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In Luce Tua

Comment on the Significant News by the Editors

The Case for Conservatism

There is a case for conservatism which has been argued ably and eloquently by such statesmen as Quintin Hogg in England and Robert A. Taft in the United States and by such writers as Russell Kirk. By temperament, training, environment, and theological persuasion we have long been drawn to this Hogg-Taft-Kirk brand of conservatism because it posits a doctrine of man which takes seriously, on the one hand, his fallenness and, on the other hand, his moral responsibility to make his own decisions in an environment of the widest possible range of free choice.

The fallenness of man makes a true conservative reluctant to trust any man to play God. He doubts man’s moral capacity to resist the corruption of power and his intellectual capacity to give men better answers to their problems than they can work out for themselves. He is inclined to look askance at any proposal to “build Jerusalem in England’s green and pleasant land” — not because he would not wish to do so but because he takes with full seriousness the fact that man is an exile from paradise lost, condemned for all of the days of his life to hope for more than he can have and to long for that which he has irretrievably lost. The conservative view of life is essentially tragic.

This does not mean that the conservative merely throws up his hands in despair when he is confronted by human need. He does what he can, individually and in association with other people, to relieve the need. But he is haunted by the fact, attested to through all of history, that so often the cures which men prescribe are worse than the ailments they were intended to alleviate. In the general area of welfare, for instance, the conservative weighs the value of a proposed solution to a given problem against its long-term consequences; he is concerned not to turn the man who is needy today into a man who will be dependent the rest of his life. There is, the conservative knows, a discipline of suffering and hardship which ought not to be dismissed too lightly, even from the noblest humanitarian motives.

The Difficult Choice

Disturbed as we have been by certain traits in President Johnson's personality and by some of the still-unexplained manipulations of his financial and political career, we had hoped that Senator Goldwater would turn out to be a genuine conservative with no worse defect than a tendency to put his foot in his mouth from time to time.

This, we regret to say, has not happened. Both in word and in deed — and even more so in attitude — Senator Goldwater has exposed himself as a counterfeit conservative. If the word had not been thrown about so loosely as to lose all meaning, we would call him a reactionary. That he happens to be a gruff, likable, he-man reactionary is, in the context of a presidential election, beside the point. He simply does not comprehend the complexities of the present or the threats and promises of the future.

He has decried the extension of federal power, but he has attempted to convict the President of responsibility for local disorders. He has promised a series of five annual budget cuts and an end to Selective Service, but he calls for beefing up the nation’s military might. He has talked about tactical nuclear weapons — “the kind that a man might carry on his back” — as though they really existed and he has indicated an alarmingly liberal willingness to share control of their use, as President, with one or more field generals. He has pledged himself to enforce the Civil Rights Law,
but he has eagerly accepted the support of the most intransigent segregationists. He has demanded a restoration of law and order, but he has welcomed rather than repudiated the anarchistic extremism of the John Birch Society and similar organizations to whom the late Senator Joseph McCarthy is still a hero.

Lyndon Johnson is a man of insufferable ego and oily craftiness whose meteoric rise from rags to riches has raised many an eyebrow, including our own. But in the conduct of the Presidency he has shown vision, restraint, responsibility, and enormous dedication. We are allergic to his particular brand of corn and we have some misgivings about the limits of his ambitions, but his record to date is one which invites confidence. We find ourself more and more often comparing him to President Chester A. Arthur, whose personal qualities and pre-presidential record left much to be desired but who made an excellent President. And it is, after all, a President that we are electing this month — not Mr. Congeniality or an elder of the church.

For us, therefore, the choice is hard, but it is clear. For many of our best friends, the choice is easy and clear — and different than ours. Whichever way the decision goes on November 3, the nation will have elected a President who will be the President of all of us. We are prepared to support him with our prayers, our labors, our encouragement, and our criticism.

**The Warren Report**

The report of the Warren Commission on the assassination of President Kennedy will not, we suspect, satisfy those at home, and especially abroad, who cannot believe that one twisted mind could be the author of such a world-shaking tragedy. There must have been, these people insist, some great and well-organized conspiracy, of which Oswald was at most only a willing tool. Moscow identifies these conspirators as Texas oil men who, allegedly, plotted the assassination at a meeting in Chicago. West European liberals, remembering Dallas' reputation as a hot-bed of rightist extremism, hint that Oswald was made the scapegoat for a crime that was actually engineered and executed by rightist groups. And there has been a disposition among some of our own political and theological liberals to explain Oswald as a kind of Everyman, enacting the suppressed desires of an allegedly hate-filled society.

The question which these reactions raises is: Why should there be such a stubborn refusal to accept the simple, amply documented fact that one man, acting on his own, could and did murder the President? Certainly it can not be because it is intrinsically impossible for one man to commit such a crime; both President Eisenhower and President Kennedy knew, and told their friends, precisely how it could be done. The reason for this refusal seems to be that our generation cannot bring itself to believe that the single, solitary individual, working entirely on his own, can block the stream of history and divert it into a new channel.

