm to enrich his coffers. Elisi's subsequent marriage to this fellow ruins Uli's dream of acquisition of the farm.

This situation could very easily be interpreted as ironic since Uli gets the farm in the end anyway. Yet Gotthelf's message is again that the material gain in and of itself does not lead to happiness. Had Uli received the farm by way of a marriage to Elisi, he would have acquired it by default. His Heiligungsprozess, consequently, would have been interrupted, the role of the secondary virtues diminished, and he would not have been led to experience the primary virtue of love. True happiness and salvation would not have been accessible to him.

It is finally through Vreneli, the maid, that Uli finds love. She is Uli's female counterpart as far as the functions and needs of the farm are concerned. She manages the household while Uli manages the livestock and the crops. Gotthelf describes Vreneli almost totally in a context of secondary virtues:

Vreneli war von den Leuten, die, sie müßen anrühren, was sie wollen, immer ein sauber und nett Aussehen haben,...Mit Fragen und Verweisen wurde keine Zeit verloren. Es schien als ob dem Mädchen, sobald es aufstehe, das ganze Tagewerk klar und geordnet, wie eins nach dem andern komme, vor Augen stehe, so dass es nie

vergebene Gänge gab, man nie hörte: "Ih ha nit gsinnert, ih ha nit denkt, ih ha nit gmeint."⁶⁹

Gotthelf then explains how Uli and Vreneli set an environment of total cooperation. There is a unity in spirit and purpose, as a result of which everything prospers, making the suspicious Joggeli extremely uncomfortable.

Vreneli embodies several secondary virtues: cleanliness, unity, order, and implicitly loyalty and patience, the latter especially toward Joggeli. In this sense she is the transformed Uli's mirror image. It should be no surprise when these two confess their love toward each other. The fact that their behavior conforms to the secondary virtues brings them to the happy condition of love. Modesty, devoutness, and industriousness help them achieve this end.

Of those three virtues last mentioned, much has already been written concerning Uli and modesty. His transition has been seen. Vreneli never had to undergo such a change; she is and was the epitome of this virtue. Nor is it necessary to show her changing in this respect. The story is, after all, about Uli's development. Gotthelf, however, does not show us a sentimentally romantic context in which she displays a stereotypical feminine modesty. Instead, he exposes a self-assured individuality which comes from making the virtuous lifestyle one's own. This is not to be confused with self-righteousness, but is an assertive frame of mind, based on solid convictions of moral right and wrong. An example is when Elisi's husband makes sexual advances toward Vreneli who becomes indignant and grabs a piece

⁶⁹Ibid., 4:262.

of wood to beat him with!

Wie eine glühende Siegesgöttin stund es da mit dem Scheit in der Hand oder wie ein Engel mit flammendem Schwerte vor dem Paradies der Unschuld und rief dem fliehenden, blutenden Baumwollenhändler nach: "Weisst du jetzt, wie ein Bernermeitschi akkordiert, und mit was es den Akkord unterschreibt, du keibelige Uflat!"⁷⁰

It is clear what she stands for, and her righteous indignation and subsequent treatment of the merchant is greeted with laughter from the entire household. After he calls her a liar when she exposes his intentions, she throws the piece of wood at him, which knocks out three of his teeth. The laughter that follows this act also becomes evidence that a foiled dishonorable act leaves one looking the fool.

Gotthelf's talent for comic relief, in an otherwise serious situation, makes the moral lesson he offers more palatable. There remains no doubt that the secondary virtue of modesty and moral purity in general are not to be taken lightly. It is clear that a love relationship between man and woman is for Gotthelf much more than the mere physical aspect or even the physical-emotional aspects of many writers. For true love to develop, it has to be based on secondary virtues. That is not to say that there is no room for physical attraction. But if we define the erotic as the purely sexual desires, then erotic nuances between Uli and Vreneli do not exist. In contrast to Uli's supposed love toward Elisi, the love toward Vreneli is the true, loyal love, without any false notions, not hampered by any false motives.

Uli now has progressed beyond his perception of the secondary virtues as an end in themselves, that they, without being coupled to

⁷⁰Ibid., 4;351.

the primary virtues, can bring happiness. Uli declares his love first. But Vreneli, even though she loves Uli, fears that if Uli disappoints her in her expectations of what a marriage should be, she will have lost any further chance for a loving relationship in this life.

Vreneli, being a model of virtue, brings forth Gotthelf's idea that marriage is an unequivocally life-long commitment. Being orphaned, and having Joggeli to constantly remind her of her "place", she feels she now has only one chance for a true love relationship. If she marries and becomes unhappy, there is no way out. For that reason she tries to suppress her feelings. Uli implores, saying that if Vreneli will refuse him, he will ask nothing more of life and he will leave, as far away as possible, and no one is to know whereto. With watery eyes he stands in front of Vreneli whose eyes also dampen. The scene is described as follows:

Da sah Vreneli zu ihm auf, da Augen wurden ihm feucht; aber um den Mund zuckte noch der Spott und der Trotz, die niedergehaltene Liebe brach auf und begann durch die Augen ihre leuchtenden Strahlen zu werfen, während das jungfräuliche Widerstreben die Lippen aufwarf als Schanze gegen das Ergeben an die männliche Zudringlichkeit...Allein des Mädchens Kraft hielt nicht aus. Das Mädchen fiel an Ulis treue Brust und brach in lautes, fast krampfhaftes Weinen aus.⁷¹

Vreneli explains that while she was a child no one loved her and she was always in the way. She couldn't recall how many lonely tears were shed. She longed for someone to love wholeheartedly, someone with whom she could share both joy and sorrow. Never having found such a friend, she would never consider marriage, unless it was the type of relationship where the husband would remain loyal in life and death.

⁷¹Ibid., 4:335.

She has not yet found someone to inspire that kind of faith. She says:

Uli sei ihm lieb, sei ihm schon lange lieb, mehr als es sagen sollte; aber diesen Glauben zu ihm habe es noch nicht finden können. Und wenn es diesmal getäuscht würde, wenn Uli nicht die rechte Liebe, die rechte Treue für ihns hätte, dann wäre ja sein letztes Hoffen dahin, dann würde es keine mehr finden, dann müsste es unglücklich sterben.⁷²

The concept of love is here based on the secondary virtue of loyalty. In fact, Gotthelf, in the above sentence, seems to almost make them synonymous. One without the other is inconceivable for a state of happiness. Only through a loyal love does one find happiness. This is, after all, the title of the novel - Wie Uli der Knecht glücklich wird. Such a love also brings unity with God.

Vreneli sees the hand of God in her life. The connection between her virtuous life and receiving love is made without equivocation. Speaking of God, Gotthelf puts the following into Vreneli's thoughts: "Hatte er den Ratschluss wohl gefasst, weil es getreu geblieben bis dahin und von der Sünde sich unbefleckt zu erhalten gesucht, nun auch seines Herzens Sehnen zu stillen, ihm eine treue Brust zu geben, ..." ⁷³

Furthermore, she also asks in her own mind if it wasn't God who offered her Uli and the adjectives treu and ehrlich appear again in relation to Uli. She sees God's will in everything that has happened so far: that Elisi married someone else, that Uli remained on the farm despite Joggeli and his antics. All these questions allowed her mind to wander in a daydream toward an affirmative answer.

An interesting aspect of this affirmation is that the thought

⁷²Ibid., 4:336.

⁷³Ibid., 4:338.

process that Vreneli undergoes begins when she questions, "warum doch wohl der Vater, der die Liebe heisse, so arme Kinder leben lasse, die niemand hätten auf der Welt..."⁷⁴ Once more the reader is reminded that both Uli and Vreneli are orphans. They had no one to love them in their early childhood. The question which Gotthelf raises is vital to an interpretation of the Christian God. It is a part of the question of theodicy and is thought about by anyone who scrutinizes Christian theology. The significance here is that Gotthelf quickly turns Vreneli's thoughts to the positive possibilities, reenforcing faith and hope in the possibility of love as a result of loyal, virtuous life. This love then becomes an affirmation of God's pleasure with Uli and Vreneli. This is substantiated by the calm and peace which attend Vreneli after she imagines herself married to Uli and in charge of a large household. Gotthelf then again, using one of his realistic literary devices, brings Vreneli back to reality after she has her "vision".

Es wusste nicht mehr, dass es im Wägelchen fuhr es war ihm so leicht, so wohl ums Herz, als ob es bereits atme in jener Welt, wo keine Sorge, kein Leid mehr ist; da rollte das Wägelchen über einen Stein.⁷⁵

Gotthelf shows us Vreneli's innocence, her unity with God. He also shows us that virtuousness is rewarded by God because it leads one to God. To further prove the point of my thesis that Uli's love toward Vreneli is a prototype for a Christian love and not just the sensual eros which unites most young couples in a relationship, I rely on the

⁷⁴Ibid., 4:337-8.

⁷⁵Ibid., 4:339.

following quote of Gotthelf's narrative interjection (one of many such interjections he uses throughout his work):

Wenn jemand eine liebe Seele gefunden und an sich gebunden nicht nur für diese Zeit, sondern auch für die Ewigkeit, soll es ihn dann nicht hin zu dieser Seele ziehen mit Himmelskraft, soll es ihn nicht in ihre Augen, die Tore der Seele, hineinziehen, um das Gefühl lebendig zu erhalten, eins mit einer Seele zu sein in Zeit und Ewigkeit? Dieses Einswerden mit einer Seele von ganzem Herzen, ganzem Gemüte und allen Kräften, in welcher Vereinigung alle Ichsucht untergeht, ist das nicht auch ein Vorläufer des Einswerden mit Gott, welchem ebenfalls unsere Selbstsucht zum Opfer fallen muss?⁷⁶

Indisputably is it written, black on white, that such a Christian matrimonial love will lead to God. The question is obviously rhetorical. This true and right love relationship allows both individuals to practice faith, hope, and charity, supported by all the secondary virtues. They do not hinder each other in the way toward their salvation; they help wherever possible, are conscious of each other's goals, and have similar intentions, i.e. purposes, in life. Such a becoming of one, such a unity, creates for them Heaven on Earth.

