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The Cresset (Vol. XIX, No. 5)

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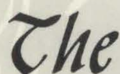

The Cresset

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE,

THE ARTS, AND CURRENT AFFAIRS

MARCH 1956
VOL. XIX NO. 5

THIRTY-FIVE CENTS

THE CRESSET

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THE CRESSET is published monthly except August by the Valparaiso University Press in cooperation with the Walther League. Entered as second class matter September 1, 1953, at the post office at Valparaiso, Indiana, under the act of March 3, 1879. Subscription rates: Domestic—One-year, $3.00; two-year, $5.50; three-year, $8.00. Canadian—Same as domestic. Foreign—$3.25 per year in United States funds. Single copy, 35 cents. Entire contents copyrighted 1955 by the Valparaiso University Press.

THE Cresset

Vol. XIX, No. 5 March, 1956

Notes and Comment

BY THE EDITORS

Status Quo Ante

A month which saw the visit of the British prime minister to Washington and the dispatch of two letters from Marshall Bulganin to President Eisenhower might have been expected to produce some change in the international situation. In reality, the very reverse seems to be true. To all appearances, the differences between East and West have become more rigidified and more formalized, so much so that any real rapprochement seems more improbable than ever before.

But perhaps in this very fact there is an augury of a kind of peace. We know of a marriage which started off turbently and threatened to end either in divorce or homicide. But after a while passions subsided, the two parties accepted the fact of their incompatibility, a kind of polite formality came to dominate their relations to each other, and they stayed married. Such a marriage is hardly marriage at its best, but perhaps it is something short of marriage at its worst, too.

The meeting between Sir Anthony Eden and President Eisenhower seems to have solidified the attitudes of the West. And perhaps out of this solidification of attitude has come a greater measure of self-assurance. We are perhaps no longer so certain that the only alternatives are those of one world or none—at least for the foreseeable future.

The letters from Marshall Bulganin seem to fall into the same pattern of things. One gathers from their content and phrase-

ology that the Russian leaders did not actually expect them to settle anything, but they did more or less indicate a willingness to take the differences between East and West out of the classification of bar-room brawls and into the classification of polite agreements to disagree. Perhaps the Russian leaders, too, are not yet ready for the finality of divorce or homicide.

In an atmosphere such as this —an atmosphere of delicate and tentative b a l a n c e—the great thing now is to keep little things from upsetting the balance. Now, perhaps more than ever before, the issues of war and peace may well turn upon events that happen in places remote from the centers of world power: in the Middle East, in North Africa, in Latin America. Students rioting against the admission of a Negro to the University of Alabama tip the scales a little bit in favor of the East. Each new indignity visited upon the captive peoples of Eastern Europe tips the balance a little bit in favor of the West. Perhaps, in this state of precarious balance, the issues lie, not in the hands of the statesmen and the generals, but in the hands of the little people of the world. This would give a strange new relevance to the Beatitude, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

Why Bipartisan?

Statesmen of both parties have been endorsing, almost as though it were some sort of moral principle, the contention that the country's foreign policy ought not to be based upon partisanship, that it ought rather to be "above politics" and bipartisan.

We want to question that contention. If we understand democratic processes rightly, politics is the device by which differences of opinion and judgment which actually exist among the people are brought onto the platform and into the legislative chambers for airing and decision. Presumably we do not elect men to office because they are prettier or because we just happen to be tired of the incumbents, but because we want to move in another direction for a while.

Now certainly at this time in our history, few of the problems which confront us for discussion and decision could be more urgent and more significant than the problems which lie in the area of foreign relations. Our very survival depends upon our giving the right answers to questions which arise out of the in-

ternational picture. To put these questions outside the area of debate (which is what some people seem to have in mind when they talk about taking them "out of politics") is to deny the citizen his right to participate in the decision-making process.

Perhaps it is true that there are no significant differences of judgment among our people on foreign policy. In that case there is no need to demand a bipartisan foreign policy because we already have one. But if there are significant differences in judgment, these ought not to be hushed up for the sake of some false appearance of agreement.

It seems to us that what underlies this whole cry for a bipartisan foreign policy is a sheepish and altogether unwarranted feeling that politics is something to be ashamed of. It is high time that we returned politics to its proper place in our system and allowed it to do what it was designed to do: to identify and highlight the matters on which we are not in agreement; to champion and criticize proposed policies and procedures; and to provide an opportunity for the people to register their will. If this means presenting to the world the picture of a people divided on some questions and unsure on others, we suggest that it is a part of the glory of a free system that it dares to reveal its differences and its doubts.

Out of such frank discussion could come a genuinely bipartisan foreign policy, based not on an agreement to keep honest differences hushed up but upon an honest discussion and, we would hope, an eventual consensus.

Juvenile Explosion

A shocking series of teen-age brutalities in Chicago has set everybody arguing again about why young people go wrong and what ought to be done to straighten them out. As might be expected, most of the self-appointed experts find the root of the problem in some one cause: working mothers, compulsory schooling, substandard housing, discipline (too harsh or too easy), the spirit of the times, inadequate recreational facilities, too easy access to weapons, lack of a curfew, or some such thing. And it may well be that all of these things play a part in the making of the problem. But it may also be that these things, too, are only symptoms and that the roots themselves are to be found much deeper.

We have no desire to muddy the waters by throwing in still another uninformed opinion,

but there have been times when we felt that we could understand, at least in some measure, what is eating these kids who get into trouble. Perhaps their excesses are one way—a vicious and perverted way, but a way nevertheless—of asserting their individuality in a world which wants, not individuals but well-adjusted and well-integrated units in the social mass. The need for recognition is a real need, as real as the need for food and sleep and sex, and when it is denied proper satisfaction, it may erupt in some diabolical form.

How else can you explain the nature of some of these juvenile crimes? So many of them are not purposive. That is, they are not committed for the sake of money or revenge, or to secure power. They actually do seem to be in the nature of eruptions—unplanned, unmotivated, reckless and pointless.

This is not meant as an excuse, and certainly not as a justification, for the brutalities which have been committed. Nor are we endorsing some sort of Take-it-easy-on-the-poor-kids policy. Perhaps, in the long run, the kindest thing we could do for them is lower the boom on first offences, before crime becomes habitual with them. But before we go throwing stones at the youngsters, we might stop to consider that we had a hand in making them what they are.

One could devoutly wish that some of these fat, overfed Pharisees who hit the newspaper letters column with ferocious cries for blood might be forced to live for a year or so in the rotting slums of the cities from which they have escaped into the suburbs. Let the devotees of the cult of success see once what our society does to the unsuccessful and they may be able to understand why youngsters turn against society. There is an America that the ads don't show and it is this subterranean America that is erupting onto our front pages.

Why Prolong It?

One of the conclusions reached by the Congressional Joint Committee on Atomic Energy is that atomic diagnosis and treatment of cancer will so prolong life that we shall have to reconsider present practises of retiring men at 65. We would like to raise the question of whether the time for such a reconsideration has not already arrived, atomic diagnosis or no.

The fact that the passing years bring diminution of some of our capacities is one which all of us

must face. What tends to get overlooked in our youth-worshipping society is the equally important fact that living is itself an education and that time has a way of recompensing us for the things it takes away from us. A man at 65 may not be capable of expending the physical energy that he was able to expend at 35, but it does not follow that his intellectual energy has been diminished and there is every likelihood that his native intelligence has been enriched and undergirded by experience slowly and painfully acquired. To throw all of that into the ashcan because a man has arrived at some arbitrarily-established age limit is to waste a very valuable commodity.

On the other hand, the great objection to a discretionary retirement policy is that it forces a man's superiors or colleagues somewhere along the line to call him in and tell him, as gently but as firmly as they can, that he has become a liability and a drag, that he is "washed up." This is about the roughest thing one human being can say to another, and often a man is carried along for years after he has ceased to carry his own weight.

What is needed, perhaps, is a re-examination of the whole job picture in a society as complex as ours. Young men and middle-aged men are dying prematurely from coronaries, while the elderly die the slow death of boredom. Particularly in the area of community service, it might be possible for older men to carry much of the burden which presently falls upon younger men. In the churches, perhaps a 65-year-old congregational president or treasurer could give more time and wisdom to his job than can a 30-year-old junior executive. Within business organizations perhaps there are places not only for those who can produce, but for those who can study and reflect and judge.

As the years go by, we shall have a constantly growing proportion of the elderly in our population. So far, we have no wiser "policy" than one of pretending that they do not exist. It is high time we were working toward some more intelligent policy.

Teacher Pay Scales

For many years, one of the grossest injustices in the school system has been the standardized pay scale for teachers of equal training and experience. Under such scales, the good and the bad and the indifferent teacher all get the same pay on the grounds that the obvious injustice of such

an arrangement is preferable to the allegedly greater injustice of making salaries dependent upon subjective judgments of ability.

Happily, there are now a few influential voices calling for a change. Among these voices is that of the highly respected dean of Northwestern University's school of education, Eldridge T. McSwain, who in a recent speech warned that "the change [to a merit system] is coming" and that "if the teaching profession does not take the lead in developing new policies and procedures, it will be taken by others."

The big stumbling block to the introduction of a merit system is, as we have noted, the question of how merit is to be evaluated and who is to do the evaluating. For years this has been set forth as an insurmountable problem and has been the chief weapon of the teachers' associations in defense of the standardized salary schedule.

The answer to this contention is, we think, well-stated by Richard D. Sturtevant, president of the school board for Barrington (Ill.) High School: "If the principal doesn't know who is doing a good or a poor job, we'd better have some new form of supervision of the school. . . . . The evaluation would be based upon observation and judgment, and would be a function of management, just as it is in business."

We agree. Having had some experience in the teaching field, we have found that a man's colleagues and superiors usually have a pretty accurate idea of his competence and effectiveness. There is a certain *esprit de corps* among teachers which prompts them to rally round each other in defense against outsiders, but among themselves they appraise each other with considerable candor. No doubt they sometimes err in their judgments but we doubt that these errors would produce as much downright injustice as does the present system.

At any rate, we don't think that the great teacher would be overlooked for long, and it is the great teacher who chiefly concerns us. He is the man who makes the educational experience worthwhile, and he is the man who will not long remain in a situation which puts a premium, as does the standardized salary schedule, upon mediocrity.

Deep Freeze

It takes a little while to accustom one's self to Adm. Richard E. Byrd's suggestion that the Antarctic continent be used as a

sort of natural deep freeze for American agricultural surpluses, but the longer one thinks about it the less unreasonable it seems. At worst, it is no goofier than what we are already doing, and at best it might be worked up into something really beneficial to mankind.

We would like to amend Adm. Byrd's suggestion by removing the limitation to American farm surpluses and broadening it to include whatever food surpluses any nation may wish to store in Antarctica. What that would give us could be a sort of international food bank against which countries might borrow when wars or crop failures produce famines in any part of the world.

Would such a thing work? We don't know and we doubt that there would be any way of knowing short of actually trying it. This much we do know: that hunger, at the present time, is not the result of intrinsic inability to produce sufficient food to feed the world's population but rather of political and economic barriers to the free flow of agricultural commodities. One of the generalizations that can be made for practically all tropical agricultural products, for example, is that they tend to be underproduced because of artificial limitations on their markets. The same principle seems to hold true for many middle-latitude products.

One objection which we had formerly held to the suggestion has been contradicted by a conclusion at which Adm. Byrd has arrived on the basis of his experience with the present Antarctic expedition. We had supposed that it would be impossible to maintain personnel in the Antarctic to supervise any sort of proposed food depot. Adm. Byrd is quoted, however, as saying that the present expedition represents, for him, "the opening of a continent." "I think," Adm. Byrd says, "that from now on there will be permanent bases down there. This expedition showed that it can be done."

Before any such food-bank program can be put into operation, there will have to come first of all a new and more humane attitude toward the significance of food in our world. At the core of this new attitude will have to be an understanding that foodstuffs are not primarily commodities whose production is the function merely of economics, but rather that they are the very stuff of life whose production ought to be determined by human need. Whether mankind is ready for such a revolutionary change in attitude, we do not

know. But with world population rising as it is, the choice is between some such attitude and widespread starvation.

H. L. Mencken

One of the best remembered of H. L. Mencken's numerous writings was his plea for a funeral which would be suitable for an agnostic who had accepted the inevitability of his own damnation. Mencken knew, perhaps as well as any man of his generation, how real the need is for such an order of service, and we are not, therefore, disposed to pass over his request lightly. But what he asks of us is a very difficult thing, for while essentially the same things could be spoken at the grave of any man, woman, or child who has died in the Faith, the words which would be spoken over the grave of an admitted agnostic would have to be as various as are the sins which men have held as shields against the love of God.

It would obviously not be fitting, for example, to lump Mencken with the half-alive, the bellyservers, the witless and the numb whose life and destiny might be satisfactorily memorialized in our Lord's words: "What shall it profit a man though he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" For Mencken's life was no mere sucking of the grape of life. More than most of us, he saw through the cheapness, the shoddiness, the fraudulence, and the impermanence of our world and was content to live in it as a stranger.

And that, perhaps, is a clue to the tragedy of Mencken's life and work. He was close enough to the Kingdom to see that the man of integrity must always be a stranger in this world. What he was never given grace to understand is that the stranger can justify his role only by recognizing that he is also a pilgrim. Merely to deny the world is to become a misanthrope. If the denial is to have any real meaning, it must be for the sake of a positive good. Rejection apart from confession is mere petulance. Denial without acceptance and submission is, in small things, snobbery, and in great things, nihilism.

And so if we had been asked to give Mencken a funeral suitable to his particular kind of agnosticism, we would have based our remarks upon those words which, more than any other words in Scripture, have occasioned in us hours of sober reflection: "Lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

This, we have to record with

profound sorrow, seems to us the tragedy of H. L. Mencken. He could show us the phonies and the hypocrites, but he himself could not recognize the real and the genuine. He came close enough to the truth to recognize that man is a stranger in this world, but not close enough to see that the stranger is a pilgrim. And so we who loved the old guy in his lifetime can find nothing to console us in his death.

The Paper Pulpit

Two of our feature articles this month deal with an ancient but perennially vital ministry of the church, the ministry of the written word. Since this is a topic with which we have long been much concerned, we hope that Pastor Gockel and Miss Pries will not mind if we add a few words to their already more than adequate coverage of the subject.

It is hard to recall when it was that we first realized that there lies in words a power to stir, to excite, to comfort, and to bless. One of our earliest recollections is of the dark winter morning when our pastor came into our first-grade classroom and told us that our teacher had died and then, without further remark, read us the account of our Lord's stilling of the tempest. What profound understanding of child psychology prompted him to choose just that story we shall never know, but certainly he could not have chosen a better combination of content and fitting word to assuage the storm in our own hearts.

Then there were the years when the Lutheran Hymnal was our constant companion. Out of those years, we recall with special gratitude the majestic measures of "Jehovah, Let Me Now Adore Thee"; the disciplined ardor of "O Jesus, King Most Wonderful"; the gentle dignity of "Now Rest Beneath Night's Shadow"; the stately grandeur of "Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying"; and the air of history that breathed from "Now Do We Pray God the Holy Ghost."

A few years later, came the Book of Common Prayer with its sonorous redundancies, the sort of language princes of the blood might be expected to employ in addressing a royal father. Still later came the eloquent contemporaries—Belloc, Chesterton, Lewis, Phillips. By these—the dead and the unseen—our thinking was shaped more than by anyone whose living voice we have heard.

This is not to underrate the importance or the effectiveness

of the ministry of the spoken word. But great preaching and great writing are separate arts. Historically and even in our own day, the prime need of the church is for great preaching, because far more people can or will listen than can or will read. But with the slow spread of minimal literacy over the earth, the ministry of the written word promises to become an ever more important part of the total ministry.

The Church should continue to encourage her sons and daughters who have the gifts demanded by this ministry to develop and to employ them.

NO VANITY AT THE CROSS

(on reading Ecclesiastes)

The old man withers and fades,
The young is snatched from bloom,
A breeze ripples the tide
And time seals the tomb.

A voice loud and strong
Sways the thoughts of men,
Holds the world one hour,
Is lost in the wind again.

All seems vanity
Until we behold the cross --
His was no voice in the wind . . . .
And only death knew loss.

—MILDRED OFFERLE

AD LIB.

By ALFRED R. LOOMAN

Listening to the telephone company commercials on the radio, I am reminded that I can remember way back to those days when a telephone was a luxury and not the accepted necessity it is today. These commercials are written on the premise that everyone has a telephone and no new customers are to be found. They make no attempt to stress the advantages of having such an instrument; in fact, they consider only one phone in the home as woefully inadequate.

Today one must have extensions located in strategic spots around the house. This idea is sold through the medium of little real-life dramas based on letters sent in by subscribers. Most of these dramas begin with a long ring on the telephone, followed by the voice of a lady obviously out of breath. She recovers her breath in a remarkably short time and spends the next minute talking. It turns out that the person calling is the husband and the lady answering is his wife who was down in the basement washing or in the bedroom cleaning when the phone rang.

What is needed, the housewife declares in her one minute spiel, is an extension in the basement and/or in the bedroom. What makes this a most effective sales talk is not the necessity of the extension, but the housewife's closing remark that they need an extension "just like the one the Jones family has next door". How these real-life stories come out I have never discovered because the announcer breaks in at

this point. Nor do we ever find out what the husband called about in the first place. At no time does he get a chance to say a word and, I am sure, after listening to that harangue on extensions he has forgotten what he was going to say.

Another sales appeal is concerned with the color of your telephone. If you still have an old black set around, you are hopelessly old fashioned. Phones are now available in all the colors of the rainbow plus two and why you should persist in keeping that black job is something that the telephone companies will never understand when, "for only a few cents more," you could have an instrument to match the color of your hair, your eyes, or the wallpaper.

I do not mean to belittle the telephone for I think it is an absolute necessity today. Having gone through two long periods without one some time back, I can testify that a telephone in the home can save much more time and money than it costs. But I would prefer to consider the telephone as a necessity and not as a household appliance that becomes obsolete in appearance every year.

Modern telephone services have increased greatly in the last couple of decades and only as a disseminator of news has the telephone moved backward in that period of time. Much of what I have to say on the modern phone systems is based on hearsay, since in our area the service is such that we feel unduly happy if we just get the operator to answer. There is something personal, however, about our system here that I appreciate and I think many will miss the old exchange with the operator when our local company goes on a dial system some hundred years from now.

Only last month a small community a few miles away, which is serviced—how that word is abused—by the same company as ours, had its phone system converted to a dial system. Until that time customers asked for their party by name. This strikes me as an unusually personal system and I regret to think that it is gone forever. This change to a dial system caused the retirement of the two matronly operators who had been on the switch board for years. I do not know what these ladies plan to do in retirement, but they could become independently wealthy by collaborating on and publishing a book about life in that community as they know it. Conceivably it would be possible, if

not legal, for them to become wealthy by collaborating on, but no publishing, the same book.

Whether they did or not, I don't know, but these ladies were in a position to know just about everything that went on in the community. Now some years ago it was possible for almost all the telephone subscribers to know what went on. In those days the telephone performed a real service as a disseminator of news. I am referring to the party-line system as used in almost every farming community. On this system all the telephones for miles around were on one line. When the phone rang for anyone on the line, it rang in every home on the line. The telephone company assigned each household a special code ring of so many short and so many long rings. When the phone came forth with your ring it alerted you to the fact that you had a call but it also alerted everyone else on the line. So if your neighbors cared to hear what you had to say, all they had to do was go to the telephone and lift the receiver.

Absolutely no privacy existed in a telephone conversation and this, of course, was understood by everyone on the line. Over the years an elaborate but unofficial code of conduct evolved on the behavior of the extra listeners. It was understood there were certain things one could not do on the party line. This code excluded almost everything except listening in. Many people tried to foil the eavesdroppers by heavy use of innuendo, by using what amounted to code names in the conversation, by understatement and by whatever strategem came to mind. Most telephone conversations were larded with such statements as "you know who", "you know the one I'm talking about", and "the one we saw in the dime store last week." Yes, the person at the other end of the line knew whom you meant—and so did everyone else listening in. A few tried using a completely futile method of getting something across secretly by speaking German when they wanted to impart any special information. This was quite unsuccessful for, on that particular line, almost everyone understood German as well, and in some cases better, than they did English.

You may call this business of listening in on the conversation of two other persons an invasion of privacy, but no one involved ever thought of it as such. In the first place, everyone on the line was involved and understood the situation perfectly. If

it was invasion, it was invasion by consent. Secondly, it was, in most cases, a healthy pastime, because it eased the loneliness of the housewife on the farm. Twenty-five years ago the farmer's wife didn't and couldn't get to town every time she wanted to. She couldn't visit with her next door neighbor because she lived farther than walking distance. Driving of the car was limited to the head of the household and his oldest son and that car went to town only on Saturday night for the shopping trip, on Sunday morning for church, and, occasionally on rainy days, to the implement store where the farmers gathered to talk crops.

The party line telephone was a boon to these ladies. They were as up on the news as if they had lived in the center of town. It was a comforting thing to have a telephone in the house and it furnished much more information and enjoyment than radio and television combined can furnish today. The art of keeping up on the right conversations took time, but the housework got done and meals were on time.

Listening in required patience and a special technique. These no longer exist. Those of us who are on two and four party lines know that the attribute of patience is gone. If you are in the midst of a conversation and another party on the line wants the phone, he will lift the receiver several times a minute and each time bang it down when he finds you still conversing. He doesn't listen in quietly and respectfully because he is too impatient to put in his phone call. In fact, far from being quiet when he has the receiver off the hook during your phone call, he either runs a recording of a machine shop in operation or collects his small children in the vicinity of the phone and starts them on a rowdy game of cowboys and Indians.

In the heyday of the party line this type of conduct would have been frowned upon. When the phone rang for someone else on the line the housewife waited until the party being called had answered the phone. Then she lifted the receiver quietly so as not to make a cracking sound in the ear of the participants. So long as time permitted, she could stand there and catch up on the news. By noon time when the husband came in he could hear more neighborhood news from his wife than he could have gotten if he had spent the entire morning reading a newspaper. All this without the wife's having spoken to a person and hav-

ing moved no further than ten feet from the stove.

Since it is uncomfortable to stand for any period of time with one hand over the mouth piece of a telephone, most people didn't bother to do it when they were listening in. As a result one had a good idea of who was listening. No house is ever completely quiet and most houses have sounds that are peculiar to that house alone. The ticking or the striking tones of a grandfather clock, the sound of a child in the background, the creaking noise of a windmill near the house all served as clues to the identity of the various listeners. To hold the receiver comfortably the lady had to stand fairly near the mouth piece, but she was careful not to cough or to make any other noise. In the Winter when head colds were prevalent it was sometimes difficult to hear the caller because of the heavy breathing up and down the line.

It was not considered correct to speak into the phone if one was just listening. Even in defense of one's own character, should anyone be so foolish as to malign it over a party line, it was necessary to stand by and take it. However, so sure was everyone that the whole countryside would be listening that I have known of cases where, when two were talking to each other and wanted advice or information from another, they merely asked her and she answered. A three-way conversation resulted. This was perfectly proper since the third party had been invited into the conversation.

The party line telephone was a time saver on certain occasions. When one woman wanted to invite a group over to the house on a particular date, she was not required to call back and inform each person that the date was all right since everyone could come. No, from the first person invited on through the guest list, everyone stayed on the phone until they were sure everyone could make it. The party line telephone, obviously, was not the thing to use in planning a surprise party.

No extension phones existed in those days nor did the instruments come in a choice of colors. The old telephone was a brown, oblong, rather unsightly box fastened to the wall and it had a crank on the side. To reach the operator it was necessary to give the crank a couple of quick turns and eventually the sound of "Number please" came across the humming line.

But a phone was a luxury in those days, except to the farmer's

wife who, quite rightly, considered it a necessity if she were to keep up on what was going on. Today's black (or colored), coldly efficient telephone may be a great technical improvement over the old brown box of the party line days, but it can never compare in other respects. That old phone was a comfort to have around, a high personal device, and an almost limitless source of news and entertainment.

The urge to touch an object with a "Wet Paint" sign on it, to yank a handle that says "Do Not Pull", to peek into an opening marked for someone else only, and to overhear the conversation of another—these are urges deep-seated in many people. If the telephone companies are so hard up for business that they must advertise extensions and colored phones, I suggest they advertise instead special phones on a party line. The results of that advertising should keep their stockholders smiling for years to come.

NIGHT OUT

Mockingly the unwashed dawn
Reeks with last night's derelictions
And in a lamp-post's halo
Soar the ghosts of yesterday's hopes.
Sluggishly, protestingly
The gutter trickles gray;
The taste of rain
Infiltrates the air
Cool against my cheeks.
On the floor of my harlequin mind
Lie a scattering of oddments
From which the thread
Of a threadbare song
Dances a mazurka
As the day violetly
Stretches itself
Yawning maudlinly
In the face
Of plundered dreams.

—CHARLES SHAW

Writing For Television

By Herman W. Gockel

Religious Director

"This is The Life"

The Creative Challenge of Evangelistic Drama

With a suddeness which has almost taken her breath, the Church today has been confronted by a creative challenge, unprecedented in her history. We are referring to the challenge of writing creatively for dramatic religious television.

The task of proclaiming or preserving her message by means of the written word is, of course, nothing new to the Church. The inspired writers of both testaments spread their thoughts on parchment. The church fathers down through the centuries filled libraries with their laboriously written scrolls. Luther and, since him, thousands more have sounded forth the call of the Gospel by means of the printed page.

But always, and in each instance, it was a matter of putting lifeless ink on lifeless paper, where it would remain until it was read by the eyes of others.

It remained for the middle of the twentieth century to make possible the communication of the Gospel by a method of writing which is "wholly other"—wholly different from anything the Church has ever done before. It is the type of writing which, during a conversation sometime ago, we found ourselves inadvertently calling "the written word made flesh." For that is precisely what those are doing who are writing creatively for dramatic religious television.

Words - Incarnate

They are putting words on paper which must become incarnate before they are ultimately "read." Not the letters which they arrange into written words, but the *people* whom their words call into being, become the ultimate conveyors of their thought.

St. Paul, of course, did not have television in mind when he

wrote the following to his Corinthians, but we can draw a warranted analogy nevertheless. He tells them: "You are an open letter about Christ which we ourselves have written, not with pen and ink but with the Spirit of the living God. Our message has been engraved not in stone, but in living men and women." 2 Cor. 3:2.3. (Phillips.)

Those who are writing for dramatic religious television are doing exactly that. They are writing the Christian message *into* "living men and women," and they are presenting these living men and women, via television, to millions of viewers every week.