Gotthelf does not linger in an idealistic never-neverland. He wants to actualize, to realize the Christian ideals. One only has to remember the stone over which the cart rolls. Gotthelf holds the ideal in front of our eyes but is not so naive as to think it will become reality without effort, just as he is not willing to relegate them to a pessimistic notion of the unattainable and therefore impractical, or something for an after-life. Many people are of the same opinion as Northrop Frye when he says, "Many of Jesus' exhortations are evocations of a world very different from the one we live in, so that we may find

⁷⁶Ibid., 4:342.

them unpractical or exaggerated as guides to practice."⁷⁷ Frye then explains in the very next sentence that it is the vision of an "innocent world" that is to be the guide to practice. Gotthelf's concern, however, is for the here and now. He presents us with practical applications. This, in and of itself, could very well have caused a good portion of the difference in point of view between himself and his pietistic critics.

Uli receives the Glungge as tenure and becomes a tenant farmer. Even the suspicious Joggeli knows no one better to lend his farm to. Once again the secondary virtues are credited with Uli's reception of the farm. "So rückte in banger Stimmung die Zeit heran, wo Uli das Leben Übernehmen sollte, das ihm das Zutrauen um seiner Anständigkeit und Treue willen Übertrug."⁷⁸ This last sentence bears out the fact that people have placed their trust, i.e. faith in Uli because of his skillfulness and loyalty. Virtuous behavior brings with it a new life, a definite break with the past. This represents a spiritual breakthrough symbolized by his receiving the farm as a manifestation of the significance of this step.

In addition to those already mentioned, there are still numerous passages which point toward a unification with God through the secondary and primary virtues. It will be sufficient, however, if we focus attention on a few essential ones which summarize the thesis.

The minister speaks with Uli and Vreneli after they are married.

⁷⁷Northrop Frye, The Great Code: The Bible and Literature (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1982), 219.

⁷⁸Gotthelf, Sämtliche Werke, 4:357.

In the following excerpt lies some proof to the formula: secondary virtues lead to primary virtues, which lead to God. In this case, it is thrift which leads to hope, which leads to godliness. Not the fact that thrift has allowed Uli to save money in and of itself is important, but the qualities coupled with thrift that allowed him to gain the trust of others is of great significance. The emphasis is still on Uli's growth, his progress toward salvation.

"Ich habe gehört," sagte derselbe, "du seiest zweig, bekommst ein gutes Lehen, eine gute Frau und habest schön Geld erspart. Das tut mir gar wohl, wenn ich eine Ehe einsegnen kann, von der ich hoffe, dass sie in dem Herren bleibt. Dass du etwas erspart, ist nicht die Hauptsache; aber du hättest es nicht, und man hätte dir nicht so viel anvertraut, wenn du nicht brav und fromm wärest, und das ist, was mich eigentlich recht freut. Das Weltliche und das rechte Geistliche sind viel näher beieinander, als die meisten Leute glauben. Sie meinen, um recht wohl zu sein auf der Welt, müsse man das Christentum an den Nagel hängen; und das ist gerade das Gegenteil:..."⁷⁹

It is, according to Gotthelf, after all the true Christian who becomes happy, the one who acquires the necessary Christian virtues, whose well-being and salvation can be achieved simultaneously. Both are based on the same principles, the same necessary qualities acquired by practicing the virtues.

To be glücklich has nothing to do with Glück haben. For Gotthelf all rewards are blessings from God and have to be recognized as such before true happiness is attainable. There is no allowance for a germanic fatum or a secular "stroke of luck". Nor is it the simplistic and unrealistically portrayed, infallibly righteous actions of the protagonist, set off against a villainous antagonist, such as in the works of the later American writer, Horatio Alger. Gotthelf shows us

⁷⁹Ibid., 4:375-6.

people with definite faults, he shows life as a struggle in which each individual has to exert his or her own energies and yet, having done so, recognizes God's hand in his or her life. There is no room for "Lady Luck". The minister, in talking to Uli says:

Aber eben das ist das Unglück, dass die Leute durch das Gfell glücklich werden wollen und nicht durch frommes Leben, bei dem der Segen Gottes ist. Da ist's nun ganz recht, dass die, welche nur auf das Gfell warten, vom Gfell betrogen werden, bis sie wieder zur Erkenntnis kommen, dass am Gfell nichts, aber an Gottes Segen alles gelegen sei.⁸⁰

For Gotthelf it is a world that is put in order by God, there are no coincidences, everything has a purpose. This means there has to be a reason for Uli's success, it was no arbitrary occurrence. From the above quote the idea can be deduced that devoutness becomes the circumference of the circle of secondary virtues. Even though loyalty is the virtue focused on more than any other, and, according to the author, is the dominant theme, there seems to be no other single dominant virtue. They are all important and have a significant role in Uli's progress, all being inextricably connected one with another.

The minister admonishes the bride and the groom to walk on the path of love, gentleness, and patience, "denn glaubt es mir doch, das rechte weltliche Glück und das himmlische Glück werden akkurat auf dem gleichen Wege gefunden."⁸¹ Again the virtues bring both happiness in this life and salvation in the next. They lead one to God. Being led to God through the virtues, especially having once attained the primary virtues, is what brings happiness.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 4:376. The word Gfell means the same as blindes Glück.

⁸¹ Ibid., 4:4:381.

To further substantiate the earlier supposition that this is a Christian love, a charity in its purest form that is to be typified by the union between Uli and Vreneli, the minister addresses the virtue of love. "Und wie die Liebe den Heiland gesandt, Liebe ihn ans Kreuz gebracht, so muss auch bei euch die Liebe tätig sein; sie ist die Kraft, die über alle Kräfte geht, heilet und bessert."⁸² How is love active? Through practice of the secondary virtues. Through them does one arrive in the realm of love and thereby in the Kingdom of Heaven. This blessed state of happiness, this Heaven on Earth, was for Gotthelf something attainable, something to be worked for.

The last page of this novel is the culmination of all the points made up to now. Two orphans, one a seemingly hopeless, incorrigible servant, over years of struggle and growth through acquisition of virtues, have found true love and a unity in God. This, in turn, leads them towards a life of happiness. "...und es stunden wiederum die Sterne am Himmel, als nach recht innigem Abschied, wie er selten von Nichtverwandten genommen wird, der mutige Kohli ein glückliches Paar davonführte - dem Himmel zu."⁸³ This is no romantic "all is well that ends well". There are still many problems and struggles that follow in the second part of the Uli novels. It is an affirmation that Uli and Vreneli are on the right path, although not yet there. It is not a falling in love and getting married and living happily ever after of which fairy tales are composed. We have witnessed the outward

⁸²Ibid., 4:381.

⁸³Ibid., 4:387.

manifestations of a sanctification process. The novel is a guidepost for all those who want to attain true happiness, a happiness on a solid Christian foundation.

This book was after all intended as a Lektür which the final observations of Gotthelf attest to.

Ja, lieber Leser, Vreneli und Uli sind im Himmel, das heisst, sie leben in ungetrübter Liebe, mit vier Knaben, zwei Mädchen von Gott gesegnet; sie leben im wachsenden Wohlstande, denn der Segen Gottes ist ihr Gfell, ihr Name hat guten Klang im Lande; weit umher stehn sie hoch angeschrieben, denn ihr Trachten geht hoch, geht darauf, dass ihr Name im Himmel angeschrieben stehe!
 Merke dir das, lieber Leser!⁸⁴

CHAPTER III

COMMENTARY

GENRE AND AESTHETICS

In order to try to understand cause and effect, influences, and ideas, the science of literary criticism has developed certain labels to identify similarities within certain creative epochs. The label within which Gotthelf falls is the Biedermeier. The minds of those who are schooled in the literary movements will, at the mention of this word, bring forth some definite images, descriptive of this period. Understanding Gotthelf means, however, to suspend those notions. His style, his motivation, and his ideas do not lend themselves easily to classification. Often a critic classifies him, only to find that the arguments and assumptions have to be revised or finds someone else revising them.

What, in fact, can be said about Gotthelf's genre and more specifically how this genre relates to Uli?

To begin with, it would be helpful to define him as an epic writer. Muschg places him nebulously in the "...nachklassischen und vorbürgerlichen Jahrzehnten des vergangenen Jahrhunderts..."⁸⁵ and calls him "...den grössten Vertreter des polemischen Zeitromans..."⁸⁶ He

⁸⁵ Muschg, Geheimnisse, Vorwort, VII.

⁸⁶ Ibid., VII.

was not a poet, although he would like to have been one. The reason for this is his topics, his motives in writing, the people he wrote about, and the language he used. Exploring this further, Northrop Frye, explaining ideas of Vico, writes:

Each age produces its own kind of language, giving us three types of verbal expression that Vico calls, respectively, the poetic, the heroic or noble, and the vulgar, and which I shall call the hieroglyphic, the hieratic, and the demotic. These three terms refer primarily to three modes of writing,... The hieroglyphic phase, for Vico, is a "poetic" use of language; the hieratic phase is mainly allegorical; and the demotic phase is descriptive.⁸⁷

The word *demos* refers to the common people. The common people of the Emmental were involved in farming. Since they are the subjects of and material for Gotthelf, his writing had to necessarily be demotic, i.e. descriptive and therefore epic. Even though there has been experimentation with "poetry of fact", can we imagine an allegory or poem in descriptive language? Instead of the Bauernroman: Wie Uli der Knecht glücklich wird we would have an Ode an die Treue. This also, of course, does not satisfy Gotthelf's intentions in writing. This is why he failed at poetry. He wrote to teach and had to use descriptive, demotic language. If he had tried to force his purposeful, descriptive language into allegorical or poetic form, it would have had a satirical effect and would leave the reader pedagogically unaffected. This is especially the case in Uli where the virtues are central and the work being intended as a lesson.