The strategy is the same as Paul's. The people on the screen become the Church's testimonials to the Christian faith and to the Christian way of life. The strategy is also the same as Christ's. "Let your light so shine before men," He says, "that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Mat. 5:16. According to this strategy, the people on the screen become reflectors of divine grace as well as invitations *to* it.

It is the duty of the creative Christian writer, then, to bring into being such characters as will do what the passages above require. He must, as it were, produce men and women who are showcases of the miracle of grace.

The Writer's Dilemma

But how preach the Gospel by means of showcases? How weave the *vertical* dimension of the essential Christian witness into popular contemporary drama which is to compete for attention on the same stage with "I Love Lucy," "Dragnet," and "Caesar's Hour"? How, in a program showing everyday people in everyday relationships, bring out the dynamic of the *Cross* as the inner motivation for the outer deed?

Indeed, how?

The creative writer in this field runs up against his first impasse when he learns to his dismay that every Christian virtue, as long as it remains merely visual, remains merely moral. There is nothing distinctively Christian about the visual aspects of kindness, meekness, patience. Nor is there anything distinctively Christian about those aspects of goodness, charity, and generosity which are apprehended merely by the eye.

You can photograph two men walking down the street, each meeting a person in need, and each lending a helping hand.

The one may be a Christian, the other not. But the photographs of both deeds of kindness would be identical. No camera on earth is capable of picking up the difference, because no camera on earth is capable of photographing the love of God in Christ which has transformed the heart of the one and not the other.

Nor will it do to absolve the camera of this obligation and reassign it to the microphone—to make vocal what you cannot make visual. To do so would be to end up with characters who would be caricatures of the normal Christian and would repel rather than attract.

Motivation Normally Implicit

The distinctively Christian motivation of the believer is normally implicit—only rarely explicit. Yet in religious drama, intended for evangelistic purposes, the writer is forced, somehow, to verbalize the motivation of his characters. As a result he finds himself in constant jeopardy, tossed between the Scylla of mere morality and the Charybdis of nauseous, unctuous pietism.

Indeed, it is right here that many church-produced films have foundered. Some have made the mistake of omitting all distinctively Christian motivation and consequently have produced only moral stories. Others have *forced* the distinctively Christian motivation upon the unready lips of their characters and, as a result, have come up with characters who were not only incredible and unconvincing but, in some instances, downright revolting.

It is a notorious fact that some church-produced plays have had a phony ring simply because those who wrote the scripts were so determined to get their "message" across that they were willing to make puppets of their characters — puppets who were merely the Charlie MaCarthys of the sponsoring church bodies.

The church will be ill advised if, in its sincere desire to get its message across to the unconverted public, it produces characters on the television screen who, far from being normal human beings, are walking editorials. Such caricatures will simply not be bought!

Meeting the Problem

In view of the above, the writer of evangelistic drama will do well to arrange his basic story line in such a way that it

leads naturally and credibly to the verbalization of a distinctively Christian message. If he has built his original story line in such a manner that the ultimate verbalization of his specific message flows naturally and easily from his plot material, he will find his audience buying his message as an integral and inevitable part of his story. But woe is him if his story does not *cry* for that verbalization when the dramatic moment comes! That is when he begins forcing a message on the lips of his characters against which his audience will rebel.

In the case of "This Is the Life" we approached this problem by building two scenes of explicit Christian witness into each story outline—one minor and one major. The first scene was intentionally written so that the attempted oral witness was halting, stumbling, and inadequate—in other words, true to life. The second scene, benefitting from the first, was written with stronger, smoother, more effective dialog. These scenes were "there" before the story was written.

Then, too, there is the device of simple geography. We soon learned that small rooms lend themselves better for explicit religious dialog than larger rooms. The American public will buy religious dialog in the intimacy of a small prescription room, for instance, rather than in the public atmosphere of a drugstore lunch counter. And they will accept a strong oral witness between *two* people—*unter vier Augen*—much sooner than in the presence of six or eight persons. And for reasons of which they themselves are not conscious they will buy religious dialog on a stage prepared with night lighting much sooner than on a stage prepared with day lighting.

In short, the writer of evangelistic drama will have to have his climactic scene of oral Christian witness clearly in mind before he writes the very first word of his screenplay. It is that scene for which his story is being written. And once he has settled on the content of that scene, he will use every device, every trick of the trade, to make that one scene come off naturally, easily, and credibly.

Minimum-Maximum

But can enough message be crowded into one or two climactic scenes of a television drama? Speaking from our experience with "This Is the Life," we would answer in the affirmative. In each episode we have sought

to present the Gospel with a minimum of bulk and a maximum of potency. In some episodes the actual verbalized Gospel may have been limited to no more than a minute or two, but when the message was delivered, it was delivered on the wave of an emotion which was twenty minutes in preparing.

It would be difficult and perhaps dangerous to compare the potential effectiveness of such an approach with that of the traditional sermon. But let us adduce at least two factors in favor of this approach.

First, it is quite likely that an immeasurably larger audience, particularly of the unchurched and unconcerned, is still at its television set to hear the verbalized Gospel toward the end of a good dramatic show than is still around to hear the explicit Gospel appeal at the end of the conventional twenty-minute sermon. This factor can hardly be over-emphasized.

Secondly, we believe that by a skillful use of the arts of empathy, whereby we induce our audience to see and feel itself both in the problems and in the solutions of our stories, we have created a mental situation in which the viewer will get more out of two minutes of oral Gospel message than he would normally have gotten out of twenty minutes of mere listening. The viewer of "This Is the Life" is more than a spectator, more than an auditor. He is a participant. He is participating in a real life situation which makes the Christian Gospel both relevant and meaningful.

If the psychology of this approach needs any vindication, we need only point to the Master Evangelist Himself, of whom Mark tells us that, when He addressed the common people, particularly when He addressed them *en masse,* He confined Himself largely to the telling of stories, reserving abstractions, applications, and explanations for the conditioned few. Mark 4:33. R.S.V .

If the deviousness of this approach needs any justification, we can again point to the Master Evangelist as He speaks to the Samaritan woman. He speaks to her first of physical thirst, then of the water of Sychar's well, then of the water of life, then of proper worship, and, finally, of Himself as the Promised One of Israel. John 4:5-26. He met her where she was and left her where He wanted her. That is the aim, as well as the technique, of the creative writer of dramatic religious television.

A Field for Experts

To achieve the subtleties which make for convincing drama on the one hand and to deliver a worthwhile Christian message on the other, is, of course, a field for experts. Nonprofessional writing, amateur acting, or incompetent directing will not get by in a medium into which the world is pouring its most specialized skills.

The Church's dramatic offerings are being seen on the very same screens on which the most successful Hollywood and New York productions appear. The general audience will not be disposed to make charitable allowances for any inferiority of skill or competence in a program just because it happens to be produced by well meaning church people.

The securing of competent writers for a program like "This Is the Life" is an almost insuperable task. All of the writers who worked on the first few episodes of the program were dismissed midway through the opening series. Of the more than thirty professionals who have worked on the project, only three remain as regulars.

Nor is this a reflection on the writers' competence. It is an underscoring rather of the *uniqueness* of evangelistic drama. For the average professional, evangelistic drama is a nightmare!

And, yet, only a professional can do the job acceptably. Effective screenplay writing is beyond the reach of the amateur, calling, as it does, for highly specialized skills and training. Writing a story is one thing. Writing a story which lends itself to low-budget filming (minimum costs and sets), is quite another. But neither is as exacting as writing a finished screenplay which is ready for the *camera*. That calls for years of specialized experience.

Television's Challenge

With the prospect of the television screen replacing the printed page more and more, at least in the homes of the masses, the Church will do well to be on the lookout for writing talent which can be consecrated to the fullest possible exploitation of this medium.

There are some 250,000 pulpits in our country, but there are more than 40,000,000 television sets with more than 100,000,000 viewers—and the number is growing every day. Let the Church continue to proclaim the Gospel from its pulpits, but let

it not fail to avail itself of this twentieth century miracle of sight and sound.

Here lies one of the greatest creative challenges of today—and tomorrow!

PRIZE RING

A square raft
Lapped by a sea of faces.

When gloves thud
Under the swift flexure of muscles,
When flesh gives seepages of blood,
In the pale eyes of civilization
Wakes a stranger.

Automobiles, radios, television,
And the bright electric eye,
Good manners, good intentions,
Whirl to a dazzling vortex,
Vanishing.

And the roar of voices
Like a sea roaring.

Augustus. . . . .
Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus,
Son of Apollo,
Do your mouldy ashes move at the sound?

Nero Claudius Caesar Drusus Octavianus,
Do you suddenly remember the cestus?
Christians and lions?
Slaves, gladiators, captives . . . .
And sand mushy and crimson?

—S. M. Sargent

The Writing Necessity

By JANICE PRIES

Dept. of Public Relations

The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

One of the greatest challenges for the Christian in the world today is that of writing. The Christian called by God to be a writer today is in a unique position. He is, indeed, by necessity a unique individual. If he is not, he is not of potential service to God's kingdom as a writer, for the demands are large and intricate.

It is unfortunate that almost universally, within our branch of Lutheranism, persons with an artistic bent have devoted themselves to the study and practice of music, for thereby energy potentially giving rise to much creativity of thought has been channeled into the necessarily somewhat sterile reproduction of the gifts of past genius. The focusing of unprecedentedly foreceful thought on the role of the Christian and of the Christian Church in the world of today has thus been precluded.

I am wondering if this historic preoccupation with music is not something of an escapist corollary of our also historic unwillingness to, one might say, "grab contemporary problems by the tail and do something about them."

I am not now speaking of some nebulous category of "problems" entirely dissociated from religion. The fact has been stated often but it bears repeating: there is no area of life, even in the so-called "secular" sphere, which is or ought to be unrelated to religion. For man, the protagonist in the problems, ought not be, is not and essentially cannot be thought of as unrelated to God. An association exists, of either a positive or negative nature.

It is in the realm of ideas where these world-problems, relating as they must, eventually, to the basic realities of religion, are to be faced. The role of the writer in the shaping, formulating and communicating of ideas

is self-evident as to function and importance.

But our church, even though it is theoretically committed to permeation of all fronts by the message from God to man, has not produced writers to send into the all-important fray of ideas—possibly because of its basically schizophrenic approach to numerous areas involving learning. The ground of the difficulty seems to be a fear of having to cope with knowledge, and, essentially, a lack of appreciation of the transcendent possibilities of God for enabling His children—whose intellects are also redeemed—to integrate knowledge into a pattern of useful service to the kingdom of God.

It is in this unceasing process of integration where the uniqueness of the writer becomes apparent. God dwelling in him, the possibilities for Christian achievement are unending, for God's resources are unending. It is not to the credit of a church which proclaims an all-powerful God to find within the church an unawareness of possibilities for impact on society which are beyond the ordinary. These possibilities exist because God exists, and it is time to recognize them and bring some of them to fruition.

There is, in our circles, at least a beginning awareness of the potentialities for Christian service in journalism. But the field of creative writing lies unreclaimed for Christian witness.

Admittedly the task is difficult—admittedly only the finest God-created intelligences will succeed in the task. But the breadth of scope becomes apparent when one considers how thorough a search for individual talents is warranted by the challenge, and how dedicated an encouragement will be necessary, often, once the talents are located. If we cannot write, we can look for writers, we can urge capable youngsters to consider the profession, we can explain the importance and necessity of providing Christian writers for society.

The task of the Christian writer is difficult because, contrary to some opinion, much more is needed than Christian faith and sanctified good intentions. Besides an incisive acquaintance with the human heart, the best-developed artistry is necessary. The drama, novel, short story or poem constructed by the Christian writer must stand by itself as a work of art, aside from inherent religious or moralistic qualities. And I suspect that it is at this point that many Christians, possibly initially drawn to a life of creative

writing, decide that they are unequal to the necessities.

The opinion is correct: they are unequal to the necessities. God, however, is not.

Our church is inoperative in many areas and ineffective in others because its people have not, as it were, "drawn the consequences" of their Christian faith. If God is the God we say He is, He is the source of all creation and all potential creation. It is basically unChristian to assume that He does not want to bring about seemingly impossible Christian impact in the world through us. (I might also state the conviction, parenthetically, that this same failure to take advantage of the creativity of God is at the root of the spiritual boredom of many Christians, and of the resort to suppers, bazaars, and other peripheral activities not directly related to God's work in the world. Let us begin to learn a spiritual lesson from recent disclosures in the physical realm: there are greater possibilities for Christian service than we know or have become used to acknowledging. They exist in the mind of God, Who is waiting to impart them to us.)

Long ago, when I was very young (and before I was a writer of any kind), I used to pray two prayers which, it seems to me, are exceedingly appropriate for the aspiring writer of any age. One was "Let us do great and wonderful things together." The other was Solomon's "Give me an understanding heart." Both recognize the limitless potential of God to give what otherwise remains ungiven. One has a transcendence about it—the implication that this frail child can be set aglow by the fires of Heaven, and that other frail children can see the glow, and respond, as they draw close and feel the warmth. The other recognizes an indisputable fact—that no writer, even though Christian, will draw people to him, or successfully engage in changing the hearts of men, if he does not have the ability (which only God can give) to love his potential audience, individual by individual. Since it is the loving God to Whom we are seeking to draw our audience, this is the only framework in which the Christian writer can work—that of a deeply compassionate understanding of "the human condition," the lostness, the aloneness of man without God. To tell the magnificent truth which God wants each person to believe—that there is a home for him at the end of day,

and arms about him, and that he, too, has a task of love in the world—this is the unequaled challenge and the deep privilege before the Christian writer in the year of our Lord 1956.

PROGRESS

The indifferent world
twists mutiple faces
toward indeterminate ways;
there is no east nor west
north nor south
but illusions of men.
Some,
whose rising hearts
have boiled into minds,
warm thoughts
on hot passions.
I have only to go away
along cold streets
where the snow is deep
and white.
No one has come this far today.

—JAMES BINNEY

How Should a Christian Vote?

By Edward L. Schapsmeier

The powerful privilege of the vote is one of the most abused possessions of the Christian in America. When it comes to politics Christians seem to react in the same manner as their worldly brethren. From the "Bible Belt" of the South have come some of the most bigoted and prejudiced representatives our nation has had the dishonor to have. Even certain Midwestern states, which have large and active church bodies, yearly elect men with extremely selfish and limited viewpoints. All too often cities with a respectable number of churches are just as corrupt as those with few. Do Christians put their faith into action at election time?

Politics and the pocket-book are bed fellows and to divorce the two requires supreme effort. Already the campaign oratory echoes the familiar selfish economic appeal. "More for you, if you are for us" is the distinct trend of smart campaigns. The farmer is being wooed this year even as he was four years ago. All the promises of greater prosperity, peace, and more for you are being dusted off and put into action. In the heat of battle each party and each candidate promises more and more. It is in this confusion and in this materialistic atmosphere that the Christian must decide how to vote.

The rules of politics are flexible as elastic. But surely there must be some ground rules to which the conscientious voter can appeal. To sift the truth from the mixture of chaff and wind requires more than sincerity. For one can be sincerely wrong as well as right.

One premise surely must remain clear for the Christian. He must recognize clearly that the United States is not the fountainhead of all power with the mantle of world authority safely cloaked upon its brawny shoulders. In short, America is not a synonym for God.

Four years ago the Republican party waged a skillful and successful campaign dedicated to the idea that because of American policy up to that time, the

world was in a mess. In other words because America said, "bang" and the Russian bear did not play dead the administration was at fault. This year's campaign will be the same players, only some of the cast is different. "Geneva" will replace "Yalta", but the sad state of world affairs that exists will be duly placed upon the administration. This naive and fallacious concept that the world jumps when America speaks is disastrous. Instead of viewing our nation as one among many, we steadfastly cling to the notion that the United States is some kind of god and the rest of the world are merely pawns.

To brand one entire party as traitors because of the course of world events is to defy logic. Democrats are still smarting under that label, but the tide has now changed so that the Kruschchev doublecross can now be blamed upon the Republican Party. Likewise the recent gains of the Communists in the Middle and Far East will be placed upon the Eisenhower doorstep just as the loss of China was Truman's baby. Such erroneous political reasoning has led to much harm for it simply does not recognize the fact that destiny does not always confer with the United States. It violates both in fact and spirit the needed national virtue of humility.

We now have one basic principle to guide a wise choice. A Christian realizes that ultimate government rests with God and his motion of casting a ballot does not in any way deify his country. With the intelligence every Christian is endowed with, he must exercise careful judgment as to how the policies of either party might influence other nations. At most the knowledge to make such a decision will be limited. So then must be his ability to render judgment upon either party.

Closely allied with humility is the great Christian virtue of charity. The "all out blame" technique is peculiar to politics.

During the Roosevelt era this was the favorite pastime of the minority party. Nothing was spared. But oddly enough today when the then minority party has the power now to make changes, very few of the basic New Deal laws have been nullified.

The last presidential campaign found each party led by men of high integrity. Each attempted to stick to the issues, but as the heat of oratory quickened the underlings lashed out at a host of unfair things. The

water becomes muddy and the emotions swell. In this atmosphere the uncharitable charges flourish. It becomes most important that the Christian voter should not succumb to the impassioned plea.

Another guiding principle that should motivate the choice of party or candidate, and it is most difficult to practice, is unselfishness. The conscience should be able to answer an unequivocal yes to the following question: "Will my vote be for the good of all?"

The man of much possessions may support one party strictly as a matter of selfish interest, despite the knowledge that certain of these policies may be to the detriment of the nation. The labor union member may give whole hearted support to a party, because it flatters him with protection and favors. A business man may lend support to a party that favors high tariffs, even if such protection is selfish and not in the welfare of others. And so it goes. Party platforms are a conglomeration of selfishness.

The Christian who falls prey to this is committing spiritual suicide. Materialism may in the end be more destructive than any of the other "isms", but for the Christian to support it yet is despicable. How can we expect our representatives in government to act for the common good, if they are not even selected upon that basis?

The selection of the proper candidate is difficult even in normal circumstances, therefore the Christian voter must exercise prudence.

What juror would feel fit to render a verdict after hearing only one side of the case? And yet many a voter feels no pangs of conscience upon listening only to the speeches of his party's candidate, while ignoring his opponent. This type of listening only confirms his pre-determined opinions. This may salve the conscience, but it is actually outright unfairness.

H.L. Mencken once wrote, "No one ever went broke underestimating the intelligence of the American people". This commentary on America has more efficacy when applied to the political scene than any other statement extant. More campaigning is dedicated to the glands than to the brain. To vote intelligently and conscientiously is a difficult undertaking. Fully knowing the importance of the privilege must motivate the Christian to redouble his efforts to prepare himself for the correct choice.

Just to read the papers is not enough. To sit passively and gaze at TV is not the answer either. To qualify for the momentous act of directly participating in one's own government one cannot suddenly become aware of what is going on. This interest in domestic and international affairs must have been a continuous thing. How can one choose to support ninety per cent of parity or decline it, if the entire thing is a mystery? What voter can rightly support a party dedicated to a foreign policy he does not understand? If Christian voters sin, they sin greatly because of sins of omission. By not keeping informed at all times they are likely to be uninformed at election time.

The original question, "How Should a Christian Vote?" may or may not yet be answered. Certain precepts have been suggested. The guides so far might well pertain to all voters, Christian and non-Christian. But the inner motivation for the Christian is far different, since he must gauge the over-all picture in a moral framework. To apply moral rules to political actions requires courage. If a Christian were to actively seek a political office, he would be severely handicapped by the mere fact that he is tied to the truth. Misrepresentation to the Christian is pure lying and failure to follow up on campaign promises must be regarded as deceit.

The American habit of forgetting campaign charges and countercharges is a tacit admission that they are often not made in good faith. Parties amass records, as do candidates in office, and these can be judged far better than the defense of it. The rogue who resorts to patriotic platitudes cannot erase his actions. The party that ignores its pledges cannot explain them away with more promises. If the Christian voters en masse would remember this, the practice would become obsolete in quick time.

The occasion might demand that a Christian abstain from supporting either candidate if neither deserves a vote of confidence. In such a case a Christian has the duty to protest, either verbally or in writing, to the parties involved. Silent protest is ineffectual, unless it is organized.

The better course would be not to abdicate the right to vote, but choose the party or candidate most closely approaching the standards desired. Parties all too often are not all black or all white, but shades of grey. This reasoning may smack of pseudo

causality, but otherwise a Christian would never be able to influence anything to the good. While it is always foolish to make a pact with the devil, it would be folly to tread above the mire of political soil. The ideal may be in the clouds with the Angels, but mortal man is still in the muck of wordly things.

It takes conviction to be a Christian voter. The insignificance of one vote all too often paralyses the voter into apathy. If questioned about voting with Christian orientation, the individual is either amazed or indignant. Religion and politics are two of a kind. Both are exceedingly difficult to talk sanely about and when one is supposed to guide in the activity of the other the reaction is pure shock. It just never occurs.

It would be remiss not to mention the remaining attribute that a Christian voter possesses that his wordly counter-part completely lacks. This is the deep humanitarian outlook based upon the concept of the "Golden Rule". Coupled with the Christians realization that he is now living as a steward who will one day have to give account, the Christian regards people as fellow creatures. Thus the question of higher taxes and aid to the Hottentots assumes radically different proportions. The rat hole of human wants may just infringe a bit on our chrome-plated living standard. Only the Christian is going to view human needs above material wealth. Perhaps it is in foreign policy that the world depends upon the Christian's vote.

Moses was an exemplary leader, but I doubt if he could ever have been elected. He would have had difficulty wooing an audience with fine oratory. His age would have been against him. His record won only dissent and complaint from the people. Aaron would have been the people's choice. Indulgence and quickness to assert popular causes insured him immediate popularity. The two are fitting examples of contemporary leaders. Some lead and others are echoes of the herd.

When Moses died he was mourned, but Aaron's death was little noticed. Thus the sands of time sift the glitter from the real thing. America needs leaders cast in the image of Moses. Our nation needs voters with the wisdom to select such men. In such a capacity God allows the Christian to participate in history and even if they choose a Saul, He will bring forth a David. It is with such a spirit and with such a confidence that the Christian decides how he should vote.

Vision And Discipline

By Herbert H. Umbach

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Can it be true that our country through its mass media of communication is producing only Fringe People? The fringe folk are the product of a civilization that tends to put everything in containers. Such a person looks for health in vitamin capsules and for entertainment in canned laughter; in college courses he seeks mere abstracts of any subject and excels in true-false combinations of ready-made answers.

A fringe man is one who dwells on the edges of real knowledge, who knows a little about everything but not much at all about any one thing. Indeed for him a little learning is a dangerous thing! Thereby he skims the surface of life. He wears the kind of clothes he has been told will make him look sincere. He belongs to the political party which is most popular among his neighbors. His religion is safe, though for what he cannot say. He feels insulted when you ask him the simple question, "Why?"

If he visits New York, he goes to see only the hit Broadway shows. If he reads a book, it will be in digest form and available in paperback covers. He attends movies or sports events if a crowd there assures his ego that he is supporting what is "good' or sure to win. He watches only those television programs that have a high rating. He won't attend a concert by a young unknown; the artist must be famous. His business tactics eventually out-Babbitt Babbitt.

Mr. Fringe Man's biggest goal in life is to be popular—with everybody. As he tries to placate and please the world he naturally reduces his own personality to the status of an ever-smiling zero. Could this be the reason why so many desperately sociable people drink so much at cocktail parties? The yearning to be liked, abnormalized now, reduces conversation to such banal

platitudes that fringe men and women find it impossible even to listen to each other's verbal soothing syrup except under the influence of spirits. Not "Be yourself" but rather "Be like the other fellow" more accurately describes his aim. The motivation, it seems, is: be like the other fellow expects you to be.

Is it any wonder, then, that the Peace of Mind cult is rapidly becoming a cheap substitute for the Gospel, all because it succumbs to the peace that bypasseth understanding? Seeking to be in the swim, the fringe folk usually drown in their own pitiful ignorance. Childishness instead of child-like-ness prolongs the game of "Let's pretend" until not even ignorance is bliss anymore.

Surely it is better to compose one poor poem than merely to quote Shakespeare without understanding the context, or to play a musical saw yourself than just to show off your agility in detecting variations of a theme in Bach. To own and use the smallest talent is greater than to belong blindly to the Book of the Month Club. What our century of the Common Man actually needs is more men who will dare to be uncommon.

In a pregnant phrase John Milton once observed that life moves to and fro on "the axle of discipline". I like those words because the picture they create is the answer to our problem; insight is won and vision is actually developed in that manner. Last summer I heard of a man who found two cast-off wagon wheels, half buried in the sandy bottom of a trout stream. He fished them out, gave them a coat of white paint, and used them for decoration. In their present location they continue to serve man's needs, this time by inspiration.

In the river those wheels appeared to be utterly useless. No doubt once they had carried heavy cargo, perhaps bearing hay to feed cattle. Certain it is that in the days of their usefulness they moved on axles; their motion was disciplined, controlled; they were harnessed for service and purposeful going.

Similarly you and I move to usefulness and creative power on "the axle of discipline" or we do not move anywhere worth going. Freud insisted that civilization has been achieved at the cost of instinct satisfaction, another way of saying that progress has come about because men and women have learned to discipline their lives. Give up "doin' what comes naturally" and instead do with all your heart what *is* necessary:

this is the essence of intelligence and progress.

When Jesus long ago commented that "the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction" (RSV) certainly He was not referring to Skid Row. A more subtle destruction of personality in others troubled Him, a decay that is more like the erosion of land which is washed and blown into unproductivity by the failure to practice soil conservation. It comes not from doing wrong; that's too easy. This kind of destruction comes by inches, not in a single leap. It results simply from doing nothing creative. It is the end product of intellectual and spiritual coasting.

That there truly is such intellectual erosion is indicated by the Gallup Poll report which recently revealed that 60 per cent of the people in our nation did not read a single book during 1954. At least on the surface this does mean that only 40 per cent of us did something to conserve our internal assets, to stimulate or fertilize our mental productivity. But where are the rest? By all indications, they got their culture by capsule; their information by newspaper, magazine, and digest; their recreation by radio and TV injection; and their thinking by proxy. Put it in student language thus: they never wrote an "in class" theme or developed an "out of class" term paper. Worst of all, the life of the spirit is thereby in an alarming measure undernourished.

We cannot afford such loss of our highest resources through failure to discipline the instinct to coast through life in neutral. Aptly as always the Bible reminds us, "Where there is no vision, the people perish". But vision and insight are not gifts handed by an easy-going God to the indigent. They are won by active men and women who themselves think and search for the knowledge that will mature into wisdom.