Having defined Gotthelf as an epic writer, we now have the basis

⁸⁷Northrop Frye, The Great Code, 5.

for looking at what kind of epic writer he was. Adolf Bartels sees him as the successor of Auerbach and the latter's Dorfgeschichten, yet having transcended him aesthetically and in his talent for portraying the life of the people.⁸⁸ The term Dorfgeschichten, stemming from Auerbach's work by that name, was soon generalized into a genre into the parameters of which some wanted to confine Gotthelf. He, to the contrary, objected to being placed into this new genre concept. Werner Hahl tells us:

Vor allem der Titel Dorfgeschichten wurde bald zu einem Gattungsbegriff verallgemeinert... 1850 schlug ihm sein Berliner Verleger Julius Springer vor, eine Reihe von Erzählungen unter dem Titel "Schweizerische Dorfgeschichten" zu veröffentlichen - was Gotthelfs Autorstolz allerdings nicht zuließ.⁸⁹

Gotthelf was no epigone. A much better description of Gotthelf's Uli is a Bauernroman, as also described by Hahl.⁹⁰ It definitely falls into the category of a novel and topically it deals with farming life. But we know it deals with more than just farming. Here again we see the difficulty in classifying Gotthelf's work. What he intended as a lesson of virtuous living evolved into a novel about such living. It is not overly didactic, however, but full of vitality and joie de vivre. It does not portray a somewhat stale and bourgeois world like the later Gustav Freytag in Soll und Haben, even though dealing with similar

⁸⁸ Adolf Bartels, Jeremias Gotthelfs ausgewählte Werke in zehn Bänden (Leipzig: Max Hesses Verlag, 1908), 1:68.

⁸⁹ Werner Hahl, "Gesellschaftlicher Konservatismus und literarischer Realismus," in Realismus und Gründerzeit: Manifeste und Dokumente zur deutschen Literatur 1848 - 1880 (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1976), 1:51.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 1:48.

virtues.⁹¹

The spiritual level of Uli is not even hinted at by the above term and yet we would feel very uncomfortable without a label for this work. Erziehungsroman is another that has been used. Heimatliditung could also apply in certain respects. Each one of these terms have been defined by scholars based on a comparison of different works by different authors. When one takes a work out of the context of this comparison, it becomes obvious that aspects of all these definitions can be found, but none is totally adequate for that particular work. It is virtually impossible to deal with the complexity of a particular work, when we involve the notions of a simplified generality. Consequently, to describe Uli as belonging strictly to any one of the mentioned or unmentioned terms confuses us and hinders us from coming to terms with Uli. Again we must be cautious about preconceptions and formulated notions which, as helpful as they are when dealing with types, may only confuse and befuddle when dealing with particulars.

It should not be our intention to come up with a new and independent genre for Gotthelf. That would only mean adding to the already existent confusion. It is important, however, to consider the factors that make up Uli. In order to do this, we have to base our communication on jargon which is not always so clearly defined that nuances of differences won't appear which cause a

⁹¹ Virtues such as order, loyalty, honesty, and attention to duty are valued in this work. Gustav Freytag, Soll und Haben, 85th ed. Leipzig: Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1916), 1:193, 200, 264.

variation in the understanding of different individuals. This is best exemplified by two opposing viewpoints in regarding Gotthelf as a realist. Schmidt claims he is "der freieste Humorist, den unsere neue Dichtung kennt," and the critic of realism, Gottschall, says, "der Uli sei eine in Romanform gebrachte Dienstbotenordnung."⁹² As Hahl says on that same page, "Die Wahrheit liegt in der Mitte."⁹³ The point is that to say Gotthelf was a realist may mean different things to different people. Therefore, we cannot understand Uli without looking at the essence of the writer as well as the product.

It is the essence of the writer which gives the reason for Uli's existence. To come to terms with any part of a genre, we have to understand the author's purpose for writing Uli. This purpose has already been introduced in the second chapter, as quoted from the foreword to Uli der Pächter. We need to understand that Gotthelf was a driven man. He at one point said, "Ich nahm mein Herz in beide Hände und schmiss es aufs Papier."⁹⁴ He wrote very purposefully and in doing so, drew on his life's experiences. He was never concerned with literature exclusively as an artform but as a medium for expressing his ideas, his beliefs and also his emotionality. It was a safety valve for himself as an individual. He said, "Begreife nur, dass ein wildes Leben in mir wogte, von dem niemand Ahnung hatte, ...dieses Leben musste sich entweder aufzehren oder losbrechen auf irgendeine Weise;

⁹² Hahl, Realismus und Gründerzeit, 57.

⁹³ Ibid., 57.

⁹⁴ Gerhard Fricke and Volker Klotz, Geschichte der deutschen Literatur, 15th ed. (Lübeck and Hamburg: Matthiesen Verlag, 1971), 272.

es tat es in der Schrift."⁹⁵ People have asked how a minister can write such "worldly" things. The answer is that although he didn't live them, he understood them at an emotional, psychological, and spiritual level. It is the immersion of the author's soul in the spirit of the people he was writing about which led him to be able to write so realistically and with such depth and insight. Fricke/Klotz write:

Seit Grimmelshausen, dessen dualistischer Gebrochenheit jedoch die urwüchsige Lebenskraft und Lebensfülle Gotthelfs weit überlegen ist, gab es und gibt es nichts Vergleichbares für die oft unbarmherzige Treue und Wahrheit, mit der die Wirklichkeit des Menschen von der Oberfläche bis in die Tiefe erfasst wird. Hier, wenn irgendwo in der Dichtung, ist der Bauer und in ihm der Mensch, wie er war und wie er ist, Gestalt geworden.⁹⁶

It is no wonder then that this knowledge of the human soul comes through in his writing. Given the above information, it is also understandable how in some critics' minds Gotthelf was perceived as a naturalist.

Gotthelf was no naturalist as such, although there were naturalistic aspects to his writing. He wrote Uli pedagogically-sociologically motivated, portraying a Christian work ethic surrounded by virtues leading people on a path toward sanctification. Had he done this purely within the confines of romanticism, as that movement is generally defined, an idyllic image would have evolved which would make the work mainly hieratic, create an insurmountable distance between the intended readership and the work, and at last make the work

⁹⁵Ibid., 272.

⁹⁶Ibid., 272.

unbelievable and pedagogically ineffective. He had to reach into the world of the farmer, including the dung, both the literal and metaphorical sense of that word, if he didn't want to alienate himself from those he wanted to teach. That the work had its initial great success in Germany, i.e. Prussia, was a result of and not an intention of the work. We can feel very comfortable with Werner Günther's perception of the degree of realism and naturalism which we allow to be applied to Gotthelf in general and Uli in specific.

"Realismus" und "Naturalismus" sind im Grunde mehr ein soziales und ethisches als ein ästhetisches Problem; sie bezeichnen vor allem das Hinuntersteigen zu Menschheitsklassen, die man zuvor erhöhter literarischer Symbole nicht würdig glaubte, weil man das Reinmenschliche in ihnen noch nicht zu erkennen vermochte. So - aber nur so - aufgefasst, ist Gotthelf ein Realist und ein Naturalist, einer der ersten, der erste wirkliche vielleicht. Seine geniale Leistung war es, als weithin Erster im Bauern den ewigen Menschen zu sehen und aufzuzeigen, den ewigen Menschen in den Bauern hineinzusehen und einzugestalten, und dies mit einer Selbstverständlichkeit, die im Leser den Eindruck der Anschauungstreue nur vermehren konnte.⁹⁷

Gotthelf, of course, sees a definite nobility in the farmer, which does lend an allegorical aspect to Uli as a type for all mankind. The sinful Uli acquires virtues and progresses toward salvation. Gotthelf's faithful adherence to the dialect and his realistic replication of life in the Emmental keep some from seeing this allegorical aspect, specifically his pietist critics. It is, after all, the higher literary symbolism through which this work becomes more than what Gottschall denegratingly refers to as a Dienstbotenordnung in Romanform. The eternal aspects that Günther refers to are the ones we are also considering as spiritual. Something

⁹⁷ Günther, Neue Gotthelf-Studien, 72.

truly spiritual transcends time and space and is therefore also eternal. In that sense then, the virtues by which Uli is sanctified are also spiritual and eternal. This also helps us understand what Gotthelf means when he says that "das rechte weltliche Glück und das himmlische Glück" are found in the exact same way.

Gotthelf's naturalism and realism are used on a descriptive level in relation to the sociological and ethical problems, according to Günther. We can then postulate that the aesthetic element of Uli is the same as what lends the spiritual level to this work. It lets the work speak to all mankind at whatever time, i.e. it makes the work eternal. This can account for Uli making the "bestseller list" in Berlin, a cosmopolitan atmosphere far removed from the provincial Emmental. There is more than just curiosity about the life of farmers that motivates people to read this work; there is an eternal/spiritual aspect to it which gives it a place for study in the aesthetic realm of the field of Germanics.

As already mentioned though, Gotthelf himself had little or no concern about the process of aesthetics. His publishers complained about the many mechanical errors in his manuscripts that they had to correct. Not that Gotthelf didn't have the capabilities to correct such errors, but he wrote with such fervor that he produced an immensity of writings and did not concern himself with what to him was trivial. Gotthelf "wanted to throw his heart on the paper"; he wrote about what concerned him, what affected the people he dealt with as a minister.

It is exactly this realistic utilitarian tendency which someone

like Gottfried Keller, who greatly respected Gotthelf on the whole, denounced as unartistic. No one yet has acclaimed Gotthelf as a definitive master of aesthetics, nor would we pursue such a misdirected task. The aesthetic is more the process of the writing, the words used, in what order, and the consequential results thereof. Gotthelf was not so much concerned with the process as with the effect. Even Keller acknowledged that Gotthelf achieved the desired result with Uli. But he does criticize Gotthelf's process.