Remember the mysterious words of Christ, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth"? The key to this beatitude is that in the original Greek the word *meek* indicates the idea of something "broken to bridle". It suggests focused or disciplined energy. In simpler words our Savior said, blessed are those whose capabilities are motivated, directed by a purpose, for they shall control the earth!

How can the undisciplined person inherit anything worth having? He cannot inherit learn-

ing, creative genius, or productive power. He does not inherit goodness or a tested sense of values. How can it be otherwise? Subject to the grace of God, the paths to spiritual truth, moral triumph, and intellectual competence proceed by way of toil of mind, labor of heart, and discipline of spirit. We move on the axle of discipline, or we do not move. To stand still is another form of going backwards while others are marching ahead.

Above all else, our human shortcomings we leave in God's omniscient providence, with the surety of the Holy Spirit that (as Paul once told the members of the Areopagus) "in Him we live and *move* and have our being". Mere motion can turn into commotion. Not so, however, for the Christian. His voluntary discipline grasps eagerly the immortal vision. For him the promise of eternity already has begun.

BALLET

Figures dance
In bouquets of fire;
Feet work like metronomes
In silver; gathering operas into
Tiny, tinkling shoes!

—MARION SCHOEBERLEIN

Letter from Xanadu, Nebr.

Dear Editor:

Well, I got the first issue of *The Spreader* out yesterday. (That's the official publication of the International Lutheran Implement Dealers Association of the United States and Canada, Inc.) You will be receiving your copy sometime this week, and I hope you enjoy it. It sure was a headache getting it out, but it makes me feel good to realize that I am an editor.

Say, I was wondering. What do you do with poetry? Even before the word was out that we were going to publish a paper, I started getting poetry from all over. You'll see some of it in *The Spreader*. But you ought to see the stack of stuff that I didn't run. Some of it is really out of this world.

Here's one I got from some guy in Carmel, California. Maybe you can tell me what he is driving at.

Machine
ripping from Earth Mother
(ooh-ah, ah-ooh)
fibrous integument
Gnothi seauton!
Freudian nightmare
tearing forgetful of nightingales
plasmic convolvatures
Respicere finem.

And here's one from Chicago. The lady says she has written a poem a day for the last 46 years and has published in every church paper in the country except the CRESSET.

Methought I heard the gentle earth
Cry softly as in pain
As though in agony of birth.
So great was she with grain
Meseemed it hardly called for was
To rip with steely plow
The fruitful womb which Heaven's laws
Would empty anyhow.

As poetry, that's pretty good, and I liked its religious flavor, but if I understood her right, it seems to me she is against plows and that's hardly the sort of sentiments we want to endorse publicly.

We have also gotten a large number of contributions (written, not financial) from people I never heard from before. A man in Los Angeles sent us 28 typewritten pages on "Marx, the New Deal, and the Fluoridation of Water." I didn't read it all, but he seems to be saying that the Commies are behind this

proposal to put fluorides in drinking water. Then there is another big, fat manuscript about how the Lost Tribes of Israel went and settled England and then migrated to the United States. And there is one entitled, "Who Murdered President Harding?" and another one on "What the Great Pyramid Has to Say about Krushchev."

What do you do with things like these? The fact of the matter is that it's real interesting stuff and maybe even important, for all I know, but I have only four pages in *The Spreader* and we're mostly interested in the implement business, so I just can't use the stuff. On the other hand, I hate to offend these people who have taken the time to sit down and write these things. Would you be interested in any of them? If so, I will tell the writers to get in touch with you.

Well, anyway, I'm sure enjoying this editing business. Maybe someday after I have had a little experience at it I can get out of the selling game altogether and work full time on a magazine or newspaper. In fact, I asked your managing editor when he was in Omaha whether he would have a spot for me in the office if I were to come to Valparaiso but he said that my great contribution to the CRESSET depended on me staying close to reality out here in the world. Maybe he is right. Great writers stick close to reality.

Regards,
G. G.
Executive Secretary of the ILIDAUSC and Editor-in-Chief of *The Spreader*

Music and MUSIC MAKERS

By Walter A. Hansen

I shall tell you something about what, in my opinion, is one of the most fascinating and important series of recordings ever issued. The discs I am referring to play a highly significant role in the history of music. It would be altogther impossbile to overestimate their value to those who study, and take pleasure in, the tonal art.

I am speaking of the Louisville Orchestra Commissions. This unique series is made up entirely of works by contemporary composers—works commissioned by the Louisville Orchestra thanks to the Rockefeller Foundation's gift of a half-million dollars.

Although music, in the course of its long history, has enjoyed, and been greatly benefited by, patronage and support of many kinds, the Rockefeller Foundation has rendered it a service which, I am sure, is altogether without a parallel.

Louisville has become the Mecca of contemporary composers. It has an unusually fine orchestra. Robert Whitney, the conductor, is a man of extraordinary ability.

I heard the Louisville Orchestra twice last October, and I had occasion to chat a bit with Mr. Whitney. The orchestra is not large. In size it is limited to about fifty players. But the richness of its tone is thrilling. It plays with remarkable precision and with pertinent expressiveness. Its members have employment for forty-six weeks every year. This, in itself, is unusual in our land.

I wonder if any conductor in the United States has a position more important and, at the same time, more taxing than that held by Mr. Whitney. "Undoubtedly," I said to him, "you must study and evaluate new scores every day." "Yes," he replied, "and I love every minute of it."

To see Mr. Whitney conduct and to note what he and the fine orchestra at his disposal achieve is to realize that his is a labor of love. This man leads with genuine authoritativeness. After

listening for only a few minutes to a reading given under his direction one is sure that the music he presents has become part and parcel of his whole being. There is no groping. The leadership is always clear-cut. It is invariably to the point.

Louisville has reason to be proud of Mr. Whitney. So, let me add, has our entire nation. Music owes him much more than you or I would be able to estimate. Without a man like him the munificence of the Rockefeller Foundation would, I am confident, be far less effective in its wide-reaching influence.

As I write, I have before me a large number of the Louisville Orchestra Commissions. They are available only by subscription. But, believe me, anyone who owns, plays, and studies them has a collection of treasures—treasures which give infinitely more than a mere bird's-eye view of what is being accomplished today in the field of composition.

It is entirely safe to say that you will not like every work commissioned by the Louisville Orchestra. Some of the compositions are couched in a completely modern idiom. Some are even ultra-modern in design, workmanship, and expression. Some, on the other hand are strikingly conservative in character.

Music is meant to be heard. The Rockefeller Foundation and the Louisville Orchestra give it a wonderful chance to be heard. Besides, the superb recordings enable you to hear it again and again. What you do not happen to like today you may like tomorrow. I know that I myself have had this experience. For this reason I think more than twice before expressing an adverse opinion about a new work on the basis of a single hearing. There was a time, you know, when the great Ludwig van Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* and many other masterpieces were condemned to outer darkness.

I wish I had the space to tell you more about courageous and far-seeing Charles Rowland Peaslee Farnsley, ex-mayor of Louisville, and the important part he has played in making the Louisville Orchestra and its achievements a subject of high praise throughout the world of music. But at the moment I must restrict myself to the statement that Louisville and contemporary music are in his debt. Mrs. Farnsley said to me, "He is always finding new mountains to climb."

Furthermore, the Louisville Orchestra has a manager who is thoroughly alive to the far-

reaching value of the Louisville Orchestra Commissions. I am referring to Richard Wangerin. He will be glad to send you information regarding the recordings. His business address is 830 South Fourth Street, Louisville 3, Kentucky.

In RECENT RECORDINGS you will find a thumbnail review of Mozart's *Turkish Concerto* as played by David Oistrakh, the famous Soviet violinist. The subtitle *Turkish* is applied to this work because in the third movement the composer inserted a melody which is Turkish in character.

Are you familiar with the third movement of Mozart's *Piano Sonata in A Major* (*K*.331)—the movement called *Alla Turca?* Do you recall the vigorous march in the *Finale* of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9?*

I have often wondered about Turkish music. Fortunately, I had an opportunity to learn something about it when I attended the 1955 Music Critics' Workshop in Louisville last October. From Ilhan K. Mimaroglu, of Ankara, I have the following information:

For example, there is the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century conception of Turkish music, known as *Alla Turca*, a style that is connected with only one part of the Turkish musical mode, namely, with the military band known as the *Mehter*.

The *Mehter* went with the Turks as far as Vienna and was played at various European courts. We see its influence in the works of great European composers like Mozart (*Piano Sonata in A Major*) and Beethoven (*Finale* of the *Ninth Symphony*). In a description of the symphony Beethoven explained that he wanted a majestic *Finale* and used a military march theme from the *Mehter* to obtain it.

The *Mehter's* repertoire, a combination of Turkish classical and folk music, made widespread use of big drums and bells with which to punctuate rhythm; it was this that the European composers copied, and the style known abroad as *Alla Turca* was born of this borrowing. Therefore it can be said that the Turkish contribution to Western music is not merely a matter of style but also the use of instruments, such as bells, in symphonic music.

What about Turkish classical music or, as it is sometimes called, Islamic Turkish music?

Turkish art music is a highly elaborate form which was practiced in the larger cities, and especially in Court circles, and has its roots in ancient Anatolian folk music. On the other hand, it has also been influenced by the musical inspiration of Arabic, Iranian, and Indian peoples; and

a fourth element in Turkish art music is the influence of Byzantine musical tradition. Thus it may be said to constitute the musical counterpart of ancient Turkish literature of the classical order. This variety of influences was instrumental in developing Turkish art music to heights of maturity and accomplishment far above those of any single one of its original sources of inspiration or influence.

Certain aspects of the church music of the Middle Ages are reminiscent of Turkish art music. This is because the church music of that era drew inspiration from ancient Greek music. Ancient Greek music, in turn, incorporated some of the folk music of Anatolia (the Phrygisti, as the Greeks called it) which was a major basis of Turkish art music.

In this music the octave is divided into twenty-four unequal intervals, with a tonal system entirely different from that of Western music. It is not harmonized, and resembles plainsong, a high development of single-line melody. On the other hand, Turkish art music remained altogether aloof from the polyphonic development of Western European music, seeking new heights of expression in endless quest of variations in melody, in new combinations of tunes and innovations of rhythm.

What about Turkish folk music?

Turkish folk music is remarkable for its great antiquity. Those who have lived among the inhabitants of rural Turkey know their love of music and dancing. Each district has its own characteristic folk dances and tunes, but there is a common thread that runs through them all, because the different tunes are only variations of a common musical form with the addition of regional characteristics in the construction.

Anatolian folk music can be divided into two main categories from the viewpoint of melody formation, i.e., a long piece resembling a free recitative, and a broken piece prepared on the basis of a known pattern. Music portraying deeds of valor, and of reciprocated or unrequited love in general, is usually written in the first category. For lighthearted folk-dance music the melodies composed in accordance with the second category offer better opportunities of expression.

I was particularly eager to learn something about modern Turkish music.

It was in the nineteenth century that Turkish art music gradually began to show signs of Western influence. Sultan Mahmut II (1784-1839) had abolished the Guild of Janisaries in 1826 and made plans to replace the *Mehter* with a military band in the European style, so that musical instruments of Western origin (such as the piano) came into wide use.

Giuseppe Donizetti (1793 - 1856), brother of the famous Italian composer, was invited to Istanbul, where he organized a concert band in 1831. Added impetus was given to this trend by Franz Liszt, who gave concerts in Istanbul in 1848, followed by the violinist Vieuxtemps a few years later. Turkish composers felt the need to effect a transition from counterpoint to volume music. The first Turkish musician to study abroad was the flutist Saffet, who went to Paris in 1886.

It is interesting to note, however, that Turkish composers did not cut themselves off from Turkish musical tradition in turning to the new medium introduced from the West. On the contrary, they have drawn inspiration from the past, and are still doing so, especially from such inexhaustible sources as the folk tunes of Anatolia.

The first conservatory of music with a regular course of studies was established in Instanbul in 1923 and was named the Istanbul Municipal Conservatory. Two years later a Teachers' Academy was set up to train music teachers for the schools.

The outstanding Turkish composers of today are Necil Kazim Akses (born in 1908), Hasan Ferid Alnar (born in 1906), Ulvi Cemal Erkin (born in 1906), Cemel Resit Rey (born in 1905), and Ahmed Adnan Saygun (born in 1907). Mr. Mimaroglu is a music critic in Ankara.

RECENT RECORDINGS

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART. *Concerto No.* 5, *in A Major, for Violin and Orchestra ("Turkish")* (*K.* 219). David Oistrakh, violin, with the Saxon State Orchestra under Franz Konwitschny. *Symphony No.* 32, *in G Major* (*K.* 318). The Bamberg Symphony Orchestra under Fritz Lehmann.—Oistrakh is a great violinist. In fact, he is one of the greatest. Lehmann's reading of Mozart's seldom heard little *Symphony No.* 32 is clear-cut. 33 1/3 rpm. Decca DL-9766.

JOHANNES BRAHMS. *Concerto in D Major, for Violin and Orchestra, Op.* 77. David Oistrakh, violin, with the Saxon State Orchestra under Franz Konwitschny. —I have never heard a more moving performance of this monumental concerto. 33 1/3 rpm. Decca DL-9754.

ERNEST CHAUSSON. *Poeme, Op.* 25. CAMILLE SAINT-SAENS. *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso.* David Oistrakh, violin, with the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Charles Munch. HECTOR BERLIOZ. *Great Festivities in Capulet's Palace* and *Love Scene,* from *Romeo and Juliet.* The Boston Symphony Orchestra under Munch. —The great artist from the Soviet Union plays Chausson's *Poeme* with gripping expressiveness. He does not tear pas-

sion to tatters. The performance of the *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso,* written when Saint-Saens was only twenty-eight, is scintillating and abounds in rhythmical incisiveness. Oistrakh has the assistance of Boston's great orchestra under the great Munch, who, with exemplary skill, presents, in addition, two excerpts from a fine score by Berlioz. 33 1/3 rpm. RCA Victor LM-1988.

SERGEI PROKOFIEFF. *Sonata No.* 1, *in F Minor, Op.* 80. JEAN LECLAIR. *Sonata No.* 3, *in D Major.* PIETRO LOCATELLI. *Sonata in F Minor* (arranged by Eugene Ysaye). David Oistrakh, violin, with Vladimir Yampolsky at the piano. —Prokofieff's sonata, dedicated to Oistrakh in 1946, is a masterpiece. Leclair (1697-1764) and Locatelli (1693-1764) had much to do with the development of violin-playing as we know it today. Here, too, Oistrakh reveals his towering greatness as a violinist. 33 1/3 rpm. RCA Victor LM-1987.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN. *Symphony No.* 5, *in C Minor, Op.* 67. FRANZ PETER SCHUBERT. *Symphony No.* 8, *in B Minor ("Unfinished").* The Boston Symphony Orchestra under Charles Munch. —Recorded in commemoration of the Boston Symphony Orchestra's diamond jubilee. It has been edifying to hear Munch's readings of these two great masterpieces. 33 1/3 rpm. RCA Victor LM-1923.

JOHANN STRAUSS THE YOUNGER. *Graduation Ball.* FREDERIC FRANCOIS CHOPIN. *Les Sylphides.* The Boston "Pops" Orchestra under Arthur Fiedler. —Excellent performances. Magnificently recorded. The score for *Graduation Ball,* an ever popular ballet, was arranged by Antal Dorati from works by the Waltz King. *Les Sylphides,* still one of the most popular of all ballets, makes use of orchestral arrangements of music by Chopin. 33 1/3 rpm. RCA Victor LM-1919.

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART. *Symphony No.* 36, *in C Major* (*K.* 425) (*"Linz*); *Symphony No.* 39, *in E Flat Major* (*K.* 543); *Symphony No.* 40, *in G Minor* (*K.* 550); *Symphony No.* 41, *in C Major* (*K.* 551) (*"Jupiter"*). The Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Fritz Reiner. —Recorded and issued in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Mozart. Reiner's readings are crystal-clear in every detail. But I do not like the ritards he calls for at the conclusion of some of the movements. 33 1/3 rpm. RCA Victor LM-6035.

DIMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH. *Violin Concerto, Op.* 99. David Oistrakh, violin, with the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York under Dimitri Mitropoulos. —This concerto, dedicated to Oistrakh, is, in my opinion, one of Shostakovich's finest works. It is by no means orthodox in construction; for it has the following four movements: *Nocturne, Scherzo, Passacaglia, Burlesca.* With excellent support from Mitropoulos and the orchestra the master-violinist from the Soviet Union plays the work with breath-

taking sweep, depth, and technical agility. 33 1/3 rpm. Columbia ML-5077.

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH. *Goldberg Variations.* Glenn Gould, pianist. — This performance of one of the greatest works ever written for the keyboard is phenomenal in the full sense of the word. The twenty-three-year-old Canadian pianist is endowed with remarkable sensitiveness and is equipped with truly amazing technical skill. Every student of the piano—in fact, every student of music—should hear and rehear this outstanding recording. 33 1/3 rpm. Columbia ML-5060.

"ALWAYS I WONDER"

Always I wonder who the children are,
Walking in their solitary youngness
Through the glory-showered streets of the star -
Bright cities, or wandering in richness
Alone through the honeyed countryside in
All the high color of their hope. They wear
With old naivete, trust in what has been,
And trust for all the years their lives shall share.
In the promise of their own eyes they shine,
For dreams to youngness are an acolyte,
That holy candle keeping bright. A shrine,
The world holds this everlasting light
Of Youth; mysterious, warm, bright in dark -
Kindling hope from life's procreant spark.

—THEODORE LABRENZ

THE NEW BOOKS

RELIGION

A BASIC HISTORY OF LUTHERANISM IN AMERICA

By Abdel Ross Wentz (Muhlenberg, $5.00)

The present volume, a revision of an earlier work published in 1923 and revised in 1933, is billed as "basic." It is intended for the general reader and also, with the bibliographical helps in the back, for the more serious student. The author is Professor of Church History at Gettysburg Seminary (United Lutheran Church in America).

The work is generally very readable and will probably be quite widely adopted as a text in colleges and seminaries. In some ways this can be considered a new book. It is certainly the most up-to-date history of American Lutheranism available. The textual citations and references in the extensive bibliography show wide acquaintance with the literature. The general reader will likely find some of the details of the alignment and realignment of synods and of the many doctrinal disputations to be dry reading. Photographs, maps, more biographical detail would have made the story more interesting (but also more expensive).

The outline follows that of the earlier editions, relating the periods of Lutheran development to the various eras of American history. A number of new chapters have been added dealing with the political and social attitudes of Lutheran synods and their churchmen at different times. Developments in the last two decades relating to union negotiations, the Lutheran World Federation, and Lutheran participation in the World Council of Churches have been added.

The author's "main purpose is to enable the reader to see the relation of the church's history to the history of society in general. . ." (Preface). One has the feeling that, if Professor Wentz's coverage of Lutheran activity is adequate, there very often was little awareness among Lutherans of the need to make an impact upon American society until about World War I and thereafter. Previous to this time (and even today) many Lutheran bodies seemed more concerned about what they regarded as aggressive threats from each other than challenges from external forces. The author does give some attention to the way in which social and cultural heritages wittingly or unwittingly acted as barriers to Lutheran unity over the years.

One interesting influence from the American scene in the earlier period is illustrated in the "Americanizing"

tendencies of the liberal wing of the General Synod during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Men such as Samuel Schmucker, Kurtz, Sprecher, desiring to make Lutheranism more "American," strove to make it more pietistic, less sacramentarian and to adopt a less conservative confessional subscription. Schmucker is presented not without his good points, however. In the end, the more conservative "Symbolists" won out, even in the General Synod.

Another point of contact between the Lutheran synods and social conditions occurred during the Civil War. While most Lutherans remained officially silent on slavery and secession, some of the more liberal eastern synods were abolitionist. Dr. C.F.W. Walther of the Missouri Synod appears privately to have felt the North "had violated God's law in carrying on the Civil War...." (p. 169).

Some of the more pietistic eastern synods (later to become part of the U.L.C.A. in 1918) were quite concerned over the liquor question, Sabbath enforcement, and mistreatment of African natives by Europeans. The Scandinavian bodies also showed pietistic concern. In general, however, Lutheran concern for social inequities in the emerging industrial order was sublimated by means of activity in welfare and charity for the individual, rather than by any "Social Gospel."

Really significant contact with the outside world had to wait for World War I, when American Lutherans felt compelled to enter into world affairs if they were to help their orphaned European brethren, to minister to the mobile millions including the servicemen. Problems at this time led to the formation of the National Lutheran Council, which serves today on a permanent basis as the coordinating agency for all Lutherans (except Missouri and Wisconsin) in the following areas—American missions, welfare, student service, public relations, Latin-American affairs, service to military personnel, world relief, and Lutheran World Federation affairs.

In general, the treatment of the Missouri Synod and Synodical Conference is quite generous, particularly in view of the many attacks by Missouri Synod organs upon the body of which Professor Wentz is a member. The author gives Missouri credit for sincerity of purpose but wonders why certain Missouri Synod spokesmen continue to suspect U.L.C.A. members of errors once committed by their "Americanizing" forbears, errors since officially repudiated. The American non-Lutheran reader might easily be led, after reading Chapter 36, to type the Lutherans as the communion of "doctrinal disputation."

As one views the history of Lutheranism in America from the the arrival of patriarch H.M. Muhlenberg down to present importance of Lutherans in the World Council of Churches, one looks for outstanding trends. The history at times is perplexing and seems to consist of alignment and realignment between local synods, general bodies, and federations of general bodies.

About one hundred years ago the Lutherans were divided into literally

dozens of synods, crisscrossed by ethnic, linguistic, liturgical, doctrinal, (church) governmental antagonisms. Today, their number has been reduced to about a half dozen who now show a remarkable amount of doctrinal, liturgical, governmental uniformity (as contrasted with any non-Lutheran body).

While formerly impotent, divided, under-represented in the councils of men and of churches, Lutherans today are taking positions of importance in organizations like the World Council and witnessing to the unique Lutheran understanding of God, man, and society. While the total record of the Missouri Synod in missions, education, and welfare activity is eminent, in negotiations with non-Missourians the Missouri answer has more often been "no" than "yes." Missouri has always been ready to discuss the possibility of walking with other Lutherans, but when the hour of decision approached she withdrew. How much longer will the hand of friendship continue to be offered to Missouri, and how much longer will she continue to wait?

INTERPRETING PAUL'S GOSPEL

By A. M. Hunter (Westminster, $2.50)

The word "salvation," says A. M. Hunter in this little book, is the key to the understanding of St. Paul's message. The concept of salvation is explored in the first part of the book by looking at it from three points of view: as a past event (which is described in Paul by the three "picture-phrases" redemption, justification, and reconciliation), as a present experience (and here stress is laid on the fact that being "in Christ" means being in the Church, the Body of Christ), and as a future hope.

The second half of the book consists of a series of chapters which consciously strive to show the relevance of Paul's message for today. Paul's diagnosis of man's predicament, the way of deliverance, newness of life and the Christian hope are the motifs which are here examined.

The book is semipopular in character and is clearly written. As such it may be read easily also by those who are not theologically trained. However it suffers at times from oversimplification. The very choice of the term salvation, for example, as the key to Paul's thought results in a separation of elements which belong together. Clarity is served, but Pauline motifs of the greatest importance tend to pale out. Nevertheless, it would be difficult to find a better or clearer book for an introduction to Pauline theology.

W. SCHOEDEL

CHANGING CONCEPTIONS OF ORIGINAL SIN

By H. Shelton Smith (Scribner's, $3.50)

"We have not lived a wholly thoughtless life," explains Dean Sperry in a passage suggesting how nearly thoughtless American churches have been. This book, in its subtitle "A Study in American Theology since 1750," implies that on "original sin" Americans have written with sufficient

interest to inspire a full-length study. It is true that the focus of American theology has been the doctrine of man.

To suggest five towering figures: Edwards is known for "Freedom of Will"; Channing for his elevated views of human nature; Bushnell for the concept of "Christian Nurture"; Rauschenbusch for a view of man's social possibilities; Niebuhr for a profound study of "Human Nature." Smith includes many other lesser figures such as Chauncy, Ware, and Taylor as well.

Unfortunately his study is too "bookish," too content to trace dusty pamphlet wars, to study ideas apart from their consequences. In American theology particularly the consequences are important. The Great Awakening, the Unitarian departure, modern concepts of Christian education, the Social Gospel, and recent realistic social action are all closely related to the ideas of the five theologians mentioned above. Smith hardly pursues this aspect of the problem, though an earlier work on education titled "Christian Nurture" shows that he is capable of doing so.

Several specific comments might be made: he tends, for example, to overdo the influence of the English liberal John Taylor. The two chapters on the New Haven controversy (Taylor-Tyler, etc.) threatens the proportion of the study. Adding the Bushnell chapter to these two, we find one-third of the "changing conceptions" originating in New Haven. (Since Smith is a Duke professor, lecturing at Princeton, this emphasis can't be blamed on a parochial "giving all for Yale"!)

Readers will be particularly interested in the chapter on the post-Bushnell "New Theology," in which original sin is an outmoded idea. It reaches its climax in Lyman Abbott whose optimism is scarcely clouded by World War I which he summarized thus: "The human race falls down occasionally, bruises itself, and weeps some bitter tears; but picks itself up and goes on walking, and persistently in the right direction." This is not, fortunately, the end of the story. At least a partial note of social realism occurs in the writings of Rauschenbusch. It should be noted that in this view Smith is taking part in a current revision of the theologian of the Social Gospel, as exemplified by Winthrop Hudson's conception of him as a "lonely prophet" in an age of complacency.

The "changing conceptions" end suddenly with Niebuhr and Tillich. Despite the caprice of selectivity which his title permits him, some conclusion or connection of chapters, however competent each individually may be, would have been of help to readers.

MARTIN E. MARTY

FICTION

CHILDREN OF THE DARK

By Irving Schulman (Henry Holt, $3.00)

In his two previous novels on juvenile delinquency, *Cry Tough* and *The Amboy Dukes,* Irving Schulman dealt with the problems of teen-agers who were products of the slums. The

reasons for their delinquency were apparent. In this novel, however, he explores the causes for delinquency in children from middle and upper middle class families, and his conclusion that youth from better families goes wrong almost solely because of lack of love and understanding in the home is not entirely convincing on the basis of the evidence presented in this novel.

In the five days that the novel follows the adventures of Steve, Judy, and Plato and the other members of their gang, one boy is killed when his hot rod goes over a cliff, an innocent woman is the victim of an impulse killing, and another member of the gang is shot down after a prolonged gun battle with the police. The rest of the crowd ends up with enough mental scars to last a lifetime.

This novel evolved from a story treatment by Schulman for the motion picture *Rebel Without a Cause*. The author, a graduate of the school of realism, can be, and often is a powerful, effective, and interesting writer, but his force too often is dissipated when the action becomes melodramatic in scenes that may have been effective in a motion picture but which are out of proportion in the novel.