Fragen wir nach dem Prinzip, zu welchem hinauf und durch welches Gotthelf seinen "Uli" gerettet hat, so finden wir ein strenges, positives Christentum. Darüber ist mit ihm nicht zu rechten... Aber die Art und Weise, wie Gotthelf seinen Zweck verfolgt, ist zu verwerfen, nicht nur weil sie pfäffisch und böseartig ist, sondern auch weil sie seine Schriften verdirbt.⁹⁸

It is the aesthetic which is revered by Keller, but for Gotthelf it is in and of itself unimportant. The latter's position toward the literary artform was to use it as a means to an end. That is not to say that his perhaps didactic points cannot be made with art. They are not mutually exclusive. Although Keller feels they detract from the artistic element, there is much evidence that Gotthelf uses the artistic to achieve his points. Scholars such as Neuenschwander show there is no lack of literary highpoints.

Die glücklichste Übereinstimmung der liebenden Erregung zweier Herzen mit dem dichterisch geschauten Bild stellt jedoch Vreneli's Begegnung mit Uli am morgendlichen Brunnen dar. Die Szene ist von geradezu klassischer Schönheit und Einstimmigkeit.⁹⁹

Keller also admits, "An epischen, lyrischen und dramatischen Momenten

⁹⁸ Keller, Sämtliche Werke, 3:927.

⁹⁹ Neuenschwander, Ordnung, 130.

der schönsten Art fehlt es auch nicht."¹⁰⁰

What we are saying then is that Uli is not an aesthetic masterpiece if measured in comparison with the classical humanist demigods, Goethe and Schiller. His use of language alone would prevent such a comparison. Not just in how it is written but what is written makes Uli a literary work of great significance. From a classical humanist vantage point one would have the tendency to find much to criticize about Gotthelf's concept of art. That is perhaps the major difference between Keller, who shows greater ties to that tradition, and Gotthelf, as writers. Gotthelf's concept of art cannot be treated superficially if we stay true to the thesis, because it is his approach to writing which ultimately enables him to portray the sanctification of a human being through virtuous behavior in his own unique way.

Gotthelf saw in literary art a medium to educate the people. This medium was to serve in furthering Christianity. In a case where this purpose is missed, art becomes an Ersatzreligion and loses much of its overall worth. For Gotthelf's active, virtuous Christianity, much of the literary art was too alienated from reality and did not really serve the human interest since it added nothing essential on the path toward sanctification. Therefrom follows Keller's critique. The two authors were diametrically opposite in their perception of the role and function of art. Keller revered literary art as a human accomplishment while Gotthelf viewed it,

¹⁰⁰ Keller, Sämtliche Werke, 3:935.

especially in Uli, as an instrument in educating people toward the sanctification process. It was an extra arm, so to speak, of his ministry. Keller recognizes this and therefore calls Gotthelf "pfäffisch", looking at Gotthelf's work purely from the perspective of the conventional Kunstbegriffe of literary criticism. For the aforementioned reason Gotthelf's works were created, according to Muschg, "...ausserhalb aller literarischen Kunstbegriffe, aller konsequenten artistischen Überlegung."¹⁰¹

It is not that Gotthelf doesn't value literary art. Obviously he used it and is a part of its history. The attitude of people toward art is what concerned him. He saw no redeeming value in art in and of itself. As Muschg explains:

Gotthelf spottet aber nie über die Kunst, nur über ihre konventionelle Verhimmelung im bürgerlichen Bildungsbetrieb. Diese Vergötzung der Kunst um ihrer selbst willen hält er allerdings für eine Form des modernen Aberglaubens, und er ist überzeugt, dass sie den Ausbruch einer neuen Barbarei nicht verhindern werde, sondern im Gegenteil ihr Vorspiel sei.¹⁰²

Gotthelf then uses art to allow his religiosity to disperse among the people, and he wants to raise, i.e. educate the people toward Christianity through examples of virtue in his novels.

Whether or not this diminishes Gotthelf's aesthetic contributions to literature depends somewhat on one's own philosophical stance toward the role of art in our lives. Certainly Gotthelf was talented in literary devices and techniques. It is most often his motives for writing and what he does literarily to achieve those motives that

¹⁰¹ Walter Muschg, Jeremias Gotthelf: Eine Einführung in seine Werke. 2nd ed. (Bern und München: Francke Verlag, 1960), 47.

¹⁰² Ibid., 48.

come under attack from the purists who revere literature as an end in itself.

One final quotation by Muschg will sum up the attitude of one who values Gotthelf's aesthetic significance and yet is not bothered by the functional thrust of his writings.

Mit dieser Grösse hat es eine ganz besondere Bewandtnis. Er ist ein religiöses und ein echt volkstümliches Genie, das nicht nur ästhetisch gewürdigt sein will, weil ihm die Kunst nicht über dem Leben, sondern im Dienst des Lebens steht.¹⁰³

ANTIMATERIALISM

Through the examination of the text of Uli we have come to understand that Gotthelf was no materialist in the philosophically defined sense of the word. Yet we have to also understand that he did not reject the world in which he lived but acknowledged it as a creation of God. As such he revered it and saw human beings as an image of God, although in spotted and imperfect form. He battled the materialistic movements of his day vehemently, especially communism and socialism. Not only did he fight materialism in its institutional appearances but also its individual manifestations, especially where it posed a threat to human sanctification. Matter as such is not considered evil by Gotthelf; the human disposition toward it, however, may be so. Jespersen explains this position quite well.

In Gotthelf's theology, spiritualization does not come from a denial or rejection of the world, but through a correct use of it...A rejection in the neo-platonic sense is foreign, Gotthelf believes, to the true Christian message. Matter, according to Gotthelf, is not evil in an absolute sense since

¹⁰³ Ibid., 7.

God created it."¹⁰⁴

Evidently the question of theodicy is for Gotthelf not a major concern, as he accepts the goodness of God and also, consequently, the goodness of his material creations.

The person's position toward the material is the central concern. Uli becomes richly blessed, i.e. rewarded, only after he displays the proper disposition toward the material. When he selfishly wants to acquire the farm through a marriage with Elisi, not yet having found love, but being greedy, he fails. Only as he achieved arrival at the virtue of love and establishes a unity with God does he find rightful happiness, including the material aspect. The latter was acknowledged as a blessing from God, as a reward from God, since he was the creator of it, for Uli's and Vreneli's virtuousness.

Secondary Virtues Vis-à-vis Selfishness

Selfishness is the repelling pole of virtue. Since it is the virtues that lead to God, it follows that selfishness leads away from God. The secondary virtues are devalued through selfishness since they create a negative effect in the spiritual realm. We have already established that the material reward Uli receives was a reward for his virtuous behavior and serves as a witness to the fact that now Heaven and Earth are bound together. It further serves as a sign that Uli is on the way to Heaven, i.e. his sanctification.

It was because of this Old Testament concept of a God intricately involved with both Heaven and Earth that Gotthelf was attacked by

¹⁰⁴ Jespersen, Christian Order, 88.

Keller, who perceived a Jewish element in the work. One can only make such an attack, calling the work Jewish in flavor, if one does not consider the role of the secondary virtues. Gotthelf does not portray a vindictive, punitive, thundering God, as Keller purports, but a Christian God who involves himself directly in the life of each individual being. This God, through virtuousness on the part of the individual, reveals himself and brings him or her happiness in this life as well as the next; but only then when a person has the proper disposition toward the material. Guggisberg supports this argument that Gotthelf's God is fully Christian. "Gotthelfs Gott straft auch, aber nicht aus Rache, Zorn und Eifersucht, sonder aus Liebe, um die Menschen zur Einsicht, Busse, Läuterung und Besserung zu führen."¹⁰⁵

Again, selfishness and greed remain unrewarded. They have no place alongside virtues, if those virtues are to have a positive effect. As already explained in the second chapter, the main reward for practicing the secondary virtues is the building of characteristics and behavior patterns which later put one in a position to receive material rewards as a blessing from God. That is not to say there are no rich people who are godless or selfish, but they are neither truly happy nor on the path toward sanctification. This connection between the material and spiritual, the abyss between virtue and selfishness, is also affirmed by Maybaum.

Für Gotthelf ist es oberster Grundsatz, dass die Tugend zum Heil führe und nur in Gott die Kreatur selig werden könne. Wer die göttliche Ordnung anerkennt, wer betet und arbeitet und tut, "was brav und recht ist", der hat auch ein äusseres Glück und

¹⁰⁵ Guggisberg, Christentum, 98.

kommt zum Wohlstand, zumindest bleibt er zufrieden mit Gott und der Welt; wer sich aber gegen die Gottesordnung vergeht, hochmütig, übermütig, und selbstsüchtig wird, der wird bestraft. Reichtum bringt nur in Verbindung mit Frömmigkeit Segen, sonst wird er eine Quelle des Verderbens.¹⁰⁶

Gotthelf gives us enough examples of people who have these negative experiences in relation to the material. Elisi, who is very selfish, ends up with an abusive husband and is both as physically and financially forsaken as she is godless. Johannes, Joggeli's son, continually demands money from his father because he can't manage his business due to his and his wife's excesses. Joggeli himself, being totally self-centered, does not seem to have one happy moment and is undone through his own and his children's wrongdoing. Uli is filled with such characters which are set in contrast to Uli and Vreneli, their loyalty and selflessness.

As we have seen, Uli is not always selfless. When he is selfish, he wins nothing by it. In the first part of Uli's story, when he only thinks of himself, how bad he has it, how he doesn't receive enough pay, and how no one allows him any pleasures, he makes no spiritual or material progress. Only after he shows an interest in his master's work and possessions as though they were his own, as he acquires the secondary virtues of loyalty and thrift as opposites of selfishness, does he make spiritual and material progress, which two remain bound together throughout the work.