PRUDENCE CRANDALL: WOMAN OF COURAGE

By Elizabeth Yates (Aladdin Books, $3.00)

This is more than a historical novel with pertinent facts involved. It is a biography of a woman who greatly influenced the cause of emancipation. By establishing a school for girls in 1833 and admitting first one Negro student and later more, the ire of her bigoted neighbors in the little town of Canterbury, Connecticut, was aroused. The burning of the school, Miss Crandall's imprisonment, and the passing of the Connecticut Black Law followed. But the good and the right triumphed in the end. Miss Crandall became a symbol of liberty, and her school and her cause a rallying point for other citizens of the North who were determined to rid our land of the black blot of human slavery.

What makes the book and the story important in our day is the fact that it shows the rationalizations of the bigots as well as the convictions of those on the side of justice and freedom developing according to the pattern that one may find today among people in Sumner, Mississsippi, or on Chicago's South Side in the neighborhood of the Trumbull Park Homes.

This book may never receive the acclaim nor the place in history accorded Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin." But when one reads *Prudence Crandall, Uncle Tom's Cabin* comes to mind and with it the influence it exerted immediately preceding the Civil War. Prudence Crandall, the person, though, as well as *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* the book, must have had a profound effect on the thinking of many citizens of this country and both helped to make the Emancipation Proclamation possible.

ANDREW SCHULZE

BOON ISLAND

By Kenneth Roberts (Doubleday, $3.75)

On the stormy night of December 11, 1710, the *Nottingham,* out of London and bound for Portsmouth, ran aground on Boon Island, a jagged patch of wave-scarred rocks just six miles from the New Hampshire port. Ten of the fourteen men who made it to the rock existed for twenty four days before they were rescued. Waves roared against the island constantly and their spray coated every rock with ice. Nothing grew or lived there; there were no implements and no natural shelter from the wind and snow. But ten men did survive, and how they did is an exciting story of the victory of courage, work, and prayer over cowardice and inhuman physical hardships. Kenneth Roberts' novel, based on an historical incident, is an adventure story of a high order.

GENERAL

THE TRAIL OF THE DINOSAUR AND OTHER ESSAYS

By Arthur Koestler (Macmillan, $3.50)

Arthur Koestler turned fifty last year, and has spent a decade in England. Either of these considerations might serve to explain his pilgrimage, in recent years, from far left to somewhat right of center. Taken together, they could hardly have failed to produce the new Koestler: a humanitarian conservative, rather donnish in thought and style, utilitarian in his ethics, willing but unable to believe, a critic of but no longer a rebel against the culture in which he lives.

Koestler has a great deal to say to his contemporaries. Having once been a Communist, and an intelligent and convinced one, he knows both the strength and the weakness of Communism. Unlike so many who hate only the works of Communism, Koestler hates the faith which motivates those works. He sees, more clearly than do most critics of Marxism, that at the center of the Communist heresy there lies the worship of a false god. ("The new determinants of man's fate—mechanical laws, atoms, glands, genes—which gradually took over, were of a lower order than man himself.")

But in these essays Koestler deals not only with Communism. In one of his most controversial essays, he deals with the question of the modern Jew. Already this essay has produced an uproar of a sort because Koestler maintains, against the trend of most modern Jewish argumentation, that the Jews are primarily a religious group; that at the heart of their religion there lies an identification of the Jew with a land (Palestine); that in the past this identification has made the Jew self-segregating wherever he has dwelt in the Dispersion; and that with the establishment of the State of Israel the modern Jew is now compelled either to go the whole way (back to Palestine) or to abandon his Jewishness. Koestler himself has chosen the latter course.

From an *embarras de richenesses,* it is difficult to single out any one or two essays for particular notice. In

terms of relevance to our present situation, however, one would have to call attention to the essay, "The Seven Deadly Fallacies," which illuminates as well as anything we have ever read the muddled thinking of what Koestler calls "Left Babbitism." This might well be made required reading for all of us who claim to be, and hope that we are, liberals.

Simply as a piece of writing, one would probably choose "The Shadow of a Tree," an attempt by Koestler to outline the course of events in the USSR upon the collapse of the present regime and the establishment of democratic and parliamentary institutions. In this essay, as in so many of the others, the focus is upon man's agelong tragedy: his constant repetition of the blunders of the past.

Koestler is one of the growing number of men in our generation who have faced up to, and seen through, the illusions by which men live and for which they cheerfully kill each other. He has gone one step further: he has come to recognize that the mere removing of the illusions does not reveal the forms of reality. The final step, the acceptance of Reality, he has not yet taken, and perhaps can not take unaided.

THE CYCLE OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

By Robert E. Spiller (Macmillan, $4.75)

When someone writes smoothly to build up a series of propositions that at first seem to be glib generalizations, we may hastily conclude that such a writer is really more fluent than authoritative. A closer analysis of the submitted propositions, however, can reveal—as it certainly does in this instance—the actual depth of such comprehensive observations, e.g. about America's entire literary culture.

In this fresh survey of an often-discussed subject Robert Spiller gives us the essential significance of his detailed research in co-editing (with Willard Thorp, Thomas H. Johnson, and Henry Seidel Canby) the famous *Literary History of the United States,* a set of reference books which is today the highest court of appeal in matters that concern the historical backgrounds of our native writings. This new, extended essay is a natural by-product. Moreover, a lifelong interest and years of college teaching (at present as Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania) increase the value of the critical perceptiveness and wealth of scholarship that is here expressed objectively.

Briefly, Dr. Spiller's theory, patterned on the basic cycle of life itself, includes two secondary elements;

> the literary movement which developed from the Eastern seaboard as a center, and culminated with the great romantic writers of the mid-nineteenth century; and that which grew out of the conquest of the continent and is now rounding its full cycle in the twentieth century.

He discards purely aesthetic analysis and likewise the merely rational view of history. Instead he shows coherently how the chief authors in particular transcend their environment while at the same time they express the genuine life of our growing nation.

HERBERT H. UMBACH

A CENTURY OF PUNCH CARTOONS

Edited by R.E. Williams (Simon and Schuster, $4.95)

There is probably no one in this world duller than the man who tries to tell another man what is funny about a joke. Humor is either self-justifying, or it is not humor at all. For this reviewer to attempt to explain what makes an anthology of *Punch* cartoons the masterpiece that it is would necessitate going into the whole anatomy of humor, particularly of that British variety of humor which is both the source and the product of the cartoons in *Punch*.

Punch was founded in 1841 as a satirical journal which proposed to maintain an urbane and witty commentary on people and events. The whole of the passing scene was to be grist for its mill. It was perhaps inevitable that the cartoon should become a favorite device for bringing the person (or event) and the commentary together into one easily-comprehended and instantly effective capsule.

What are the cartoons about? Well, there are jokes about working-men (mostly plumbers), about fads in style, about animals, about the amusements of the uppah clawsses, about Irishmen, about lovers, about trains and cars, about children, about golf, about the stage, about shopping, about doctors, about wars. There is a special section of jokes, original with *Punch,* which have attained a dubious immortality by repeated resurrection. And there is a delightful full-color parody on *The New Yorker*.

Cartoon afficionados will be particularly interested in tracing the evolution of the cartoon from its chrysalis stage as a sort of illustrated joke, the caption being its body, to its present form as a drawing bearing a vestigial one-line caption or, in some cases, no caption at all.

There is an introduction by R.E. Williams, who is business manager of *Punch,* and there is a one-page foreword by Malcolm Muggeridge, its editor. The person who is unacquainted with *Punch* ought to read these as examples of the sort of writing he is missing.

I AM A MATHEMATICIAN

By Norbert Wiener (Doubleday, $5.00)

Norbert Wiener is a professor of mathematics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he was taken on as a young instructor after a few earlier trials as a brilliant Harvard Ph.D. at nineteen who seemed to rub some people the wrong way. M.I.T. has undoubtedly greatly profited by his continuance on that faculty for nearly forty years. He was a child prodigy—he has told of his childhood in a recent book, *Ex-Prodigy*—whose father was an energetic, scholarly professor of Slavic languages at Harvard. The Wieners are Jews and some of the troubles experienced by the young and justly ambitious Norbert were not unconnected with this fact. The man is strongly ethical in his principles and has seemingly never hesitated to voice his convictions.

Early in his career he had diffi-

culty in being recognized and accepted by the scientific community, these apparently not unrelated to the antagonism of the elder Birkhoff, a professor of mathematics at Harvard who was something of a leading light in his day and who guarded his position jealously and zealously. There is little doubt that the sharpness of Wiener's remarks about his distaste for "the politics of science" and the latter-day "popes and cardinals" of science is the product of early stings from Birkhoff and others. Perhaps also, his concern about the establishment of the priority of his thoughts and publications—evident on many pages—started early. But Wiener has established himself as a mathematical scientist and as a person. His works in mathematics include original contributions in prediction theory, generalized harmonic analysis, Brownian motion studies, the general theory of computing machines and cybernetics, his term for "the theory of communication and control in the machine and the living organism."

As a person of deep conscience and responsibility he was active in bringing to this country many of the notable refugee world scientists who are now American citizens. Not the least interesting facet of this book is his inclusion of many references to leaders in world science. Professor Wiener has travelled and lectured widely here and in Mexico, Europe, and the Orient. This book tells much of these travels and gives some popular insight into his life's work. All in all, Wiener does a fine job in showing that mathematics, far from being a subject already cold and completely written, is a dynamic and even passionate discipline.

The book is full of quotable quotes. Here are a few.

From page 109:

> Physics is at present a mass of partial theories which no man has yet been able to render truly and clearly consistent. It has been well said that the modern physicist is a quantum theorist on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and a student of gravitational relativity theory on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. On Sunday the physicist is neither but is praying to his God that someone, preferably himself, will find the reconciliation between these two views.

From page 270:

> It is a real difficulty in our schools of science and engineering to have to try to educate young men who believe that they have a calling towards science merely because they are accustomed to playing with the ideas of destructive forces, other planets, and rocket travel.

From page 359:

> I am particularly lucky that it has not been necessary for me to remain for any considerable period a cog in a modern scientific factory, doing what I was told, accepting the problems given me by my superiors, and holding my own brain only *in commendam* as a medieval vassal held his fiefs. If I had been born into this latter-day feudal system of the intellect, it is my opinion that I would have amounted to little. From the bottom of my heart I pity the present generation of scientists, many of whom, whether they wish it or not, are doomed by the "spirit of the age" to be intellectual lackeys and clock punchers.

Lastly, from page 363:

> Behind the drive to the mass attack [in scientific work] there are a number of strong psychological motives. Neither the public nor the big administrator has too good an understanding of the inner continuity of science, but they both have seen its world-shaking consequences, and they are afraid of it. Both of them wish to decerebrate the scientists, even as the Byzantine State emasculated its civil servants. Moreover, the great administrator who is not sure of his own intellectual level can aggrandize himself only by cutting his scientific employees down to size. ... What is the real value of the work of the monkeys and the typewriters? Sooner or later, they will have written all the works of Shakespeare. Are we then to credit this mass attack with creating the works of Shakespeare? By no means, for before writing the works of Shakespeare, they will almost certainly have created just about all the nonsense and balderdash conceivable. ... To say that the monkeys' work will contain the works of Shakespeare has no other sense than to say that a block of marble will contain a statue by Michelangelo. After all, what Michelangelo does is purely critical, namely to remove from his statue the unnecessary marble that hides it. Thus, at the level of the highest creation, this highest creation is nothing but the highest criticism.

ORCHARD MAGIC

Last night a freezing rain, like lead,
Caught the orchard unaware,
Routed the trees and left instead
Ice coated monks at prayer ...

But see! this morning, slim, devout
And dressed in shining mail,
The Jonathans are setting out
To seek the Holy Grail!

—DON MANKER

A Minority Report

By VICTOR F. HOFFMANN

Children of the Industrial Revolution

The modern American man is, among many other possible descriptions, the child of the Industrial Revolution. This may mean many things. He can now live in a home with modern conveniences such as refrigerators, radios, television sets, and radiant heating. The children of our homes now play with Marx mechanical toys that stop and start and light up, baby dolls that sleep and cry and wet, and with intercommunication sets that transport voices to a distance of one hundred feet.

With all the necessary qualifications about the American inequalities, one would have to say that the standards of living in general have been raised by the Industrial (and technological) Revolution. Very few people, for example, work from sunrise to sunset. There has been a marked increase in the leisure time of Americans. Modern vocational life and leisure time activities have been facilitated by quicker and more efficient means of transportation and communication. Moreover, the Industrial Revolution has reworked the rural face of America. In very many respects, the rural hayseed has survived only in the hills and in television vaudeville.

The good and bad, as always, have come together. It seems to me, however, that it serves no real purpose to cling to the nostalgia of the good old days. Why veto the present when you cannot go back to the good old days anyway? Whatever ethic was maintained as the Absolute

in the days of rural America must be re-worked into the new age.

Our Attitudes to the New Day

It has been said many times over that the Word of God and the Christian ethic will cover every aspect of life. This sounds good and might be true if properly understood. We do not wish to minimize the absolute characteristics of the Word of God and the Christian ethic. God—the same yesterday, today, and forever—is an Absolute. Our Christian ethic is based on eternal and immutable principles. "Thou shalt not murder" yesterday implies "thou shalt not murder" today and "thou shalt not murder" tomorrow. Nor "shalt thou steal"—yesterday, today, or tomorrow.