Secondary Virtues Vis-à-vis Avarice

Avarice, like selfishness, is a destructive characteristic. It

¹⁰⁶ Maybaum, Gottesordnung, 29.

is true that hope for material possessions is an incentive for Uli, but avarice is never rewarded. What Karl Fehr says is true: "Im Vergleich zu Vreneli bleibt Uli stets mehr an den realen Zweck gebunden, und seine unzweifelhaft starke Hingabfähigkeit wird andauernd von Erfolgssträumen, vom Verlangen nach Besitz und Ansehen, begleitet."¹⁰⁷ But this longing for possessions and respect is the catalyst which leads Uli to a virtuous lifestyle and to his own eventual salvation. We need to remember Gotthelf's claim that the earthly and heavenly happiness are attained by the same means. This longing cannot evolve into avarice. Any step in that direction is punished. Avarice, or greed, is, after all, one of the seven deadly sins.¹⁰⁸ When Uli loans out his money with the intention of amassing more, he loses it. When he wants to marry for money, he fails and suffers ridicule.

Gotthelf continually fought against avarice. In writing a report about the community of Utzenstorf, we read of Gotthelf's perceptions from Ernst Gallati: "Das normale Verhältnis zu den materiellen Gütern sei oft gestört, etwa bei Übertriebener Sparsamkeit oder blinder Arbeitswut."¹⁰⁹ What, besides avarice, is "Übertriebene Sparsamkeit"? Gallati quotes many more examples of vice, some relating directly others indirectly to avarice.

Knowing that Gotthelf studied Hegel's dialectical process

¹⁰⁷Fehr, Das Bild, 291.

¹⁰⁸In opposition to the seven cardinal virtues there are seven deadly sins or vices "for which punishment is eternal damnation... They are pride, covetousness or greed, lust, envy, gluttony, anger, accidie (or sloth)." Metford, Dictionary of Christian Lore and Legend, 225.

¹⁰⁹Gallati, Gesellschaftskritik, 14.

may help in explaining Gotthelf's position. It is possible to say we found Uli early on in a frame of mind which made him wasteful of his resources; that may be our thesis. As Uli realizes the materialistic possibilities before him, he experiences notions of the opposite extreme, those of avariciousness. This is the antithesis. Neither of those extremes is fruitful and Uli comes to a realization of the moderate, and for Gotthelf true, principle in regard to one's disposition toward the material, i.e. the secondary virtue of thrift. This is our synthesis, the newly discovered truth in Uli's circumstance.

Avarice then becomes the antithesis, or opposite of a virtue, a vice. At the same time it can also be a degenerated virtue (without the effect of another medieval virtue - m^âje). Avarice can start as thrift and then grow to an excess. If this secondary virtue, thrift, does not lead to the primary virtue of love of one's neighbor by way of generosity and devoutness, it also cannot lead one to God and the ultimate purpose of the virtue is lost. Instead of God influencing a person, the person is ruled by what was originally virtue, now turned negative in its effect. It turns negative by being carried to an extreme, as in the case of avarice, or it becomes totally meaningless since it does not fulfill its true objective. Greed is an abhorrently exaggerated thrift, an extreme which controls a person in such a way as to act as a barrier between a person and the godly primary virtues.

This is not the case with Uli. He is led into temptation as he considers marriage to Elisi with her potential inheritance as a catalyst. But Gotthelf makes it clear that even throughout this time

Uli thinks about Vreneli. In this way two important factors are presented to the reader: first, that Uli would never have found happiness with Elisi, and in a general sense, that his avariciousness would have stopped the sanctification process; secondly, as Günther so aptly puts it, "Mit Vreneli tritt eine neue bauende Macht in sein Leben: die Liebe."¹¹⁰ Once Uli regains his perspective and puts any avaricious notions under control, he puts himself in a position to experience the primary virtues. Uli becomes in essence moderate to be able to do this.

Gotthelf teaches moderation. The balance between Heaven and Earth has to be kept. Otherwise one becomes too schwärmerisch on the one side, which was Gotthelf's opinion of his pietist critics, or too worldly on the other, i.e. materialistic.¹¹¹

Virtue Vis-à-vis Materialism

Is it possible to be simultaneously materialistic and virtuous? Is Uli materialistic? These are questions which must be answered if one is to explain the role of the secondary virtues.

In order to answer these questions, we must be conscious of the premise that Gotthelf believed in a personal God. Guggisberg gives us the following insight:

Gotthelf steht allen Spekulationen über das Wesen Gottes fremd

¹¹⁰ Werner Günther, Jeremias Gotthelf: Wesen und Werk (Berlin, Bielefeld, München: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1954), 144.

¹¹¹ Bayer, referring to Gotthelf's biographer, writes: "Manuel wusste also, dass Bitzius den jüngeren Pietismus (Erweckungsbewegung) als zügellose Schwärmerei bekämpfte..." Bayer, Theologische Quellen, 426.

gegenüber. Gott ist für ihn kein abstraktes Wesen, kein Begriffsgott, über den man wie über irgend einen Gegenstand reden könnte, ohne von ihm nicht im innersten berührt zu sein. Er ist für ihn nur in der Erfahrung zu fassen. Gotthelf spricht nur von der Seite Gottes Wesen, die der Welt, dem Leben zugewandt ist.¹¹²

God is therefore directly connected with the world, being its creator. The human individual, also a creation of God, even though earthly, also has godly aspects. Gotthelf makes it his mission as a writer to engage people with this aspect. Through Uli he shows that God has a direct interest in mankind, that the creation is intimately bound together with the creator. In this sense there is for Gotthelf no separation between physic and metaphysic. The material can be spiritual and the spiritual can be material.

Since God is only comprehensible through experience, this also being an understandable, i.e. empirical attestation of God's love, there are still many people who, not having experienced him, are spiritually separated from God. So there must be a way in which one may gain experiences which lead to God. In Uli it is the moderate, unselfishly practiced secondary virtues which lead to this path. When Uli saves, he not only has money but also a feeling of security. He can make it through some periods of illness when he can't work; he's more in control of his own life. When he is loyal toward his master, he not only receives a raise in salary but also increases in his feelings of responsibility toward himself and his master. When he acquires humility, the master teaches him techniques of farming. Each secondary virtue that Uli acquires builds his character through

¹¹² Guggisberg, Christentum, 92.

positive experiences and lead him toward the primary virtues. From thriftiness comes the hope to better himself. From loyalty comes, in the end, love. Through devoutness he gains more and more faith. Which secondary virtues lead to which primary virtues is also at times interchangeable. But this does not occur until he recognizes through experience who means well with him and that through thrift and loyalty things may be achieved. It is Uli's experiences which prove to him that the virtuous way is the right way, and simultaneously let him experience God.

Because these Christian virtues are given by an exegete of a Christian God, they then also lead to a Christian God. This God, since he involves himself directly, knows how to reward virtuous behavior. And the one who through this also experiences God, knows how to recognize the reward as God's blessing. It follows then that if one considers material possessions in and of themselves, as long as they are linked with God, Gotthelf is not antimaterialistic. It is a person's attitude toward those possessions which concern him. If God and his commanded virtues are removed from the relationship between an individual and his or her possessions, then Gotthelf becomes very antimaterialistic.

Aside from the individual's relationship to material goods as mentioned above, there exists also the philosophy of materialism. The whole system of exchange of goods and services, i.e. economics, was being revolutionized and affected people's lifestyles. With the economic revolution came new ways of thinking in an attempt to deal with these changes and their relationship to some of the fundamental

questions of human existence. Gotthelf could not accept the resulting philosophy of materialism and many of the changes it reflected. In this he was truly conservative. Uli, being "eine Gabe für Dienstboten und Meisterleute", people who share an economic relationship one with another, allows us to understand why Gotthelf was so opposed to these changes. He saw the Christian order and therefore the sanctification process threatened through the social and political occurrences of this time period. How he understood this order threatened will be explained by the next quote. We need to be quick to add that Gotthelf, however, was not a prophet of doom. He believed that the world was progressively getting better. But he also believed there were elements which obstructed this move toward betterment, and he fought vehemently against them. If matter, through the virtues, is bound to God, there is a peaceful coexistence. Should matter exclude God, then it degenerates or alienates the secondary virtues and declares war on the primary virtues. One of the socio-political economic systems which did exactly that was communism. Guggisberg explains Gotthelf's consequent position toward this movement very well.

Im ganzen kommunistischen System sieht er nichts anderes als tierische Selbstsucht,...Kommunismus und Radikalismus könnten nichts als zerstören. Diese fahrenden Reuter bildeten zusammen mit Zigeunern und Juden eine Art unheilige Dreieinigkeit... Kommunisten, Sozialisten, Fourieristen und andere Unchristen suchten die Ursachen des bestehenden Elends nie in der Sünde, sondern stets in der bestehenden Ordnung, ja sogar in den Geboten Gottes und deren Befolgung.¹¹³

Uli, in its battle for the Christian order was in this sense entirely antimaterialistic. The social problems are to be solved

¹¹³Ibid., 266-7.

through the Christian virtues. Gotthelf recommends savings banks, "Denn er ist davon Überzeugt, dass sich jeder durch Tüchtigkeit zum Wohlstand erheben könne," writes Cuggisberg.¹¹⁴ But Gotthelf's concern is not just for the material well-being but also the spiritual. Therefore, he continually and polemically attacks the antispiritual Zeitgeist. Maybaum, relying on Gotthelf's texts, writes about Gotthelf's attitude regarding the radical movements.