Luther's explanation of the seventh commandment is still of lasting value: "We should fear and love God that we may not take our neighbor's money or goods, nor get them by false ware or dealing, but help him to improve and protect his property and business." But this is all very general. All of the explanations of the seventh commandment in *Luther's Small Catechism* are quite general.

It is relatively easy to see what happens when a neighbor steals a neighbor's cow or entices away his neighbor's wife. But it is not so easy to see what is happening when neighbor grocer is stealing from neighbor consumer through the profit and price mechanism. If you are selling television sets, may you ethically take a one hundred dollar profit on a three hundred dollar set? According to the Christian ethic, what is a fair amount of return?

It is hard to interpret Scripture texts in the light of a new day (in the light of any day, for that matter). Take a passage of the New Testament (1 Timothy 6, 8-10): "Having food and raiment, let us therewith be content. . . .For the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." What is a fair amount of food and raiment that keeps us within the frame of Christian contentment? What is enough poverty to keep me humble? What is too much wealth to make me forget God and all things decent and honorable? At what point in the acquisition of money, of salary, of profit, and of wages, do we begin to give indication that we love a fast buck?

Luther's Catechism does not give many answers. Our Christian ethic is not undeniably clear at all points on this. And the Bible as it stands is not always clear. Where does the Bible tell you what a fair amount of profit is in a pat, slide-rule type of answer? We see but darkly!

Human Relativity

The difficulty does not lie with God nor with the Christian ethic. The problem lies in the situation, in the human situation. We can find a clue in an article by William Lee Miller, professor of religion at Smith College, in *The Reporter Magazine* ("The Irony of Reinhold Niebuhr," January 13, 1955). Professor Miller has written: "Before God, who is absolute, the religious man knows all human positions to be relative . . . .the statements of a living faith, unlike rational propositions, do depend upon the context in which they are spoken, and the life and community out of which they are spoken. Protestantism, which is a living faith, is therefore always in need of restatement in new historical situations."

The immutable principles of a faith and an ethic, it seems to me also, must always be restated in every time, place, and generation. For me as a Christian, this requires knowledge on several fronts: of theology, of the ethic, of human nature, and of the historical situations and the historical understandings which involve our culture, literature, sociology, politics, science, and the like. A clergyman above all was not called in a vacuum. Like all members of the priesthood of believers, he was called in a specific manner to a specific time and place, to his job, his family, his country, and to the intellectual stream of his day. This is true also, it appears, for the operation of any institutional church, seminary, or university.

This, of course, involves the difficulty of living in and speaking to the tension that exists between the Absolute divine situation and the tentative human situation. And, of course, the tension that exists between the mandate to follow the law of love and our inadequacies to follow that love-mandate will probably become unmistakably clear. The resulting restlessness that follows upon all of this will of course remain until the grave and eternity close over our lives.

One concludes that one cannot speak to the Industrial Age as one has spoken to the Rural Age of America. What do we as

Christians have to say about the gadget age, the right to work as compared to the right to property, about leisure time, about wages and profits, and our culture?

Super-Orthodoxy

This restlessness and tension will become intolerable for many Christians. They might love security too much and they cannot wait for the security of the grave. They are compelled to build a security on this side of the grave.

This thesis has been taken up by Erich Fromm, author of *The Fear of Freedom* and *The Escape from Freedom*. He attributed much of the success of modern dictators to their ability to capitalize on the frustrations of the rootless and restless man. The dictator offered security, the needed bulwark for the dependent man—offered him a substitute God in the form of the state. It offered him an orthodoxy in which he could take root, an orthodoxy that he had lost since the days of John Locke and David Hume.

It seems to me presently that I see illustrations of the Fromm thesis in some of the modern institutional churches. Some members of the clergy and of the laity as well have suddenly been projected into the modern tensions and find it difficult to apply and interpret the Absolute to the dynamic. They find it rather difficult to apply the law of love to relative situations that are always moving away from them, disappearing and emerging at every turn of life's way.

The resulting insecurity and the inordinate desire for security have projected some persons into the creation of a false security. The easier way out is to insist on dogmatic and rigid theological patterns and ethical rules. This is the refuge of false orthodoxy that might have created the McCarthys and the Jenners who insist definitely on their version of Americanism. Except that—it looks worse on theologians and Christians.

THE MOTION PICTURE

By Anne Hansen

When Thomas Alva Edison completed the building of the first motion-picture machine, the Kinetoscope, in 1889, he did not take his invention too seriously. He, and many others, regarded the revolutionary Kinetoscope as a novelty—a novelty which would soon lose its appeal. But, instead of declining, interest in the new entertainment medium grew steadily.

In 1893, in East Orange, New Jersey, Edison built the world's first motion-picture studio at a cost of $637. Here, in the so-called Black Maria, the first commercial motion-picture films were produced. These films depicted a simple scene or event. They were about fifty feet in length, ran for a little less than a minute, and were designed to be shown in the Kinetoscope Parlors of New York City and in amusement centers where "peep-show" machines had been installed. This was the humble beginning of what is now one of the great industries of the world.

The story of the early years of the motion-picture industry is set forth in Daniel Blum's fascinating book *A Pictorial History of the Silent Screen* (Grosset and Dunlap, New York). I am sure that devotees of the silver screen will welcome and enjoy this graphic account of the development of an art form which Mr. Blum describes as "peculiarly American and yet universal."

I believe that these devotees will be equally interested in an article by Leo Rosten in the January 10, 1956, issue of *Look* magazine. *Hollywood Revisited* presents what Mr. Rosten calls "a psychological Xray of the movie colony today—its manners, its conflicts, its morals—where television, wide screen, and middle age have forever changed the life and work of the glamorous."

Fifteen years ago Mr. Rosten's highly critical study of the industry, titled *Hollywood: The Movie Colony, The Movie Makers,* gave rise to a great deal of heated discussion. His new study of the same scene seems to

ne to be both more temperate in tone and more tolerant of those who produce motion pictures and those who act in them. "Today," Mr. Rosten writes, "the movie colony is more sensible, more sober, more restrained, and more tired." In *Hollywood Revisited* the author discusses motion-picture stars, old and new; the way in which they live, work, and play; the skyrocketing cost of present-day productions; the effect of World War II on players, producers, and audiences; the impact of television on the industry; and the advent of wide-screen, stereophonic sound, and new camera techniques.

The past month has brought the revival of a number of noteworthy old films to local theaters —but only one or two noteworthy new pictures. Unquestionably the best of these is *The Court Martial of Billy Mitchell* (Warners, Otto Preminger, Warner Color, CinemaScope). Gary Cooper appears in the role of the fiery advocate of air power as an all-important factor in twentieth-century warfare.

William Mitchell was a brigadier general when, contrary to direct orders, he and his small bomber squadron, flying at low levels, dropped 2,000-pound bombs on the "unsinkable" battleship *Ostfriesland*. Although Gen. Mitchell proved his contention that the *Ostfriesland* could be sunk from the air, he was reprimanded, reduced to the rank of colonel, and separated from his beloved young aviators. Nevertheless, Col. Mitchell continued his energetic campaign for larger appropriations for the neglected air arms of the Army and Navy, for newer and better safety measures and adequate equipment for our fliers, and for the establishment of a powerful, separate Air Force Unit. His outspoken denunciation of shortsighted brass-hat policies eventually resulted in court martial, suspension from service with loss of rank and privilege, and, finally, his resignation from the U. S. Army.

Until his death in 1936 Col. Mitchell, disappointed and embittered, persisted in his efforts to arouse the nation to the need for air strength. Unfortunately, he was gruff and tactless, and all too often alienated many who were inclined to support him. Today we know, of course, that Col. Mitchell's ideas were sound and practicable, and that he was amazingly—and tragically—accurate in the prophecies which seemed so ridiculous to many of his contemporaries.

The Court Martial of Billy Mitchell has the force and the

simplicity of a documentary film. Gary Cooper is wholly convincing in the title role. The supporting cast is uniformly good. Otto Preminger's direction is excellent.

Advertising blurbs for *Good Morning, Miss Dove* (20th Century-Fox, Henry Koster, CinemaScope, De Luxe Color) label this film "frankly sentimental." An understatement, if I ever heard one! *Good Morning, Miss Dove* literally exudes sweetness and sentiment from every pore. Fortunately, Jennifer Jones manages to inject a welcome and refreshing tartness into her portrayal of the strict Miss Dove, the teacher whose forbidding exterior covers, but does not always conceal, a heart of the purest gold. But no amount of competent acting can make this pretty trifle anything more substantial than a beautifully fashioned bonbon.

At that, *Good Morning, Miss Dove* is an exercise in acidulous restraint compared with *All That Heaven Allows* (Universal-International, Douglas Sirk, Technicolor). Sobs to the right of me and tears to the left of me made me fear that I might be flooded right out of the theater. What brought on the sobs and the tears? Nothing more admirable than mediocre acting and a plot which was as weak as it was trite and shallow. I blush when I confess that the audience was made up very largely of members of my own sex. And I agree wholeheartedly with the sentiment expressed—however inelegantly—by a stalwart teen-age boy as he left the theater. He said, "Gosh, wasn't that for the birds!"

Next we come to *The Rains of Ranchipur* (20th Century-Fox, Jean Negulesco, CinemaScope, De Luxe Color), a soggy rehash of Louis Bromfield's novel *The Rains Came*. Here we encounter not only tropical fever, torrential rains, thunder and lightning, earthquake and flood, but the aging Lana Turner as well. Sound and fury are, as always, a poor substitute for genuine artistry.

Margaret O'Brien plays her first adult role in *Glory* (RKO-Radio, David Butler, SuperScope, Technicolor), a routine comedy which purports to reveal behind-the-scenes activities in the lives of those who follow the sport of kings.

On the screen the white man's war against his red brother goes on and on. *The Indian Fighter* (Bryna; United Artists, Andre de Toth, CinemaScope, Technicolor) stars Kirk Douglas as a veteran of the plains who is

sympathetic toward the plight of the Indian. In *The Last Frontier* (Columbia) Victor Mature appears in the role of a down-and-out trapper who attaches himself to the U. S. Army in the mistaken idea that the life of a soldier is a life of ease and comfort. Both these films have one thing in common—magnificent settings in the West, superbly photographed in color. Elsa Martinelli, a newcomer to the screen, makes her debut as the Indian maiden in *The Indian Fighter*.

Ray Milland plays the hunted gunman in *A Man Alone* (Republic, Trucolor), a tense and violent drama of the old West. Here, too, the grandeur of the Utah country completely dwarfs the make-believe goings-on of the puny mortals who appear against this splendid backdrop.

The stirring music of Alexander Borodni provides a melodious backdrop for *Kismet* (M-G-M, Vincente Minelli, CinemaScope, Eastman Color), a lavish and colorful musical extravaganza in which Howard Keel, Ann Blyth, Vic Damon, and Delores Gray appear in leading singing roles.

A featherweight plot—ostensibly derived from the ancient Greek comedy *Lysistrata*—lighthearted romance, and gay song-and-dance routines describe *The Second Greatest Sex* (Universal-International, George Marshall, CinemaScope, Technicolor).

Echoes from the war in Korea come to us in *Target Zero* (Warners) and in *Hell's Horizon* (Columbia). *Target Zero* concerns itself with the rescue by an American patrol of United Nations personnel caught behind the lines of the enemy in Korea. *Hell's Horizon* follows the experiences of a bombing crew on a crucial mission. Both are small-budget films.

Artists and Models (Paramount, Fred Tashlin, Vista Vision, Technicolor) provides a fitting setting for the mad antics of Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis. Need I say more?

Pat O'Brien is cast as the power-greedy labor racketeer, and Dennis O'Keefe appears as the law-abiding citizen who is going to stop him in *Inside Detroit* (Columbia), an unsavory melodrama of conflict and violence.

The Editor's Lamp

PROBLEMS

CONTRIBUTORS

FINAL NOTES

Two writers who have made notable contributions to the field of religious journalism are represented in this month's CRESSET. The contributions of Pastor Gockel, centering around the television program, "This is the Life," are well-known and have received nation-wide recognition. And deservedly so. For the story of the TV Fischers is a laudable attempt to portray the workings of the Gospel in the day to day round of living, without preachiness or moralizing.

Not so well known generally is the work of Miss Pries. Suffice it to say that in that last remaining pocket of resistance to the feminization of our culture, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Miss Pries has not only been granted admittance but has won much respect as a journalist who knows her stuff and who does her work against the background of a high measure of theological competence.

We had room for only two articles on the theme, "The Ministry of the Written Word." Had there been room for more, we could readily have found the writers. At this moment, the Church is blessed with writers as perhaps never before in her history. What she needs most of all now is readers.

Speaking of readers and writers, one of the truly first-rate journalistic products of the church today is *The Lutheran Layman*. It is a newspaper, with heavy accent on the "news" half of that word. We never fail to read it from cover to cover.

We have been privately needling its editors to make the thing a weekly. We think that there is a place for a weekly newspaper within American Lutheranism and that the *Layman* has the personnel and the record of accomplishment to move into that void. If you agree with us, why not write its editor, Elmer Kraemer, at Concordia Publishing House, 3558 South Jefferson, Saint Louis, and tell him a) that you agree that he ought to publish weekly and b) that you would subscribe if he did?

Next month's issue will be built around the theme of comparative religions and will, in addition, carry an original dramatic poem by our drama editor, Walter Sorell. It should be an outstanding issue.