Die menschliche Natur fordert ihre Rechte, sie will, dass ihre Triebe befriedigt werden; da diese aber durch religiöse Tugenden un den wirklich gebildeten Geist nicht in Schranken gehalten werden, so entsteht eine Anarchie der Triebe, Unordnung, in welcher der Mensch nicht leben kann. Diese Lehre sei nichts anderes als, "dass, wen es gelüste, eine Sau sein zu wollen", er dem Verlangen auch nachgeben solle. Man erkenne nicht, dass der Ursprung des Unglücks in der Sünde liege, sondern glaube, dass er in der bestehenden Ordnung zu finden sei, und wolle diese stürzen.¹¹⁵

Maybaum also shows in more detail how this Zeitgeist is being fought by Gotthelf because of this atheistic materialism.¹¹⁶

In no way should we believe that Gotthelf defended the status quo. We must remember that he was also a political activist and published political articles. He recognized the social injustices and worked to erradicate them. However, a totally different cause was attributed to these injustices then the revolutionaries purported. Gotthelf saw as the primary cause of social ills and injustices the lack of Christian virtues, i.e. sin. Uli is in part an answer to these problems. It is written for both Dienstboten and Meisterleute.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 269.

¹¹⁵ Maybaum, Gottesordnung, 30.

¹¹⁶ See Ibid., 31.

Johannes, Uli's master, is just as much an example for an employer as Uli is an example for an employee. All characters in Uli show how material goods in and of themselves could do nothing for mankind's ultimate salvation. Only in connection with the to-God-leading virtues is the material a positive force in life; otherwise it is only there to satisfy unbridled drives, destroy the character of an individual, and consequently negate that individual's possibility to experience God. Gotthelf saw this very possibility threatened through the philosophy of materialism.

Karl Marx, on the other hand, did not see the Christian virtues in a positive light; he attacked them. Hermann Weiss informs us, "Sein in den Jahren unmittelbar vor der Revolution entwickelter Begriff des Klassenkampfes beweist, wie weit er sich in seinem Denken von den christlichen Idealen der Demut und Liebe entfernt hat."¹¹⁷ Gotthelf sees in this tendency not only a social revolution but a declaration of war on Christianity and "die von Gott geschaffene 'unabänderliche Ordnung'".¹¹⁸ Gotthelf values these virtues as positive, because through them the God-willed order of relationships between human beings exists. Weiss gives us an example: "Im Gegensatz zu Weitling sieht Gotthelf das Almosengeben der Reichen und die Dankbarkeit der Besitzlosen als einen notwendigen Beitrag zum gesellschaftlichen Zusammenhalt an."¹¹⁹ We may go one step further and say that beyond

¹¹⁷Hermann Weiss, "Vorspiel zur Revolution: Die Bewertung der Demut in den vierziger Jahren des 19. Jahrhunderts." Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie 97.2 (1978), 211.

¹¹⁸Ibid., 220.

¹¹⁹Ibid., 221.

the societal bond this seems essential for salvation. It is through personal interaction that virtues can be practiced; they cannot operate in a vacuum. Nor can they be mediated through government or social agencies. The personal interaction is important as we can certainly observe with Uli and Johannes as examples. Gotthelf did not want a change in this Gottesordnung. The Christian feeling of responsibility toward one's fellow human being has to be developed within each individual and cannot be mitigated or taken over by the state and its agencies.

The spiritual roots of human relations had to also be nourished on the side of the poor. They should know "wer es gut mit ihnen meine", as is so often written in Uli. The poor also need to stay within the bounds of the to-God-leading virtues, otherwise there are no more bounds whatsoever. Weiss quotes Gotthelf: "Je unbekannter der Geber mit den Armen ist, desto frecher ihre Forderungen..."¹²⁰ (This, of course, is an argument which still exists today in any welfare state.) If the poor recognize, through their gratitude, the goodwill of the giver, the possibility exists that they could perceive the given as God's blessing, i.e. a reward for their humility and gratitude, and not think of it as their right. Through this the virtues again lead mankind toward God. Both giver and recipient are sanctified through their virtuous conduct and interaction.

So Uli shows us the right way to salvation. Johannes' exemplary mastership and Uli's becoming teachable, allow both master and servant simultaneously to further develop as Christians. The material is

¹²⁰Ibid., 224.

both a bait and a reward for virtuous actions.

BIBLICAL ETHIC AND DOCTRINE

In Uli Gotthelf presents a God who is not abstract but inextricably involved with human affairs. He rewards and he punishes. Keller identifies this as jüdisch.

The argument that Uli has Jewish, i.e. Old Testament elements should not elicit objectionable reactions from a Christian frame of mind, at least theologically. Christianity's roots are deeply implanted in the soil of Judaism. Both the Old Testament and New Testament are accepted as canonized scripture in the Christian world. An occasional visit to hear a sermon will prove that doctrines are preached out of both texts, however varied their interpretations might be. In the epistles of St. Paul, perhaps the most often quoted sources of Christendom, we find written: "So ist das Gesetz unser Zuchtmeister gewesen auf Christus, ..." ¹²¹ Paul, himself a cofounder of Christianity, or at least his editors, do not reject the old but view it as preparatory for the new teachings.

Gotthelf has no need to excuse himself for using both the old and the new; both, in conjunction with one another lead to a Christian God. The commandment to love one's neighbor is not new. It is also in the Old Testament. "...Du sollst deinen Nächsten lieben wie dich selbst; ich bin der Herr." ¹²² The commandment is directed toward the Hebrews but prepares the way for the Christian universalization of the

¹²¹ Galatians iii.24.

¹²² Leviticus xix.18.

principle. The Old testament is richly endowed with symbolism, metaphors, similies, and other literary devices which have been interpreted by the Christian world as preparations for its message.

The Sanctification Process

Gotthelf saw in the farmer the image of an ideal. Farming without God is for him not a possibility. One is always dependent on Him since He is the creator and ruler of nature, also manifesting Himself in nature but not in the pantheistic sense. In Uli the sanctification process becomes visible because of this connection between creator and creation. Günther writes the following about Gotthelf's Bauernwelt: "Und als ihren kostbarsten und schönsten Sinn hat diese geistige Welt ihm Lebenstreue und Lebensreinheit: Heiligung offenbart."¹²³ Uli embodies the universal model for the sanctification process as typified through farm life. To be a farmer means being dependent on God. And to be a successful farmer, one has to have a positive relationship with God, i.e. being devout in order to earn God's blessings. Therefore, Uli is led to God through the temporal concerns of the farmer which are positively acted upon by the secondary virtues, those building and developing Uli's character to prepare him for the primary virtues and salvation.

To further support this point, Günther's insight into Gotthelf's Bauernwelt is very helpful.

Vorrecht und Verantwortung, Segen und Pflicht des Bauerntums
quellen aus dieser Unmittelbarkeit des Auf-Gott-gestellt-Seins.
sie erzeugt die vier Kerntugenden, die, wie Gotthelf anderwärts

¹²³Günther, *Wesen und Werk*, 45.

sagt, ein Bauer haben muss und ohne die er keiner ist oder es nicht lange bleiben wird: Arbeitsamkeit, Häuslichkeit, Ehrbarkeit und Frömmigkeit.¹²⁴

This point is presented very vividly when Johannes, Joggeli's son, loses the Glungge in an auction. The lack of the above mentioned virtues make it impossible for him to be a farmer. He regards farming as unworthy of himself. A sanctification is therefore out of the question for this Johannes. Not only does he personally resist the responsibility which could lead him on the path of saving virtues, but he also tries to dissuade Uli from remaining loyal to Joggeli, his own father, by offering Uli a job and luring him away from the farm. The latter is not dissuaded. In a more general sense Uli remains loyal to the world of the farmer and with that remains with the sanctification process actively engaged.

This sanctification portrayal never transforms itself into a romantic image of the ideal. It is not an idyllic mirror image of an archetype. This is what makes the work so believable, the realities of farm life are not hidden, not even the vulgar language is excluded, in short, it is not deified or mystified. Günther writes: "Die Identifizierung von Heiligung und bäuerlichem Lebenssinn hat ihn niemals gehindert, die Bauernwelt in ihrer lebendigen und irdischen Realität zu sehen."¹²⁵ That is why the descriptions of the town brawl, the fighting maids, the mentioning of dung, etc. All this is a part of farming life that up to now had not been included in any writing about

¹²⁴ Ibid., 48.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 52.

this class of people. In doing so, Gotthelf was one of the first. Consequently, some critics looked at this understanding and showing of the real farm life as having a "worldly" perspective.

Gotthelf, being a descriptive, or demotic writer, was therein misunderstood. He saw much in human beings which could be termed animalistic. For him, the person who was not on the road toward sanctification was animalistic. This is a person who lives from day to day, doesn't think about any future, is perhaps not even capable of doing so, and does not practice the virtues because they have no purpose for such a person. Uli is in exactly this condition at the beginning of the novel. For him, a poor farm servant, "dem niemand eine Freude leiden will", there is no future.

One might well ask how this conception of the human individual and his or her sanctification process fits into the theological arguments of the time. But it is interesting to note that Gotthelf doesn't place much value on theological arguments; it isn't they which sanctify a person, it is the sphere of active Christian virtues, as seen in Uli. Jespersen sums it up thusly: "The exegesis of life can never be learned in theological lectures."¹²⁶ How one is to live can only be learned through experiencing life itself. This argument is consistent with Gotthelf's view that to know God one has to experience him. Experience, total active involvement in life, is for Gotthelf essential for eventual salvation.

In order for Uli to be saved, he has to become actively engaged

¹²⁶ Jespersen, Christian Order, 109.

in life. Uli sees how well off others are but can in no way experience the goodness of God in his condition. His lifestyle keeps him separated from God. It is impossible for God's influence to penetrate his life, until, through the help of the Bodenbauer, he removes his superficial life experiences and exchanges them for the secondary virtues. Guggisberg describes the frame of mind and reference that Uli had to deal with.

Durch die bittere Not des Daseinskampfes richtet sich die ganze Aufmerksamkeit auf das Materielle und den Genuss. Die eigene Not findet am Luxus der anderen ein schmerzliches Gegenbild. Man gewöhnt sich, an der Oberfläche zu bleiben, durch Alkohol und Liebschaften wird das Gefühlswesen verwüstet, die akute Rationalisierung des Lebens macht das Einströmen Überrationaler Kräfte unmöglich.¹²⁷

This describes Uli perfectly at the beginning of the novel. The superrational powers in this case would be God, who has no access to Uli in the condition he is in.

When a person finds himself in this condition, Gotthelf shows that such a person cannot only not be helped by God but cannot help him or herself either. The only one who is thus capable to help is someone who is already a true Christian, i.e. is on the level of the primary virtues and has a positive relationship with God. In this novel that role is filled by Johannes, the Bodenbauer. Of him Sengle writes: "Die Zustände, in denen Uli lebt sind nicht nur normal, sondern günstig, dadurch vor allem, dass sein Chef, der Bodenbauer, ein 'wahrer' Meister ist, ein Idealbild aller Tugenden."¹²⁸ This Johannes

¹²⁷ Guggisberg, Christentum, 263-4.

¹²⁸ Sengle, Biedermeierzeit, 911.

was able to influence Uli in that he was already on this "advanced" level. Never did he give theological lectures to Uli, only addressing those points that were pertinent to Uli's life whenever he gave him a lecture of any kind. Other than that, he simply let Uli experience his own goodwill. Only in this way does Uli discover, after many events, "wer es gut mit ihm meine". Johannes leads him toward the sanctification process. One's fellow man is absolutely essential to find the right path. On his or her own a person cannot be saved. Therefore, every individual has a direct responsibility toward his or her fellow human being. This point is addressed by Maybaum.

Das Gebot der Nächstenliebe weckt nicht nur Liebe, sondern damit zusammen Verantwortungsbewusstsein. Es ist eine verwerfliche Einstellung, wann jemand sagt, ihn gehe "die ganze Sache nichts an, und, was ihn nichts angehe, darein mische er sich nicht".¹²⁹

Johannes' neighbor, Resli, does not have this feeling of responsibility toward others. He allows his servants to have relationships as though they were married. Consistently he is plotting how to disrupt any positive relationship between Johannes and Uli, almost succeeding on occasions.

Johannes, however, becomes Uli's protector, one might say God's proxy. "Denn die Art, wie Johannes seinem Knecht gegenübertritt, wird allein von der christlichen Agape bestimmt," writes Fehr.¹³⁰ Fehr also goes on to describe the effect of Johannes' actions. He helps Uli toward "der selbstständigen Entfaltung der innewohnenden Kräfte".¹³¹

¹²⁹ Maybaum, Gottesordnung, 73.

¹³⁰ Fehr, Das Bild, 260.

¹³¹ Ibid., 262.

For Uli, it is his relationship to Johannes which helps him in his socio-economic betterment. To the young servant the sanctification process is not a consciously chosen road but rather an adherent of economic progress. At the start Uli can only see the ladder toward material success; he does not yet know that it is a double ladder, the other leading to spiritual success, or happiness.

When one has this feeling of responsibility toward one's fellow man and practices love of one's neighbor, then it is advantageous to be materially in a position to give help and to reward. In Uli's case this is very important since his material progress is bound together with his spiritual progress. Gotthelf's attitude toward material goods cannot be overemphasized. Here we need to recognize that a wealthy or well-to-do person need not sell everything he or she has and give it to the poor, as is written in the Bible. Gotthelf sees this as impractical and ineffective in the long range. Jespersen says it thusly:

In all of Gotthelf's works, there is not a single example of a person who believes that it is necessary to forsake wealth and material comfort in order to be a good Christian. It is sufficient that he use his worldly possessions unselfishly to promote righteous causes.¹³²

This reiterates the quote in the last part of the preceding chapter when the minister speaks. It is what one does with one's possessions that is the crucial factor. If they are used to help one's fellow man, then it is good. Are they used to satisfy animalistic egotism, then it is bad.

¹³² Jespersen, Christian Order, 89.

The principal egoists of the work: Elisi, Joggeli, Johannes (Joggeli's son), and the cotton merchant are examples of the negative disposition. There exists also no spark of hope of a spiritual betterment.

The strong Stamm on which Uli raises himself has to eventually be left by him, if he wants to make progress. Not only does Uli in his new position receive a higher salary but also more responsibility and effect on the lives of other people. He must become more independent. The acquired virtues become solidified and he nears God through his experiences, until at the end, when he, with the love of Vreneli, is in heaven.

Later in the work Vreneli becomes Uli's strong Stamm on which he continues to raise himself. Someone has to always be there with whose help progress is possible. Gotthelf looked at the human race as dynamic, always becoming better. "Wir Menschen alle, Prediger und Laien, sind ein Werdendes, und wo Leben ist, da ist ein Werden bis zum Tode..." This we read in a letter by Gotthelf as quoted by Neuenschwander.¹³³ Even though the Hegelian influence can definitely be felt in this quote, it relates directly to the sanctification process.

Virtues can only operate in a social context. It follows then that Uli, or anyone else, can only be saved through interaction with other people. Asceticism has no place in Gotthelf's sanctification process. It should be clear then that the biblical doctrine of love of one's neighbor, through Johannes, is what promotes Uli on the path of

¹³³ Neuenschwander, Ordnung, 138.

biblical ethic, i.e. secondary and primary virtues. These enable him to experience the love of God and to replicate it on the human level through his interaction with others. The formula for the process can be summed up thusly: a Christian individual helps promote someone to the with material reward connected level of secondary virtues, these lead to the God connected primary virtues.

Work And Acquisition

The roots of the Christian work ethic are already deeply embedded in Hebrew literature. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, ..." ¹³⁴ But to say, as Keller did, Uli is more Jewish than Christian, shows to some degree naivety about or nonacceptance of Gotthelf's beliefs, which leads to false conclusions. Gotthelf himself did not value Jewry very highly, which is a reflection of a pan-European attitude of the time.

For Gotthelf, the children of Adam and Eve are in the same condition as concerns work as their ancient father and mother. Each individual must or should work to sustain him or herself. Physical sustenance is an aspect of life that is the responsibility of the individual. This aspect fulfills its true and God-given purpose only if it is connected with a restoration of an intimate relationship with God, which was lost do to the fall of man. This means that work becomes a catalyst in the sanctification process. The welfare state was, for Gotthelf, the antithesis of one of God's commandments. Communist and socialsit doctrine were not just anti-Christian in their

¹³⁴ Genesis iii.19.

aetheistic teachings, but also interfered in the Christian realm of action and made it impossible to experience God and his blessings through work rewarded by him. The ideology becomes the new God, the state the mediator, or Christ. Work would be tied not to a religious God in the conventional sense but to ideology. This is intolerable for a man who believes that through work, especially farming, one can come to experience God.

Work and acquisition are especially for Uli a material sign of spiritual progress. We have to be careful not to confuse this with Calvinism. Nothing is absolutely predetermined, and material possessions do not unequivocally mean that he is rich due to the pleasure of God. Gotthelf does not accept the doctrine of predestination; it is through recognition, conversion, work, and progress that mankind is sanctified.

Perhaps we cannot imagine an individual within a society who does not in some degree fit into the category of either master or servant, employer or employee, for whom these principles could not be applicable. Then one thinks of the welfare rolls and the unemployment lines. Gotthelf perceives an increasing difficulty in a modern industrial society to retain the intimately personal relationships of employer and employee, those relationships that allow for a feeling of direct responsibility and love for one's fellow man. The masses of workers in a factory have little or no personal contact with their employer, who often values the worker as part of an abstract resource with the term "labor force". Gotthelf did not only see a danger in the communist reaction of the proletariat but also in the entire capitalist

industrial revolution. The life of the Emmental farmer for him was what shaped his beliefs and Uli serves as a reflection of those beliefs. His was a voice of century old stability in a revolutionary world.

The Economy

Otto Brunner gives us a better insight into why Gotthelf uses the model of the farming world to express his religious beliefs. He writes about economy.

Die Ökonomik ist buchstäblich Lehre vom Oikos, vom Haus im umfassendsten Sinn, vom "ganzen Haus", um mit Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl zu sprechen, der diese heute nur noch im bürgerlichen Leben teilweise lebendigen Sozialgebilde im Moment seines Zerfalles oder doch seines Zurücktretens beschrieben hat.¹³⁵

Biblically, this "ganze Haus" is the house of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as well as other ancient patriarchs, and in this sense is hebraic. These ancient housefathers did not only have responsibility for the income and care of their own nuclear or extended family but for an entire economic society. Their word is to be obeyed. Through them come the laws, the rules of behavior and control of relationships between all those belonging to the house, as well as all decisions concerning the economy of the house. The sphere of influence of such a housefather is all-encompassing, affecting all areas of life. As such, the housefather had to act in the interest of the entire household. He would not be successful economically if his attitude were selfish or self-serving. Brunner further explains:

¹³⁵Otto Brunner, "Das ganze Haus und die alteuropäische Ökonomik," in Neue Wege der Verfassungs- und Sozialgeschichte. 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968), 104.

Die Ökonomik als Lehre vom Oikos umfasst eben die Gesamtheit der menschlichen Beziehungen und Tätigkeiten im Hause, das Verhältnis von Mann und Frau, Eltern und Kindern, Hausherrn und Gesinde (Sklaven) und die Erfüllung der in Haus- und Landwirtschaft gestellten Aufgaben. Er ist notwendig und erlaubt, soweit er der Ergänzung der Autarkie des Hauses dient, er ist verwerflich, sobald er zum Selbstzweck wird, das heisst, auf Gelderwerb an sich zieht.¹³⁶

This doctrine is built into Uli. Gotthelf believes this situation is still found in the farming life of the Emmental. Johannes, the Bodenbauer, is such an ideal image of a housefather whose concern is for the entire house, not only his immediate family or even just himself. He is necessary and allowed because he does not only work for and toward his own interest but that of his entire house. Therefore, he is also concerned with what Uli does with his free time. Invariably it is a reflection on his house, and having responsibility toward all its members, this also includes Uli. Johannes then, in a very real sense, becomes Uli's father. This feeling of responsibility is addressed in the text itself. "Die Meisterleut sind doch Meister in ihrem Hause, und was sie in ihrem Hause dulden, und was sie ihren Leuten nachlassen, dafür sind sie Gott und den Menschen verantwortlich."
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Although having links to the Hebrews, such a conception is not exclusively hebraic. According to Brunner it is a tradition which, through the Greeks, was also old-European.

Die alteuropäische Ökonomie ist die Lehre von der "Wirtschaft" im bauerlichen Sinn, vom "ganzen Haus". Was seit den Griechen im europäischen Denken theoretisch erfasst wird, ist eine sehr

¹³⁶ Ibid., 105.

¹³⁷ Gotthelf, Sämtliche Werke, 4:8.

viel weiter verbreitete Denkweise, die der Grundform aller Bauernkulturen entspricht: Das Haus, die Wirtschaft ist das grundlegende Sozialgebilde aller bauerlichen und bauerlich-adeligen Kulturen...und wurde in diesen Jahrtausenden vom Strukturwandel der politischen Formen der Oberschichten in seiner Substanz wenig berührt.¹³⁸

During the time Gotthelf was writing, the age of industrialization, this old-European farming economy was still very strong in the Emmental. Because of this commonality among all farming cultures, this "entire house" economy, it is very plausible to find among the Emmental farmers an economy which is also found in the Bible, especially the pastoral Old Testament settings. The biblical patriarchs, as models of a lifestyle directly subordinate to God, could find their replica in the farmer of Gotthelf's world: specifically is it the Bodenbauer in Uli.

We already examined Johannes' role as God's proxy. His virtuous actions influence Uli in the way they do because of Johannes' advantageous position of a biblical housefather. The virtuous administration of the "entire house" enables him to teach and reward Uli. He gives Uli experiences, through the secondary virtues, which lead him to the primary virtues and to God. In this fashion Johannes is God-like, not only in the Old Testament kind of way but also in the Christian. As such a human representation of God we see characteristics which reaffirm the Christian perspective. Johannes is God-like in that, as the administrator of the "entire house", he loves, teaches, and rewards, i.e. is actively involved as a positive force for good. This connection between Johannes and his house and God and his world is not

¹³⁸ Brunner, Das ganze Haus, 107.

something new. Brunner clarifies this:

Es wäre aber durchaus möglich, das die älteren Jahrhunderte beherrschende religiöse Geschichtsbild, die christliche Geschichtstheologie "ökonomisch" zu nennen. Denn "Oeconomia" ist auch ein Terminus der christlichen Dogmatik seit Tertullian, meint die die Geschichte bestimmende göttliche Weltregierung, den Heilsplan. Noch in einem Hauptwerk der Hausväterliteratur des 17. Jahrhunderts, in Wolf Heinhards von Hohlberg "Georgica curiosa" heisst es in der Einleitung, dass Gott "der menschenliebende, himmlische Hausherr sei, der nicht ablässt, die grosse Weltoeconomia noch immerdar zu bestellen und zu regieren". Man war sich also damals des Zusammenhangs zwischen göttlicher und menschlicher "Ökonomie" noch wohl bewusst.¹³⁹

We are already familiar with Gotthelf's idea that Heaven is bound closer together with Earth than is generally believed. How much Gotthelf knew about or was directly influenced by the Hausväterliteratur may be a question for further study and research. A knowledge thereof would not have been necessary though to create Uli in that tradition. It was a cultural and not just a literary tradition and therefore can be experienced in life if not read in books. We know how Gotthelf felt about experiences. This viewpoint about economy, for Gotthelf perhaps more intuitive than conscious, is a fact of his farming world.

Gotthelf's Christianity

Gotthelf was a practical person who did not value the theoretical very highly. He did want to actualize certain ideals but had no unrealistic illusions. Because of this practical disposition, he also had not much use for abstract theology. What was theologically Christian had less meaning for him than what was pragmatically applicably Christian. Therein lies also the origin of his socio-political activism, which he practiced very polemically. It is this

¹³⁹ Ibid., 126.

practical Christianity which helps Uli to be sanctified. It is not his going to church and having his mind theologically engaged with doctrine and dogma. What Bayer says about another work of Gotthelf is also applicable here. "Wie auch sonst in der Epik Gotthelfs sind hier Geistliches und Weltliches eng miteinander verflochten."¹⁴⁰

As a practical man, minister and author, the secondary virtues were of great importance to him. They determine the actions which are labeled as either Christian or unchristian. For Gotthelf these concepts of virtue are not just theoretical conversation pieces but tools to be used not only in building a better life for oneself also for others. Gotthelf shows a real conviction, a religious conviction toward the role of these virtues. Speaking of the most dominant of these virtues in Uli, loyalty, Hans Bayer, who saw much that was Waldensian and Baptist in Gotthelf, writes: "Die Predigten Gotthelfs lassen erkennen, dass dieser Treuebegriff für den Pfarrer Bitzios nicht bloss eine literarische Fiktion, sondern reales Ethos ist."¹⁴¹ This total immersion in these concepts is not just true of loyalty but all other secondary virtues in Uli. It must be true because Gotthelf based the process of sanctification on these same secondary virtues, making them indispensable for salvation.

What then is the essentially Christian in Uli? It is the God representing, virtuous Johannes, the teachable Uli; it is the

¹⁴⁰ Hans Bayer, "Biblisches Ethos und bäuerliche Lebensform. Die sprachlichen, sozialen und religiösen Grundlagen von Gotthelfs Epik," in Jahrbuch des Freien Deutschen Hochstifts 1980, ed. Detlev Lüders, (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1980), 351.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 356.

secondary virtues which help Uli on his way toward sanctification; loyalty, thrift, obedience, etc.; it is the primary virtues which allow Uli to experience agape, as well as faith in himself, in God, and in his fellow man; it is the eventual unity with God and his blessing for a righteous life. Uli receives these blessings in this life, not just the next. This is Gotthelf's practical Christianity, it not only helps one achieve a future better world after life, but it can also create a better world here and now; for the individual as well as the entire society. Uli shows us the way to a better world. The work contains principles of human relations which we can all understand and which have universal application and implications. This is the Christian and also eternal in Uli.

REFLECTIONS

In the first chapter the thesis was introduced and presented as a function of the secondary virtues to lead mankind to the primary virtues and to God. The second chapter dealt with the text of Uli, using the text-immanent method of interpretation. Through thrift, loyalty, industriousness, devoutness, and other virtues, Uli becomes faithful, hopeful, and loving. In the third chapter we researched some of the secondary literature and various aspects which influenced this realm of virtues and have hopefully thereby lent a degree of believability to the thesis.

One thing remains: to address the relevance of all this writing. We are thoroughly conscious of the fact that this thesis could either collect dust on a shelf, or if read, could be the topic of some brief

discussion and thereby remain insignificant in its overall effect on the studies of Gotthelf. If that occurs, this work will not have any relevance.

Hopefully, in the spirit of Gotthelf, this work will do more than that: namely, stir up some action. If this thesis has raised some questions which could stir interest in Gotthelf, his writings, and perhaps the topic of virtues in literature as a whole, then the work will have been useful.

There are many topics worth investigating. A comparison between Gotthelf's intentions in writing and today's proliferation of self-help literature would be a worthwhile topic of research; especially if one were to examine the virtues in that literature and the role they play.

The whole idea of progress could be examined, especially the theological and sociological forces which influence this notion. Uli offers us a viewpoint of life which, if acted upon, could enable us as humanity to make greater progress. It is an artistically clothed epic which serves as an exhortation for human progress, which is synonymous with sanctification by Gotthelf. He also stands somewhat outside of the main theological movements. Hans Bayer researched Gotthelf's theological sources. A comparison between Gotthelf, church dogmas, and exegetes of his time would also prove interesting.

Then there is the topic of the secondary virtues in general. Loyalty, for example, could be traced into the old Germanic epics. Germanic loyalty could also be compared with Christian loyalty. Is it possible that in actuality Gotthelf occupies himself with old Germanic rather than Judeo-Christian concepts of virtue

in Uli?

In a more general sense, the secondary virtues are also important for the studies in German literature that are in any way concerned with values. This is especially the case with the studies of the Nazi era. Some of the virtues were highly valued, such as loyalty, but had a negative overall effect. They were no longer linked with Christianity or the primary virtues. To trace these virtues through the Nazi literature would tell us much about the relationship of secondary and primary virtues and their contexts.

At the end of this work, we would be amiss to doubt that Gotthelf was a Christian author. Like Johannes, the Bodenbauer, says, everything depends on faith; but action leads to faith. Is Uli worldly in the sense of Marxistic materialism? Never. Is Uli worldly in the sense that there is a definite unity between Heaven and Earth through the sanctification process? Most definitely. It is the Christian message that engages Gotthelf, that forces him into action; no fanatical theology or disposition, but a message strongly rooted in the world of his Emmentaler farmers. It is sociologically relevant. It is timely, in that the dangers of the industrial revolution are presented through a portrayal of their antithesis. It is individually relevant because of the deep and complete recognition of human nature which one has to learn to control.

In Uli Gotthelf is simultaneously sociologically, politically, economically, and religiously active because the realities of life are not shunned by him. For Gotthelf, the true Christian is active; active through the secondary virtues, motivated through the primary

virtues, and rewarded through a unity with God which in Uli is visible, i.e. empirically verifiable.

Finally, it is hoped, that this work will make Uli more accessible for some, that Uli will be read in the way that Gotthelf's intuition sensed and felt the work. What primarily makes Uli relevant is that the work deals with some key questions of existence and human interaction. This will make Uli relevant for a long time as a valuable artistic contribution to the world of literature.

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