We have, all of us — liberal, conservative, and middle-of-the-roader — become collectivists in our basic assumptions about man and society. We no longer see men as individuals torn between the divine and the demonic, but as specimens of some collectivity — political, economic, social, racial, religious, or even psychological. We could be satisfied with a finding that Oswald was the agent of a Marxist plot or a right-wing plot; that he was a proletarian whose hand was inevitably set against a wealthy President; that he was an outcast whose resentments drove him to destroy the visible symbol of ordered society; that he was a segregationist infuriated by the President's advocacy of civil rights; that he was a Protestant lashed by hatred of a Roman Catholic President; or that he was a homicidal paranoid whom society had failed to identify and treat.

But it challenges our doctrine of man to accept the fact that a man named Lee Harvey Oswald, acting from what mixture of motives we do not know, decided to murder somebody important, bought a gun, and did it — on his own. It offends our belief in the essential rationality of things to be told that Oswald had considered killing Richard Nixon, had tried to murder General Walker, and finally ended up assassinating the President, apparently for no better reason than that he wanted to kill somebody important enough that his death would attract attention to the killer. This kind of purposefulness — or shall we call it purposelessness? — smacks too much of the demonic to fit into a universe from which, we thought, modern man had exorcised all of the demons. It makes more of man, for good or evil, than we are willing to accept. It suggests that every one of us may have within him the power to shake the universe, for good or for ill, and that for our use of that power we, must someday give an accounting.

For if the man Lee Harvey Oswald had it in his power to do the evil that he did, what countervailing power must there not have been within him to do good? And if, in any one man, there are these potentials, how can we ever be sure that we do not ourselves possess the same potentials? And if we do, is it enough that we do not give evil its head? Or must we be prepared to explain someday why we did not do the good that we had in our power to do?

**Looking Toward the 21st Century**

Southern newspaper editors have been congratulating their communities — and with good reason — on the integration, without violence or disorder, of a number of formerly all-white schools this Fall. For the first time since the Supreme Court's great decision of ten years ago, integration is now a fact in every state of the Union, and there is reason to hope that even demagogic politicians have learned to accept it as a necessary, if unpalatable, national policy which no state can oppose indefinitely.
In the midst of these congratulations it is necessary, however, to remember that a great deal remains to be done. Gratifying as it is to read the New York Times headline: “Now All States Have Some Integration,” self-congratulation seems a bit premature when one looks at the statistics, as they are given on the map under the headline. This is a map showing the percentage of Negroes who are attending schools with white children in states of the old Confederacy, and these are the figures:

- Texas: 7.66
- Tennessee: 3.27
- Florida: 2.77
- Virginia: 2.62
- North Carolina: 0.936
- Arkansas: 0.762
- Georgia: 0.297
- Louisiana: 0.224
- South Carolina: 0.097
- Mississippi: 0.021
- Alabama: 0.015

The tragedy of these figures is not political or sociological or ideological, but human. What they mean is that in South Carolina, for instance, one Negro child in a thousand is getting an education reasonably adequate to equip him for living in the 21st century. The other 999 have been predestined to functional illiteracy, joblessness, and poverty. They will live to see their people free — of that there is no longer any doubt — but they will not themselves be able to profit from their freedom.

This is the real urgency of the problem. No one is interested in pressing any crowns of thorn onto the brow of the South. No one can altogether forget that the states which rank lowest in the listing above suffered most under Reconstruction. But it is not the past which we have to contend with in this matter. It is the future. And this future, for the South as for all of us, is a-building right now. This year’s first-graders, black and white, will be reaching their most productive years in the year 2000. Now, not ten years from now, we must answer the question: What legacy do we want to leave to the 21st century?

### The New Breed

We spent an unusually profitable evening recently with a Roman Catholic clergyman who has been, for many years, principal of a high school. We were talking about the present generation of high school kids — a topic in which, at the moment, we have considerably more than an academic interest — and this is what he told us:

1. The great majority of them have not received any affection at home and therefore do not know how to give or receive affection. Nevertheless, they seek affection. But they are suspicious of friendship. Popular Freudianism, plus perhaps the increase in homosexuality, has made friendship with members of one’s own sex suspect and has helped to produce such phenomena as early dating with its concomitants of “going steady,” teen-age sexual experimentation, and early marriage.

2. This generation doesn’t “dig” anything from deduction any more. This presents a problem for teachers in a Roman Catholic or Lutheran high school where religion, at least, has traditionally been presented as a set of facts and propositions from which meaningful deductions could be made. Today’s youngsters apparently start not from propositions but from questions, and the teacher who is not answering their questions is simply not getting through to them.

3. This is a generation which rejects hypocrisy. Its one moral commitment is to honesty — a commitment which sometimes leads it to kinds of behavior which its elders find distressing (particularly in matters of sexual conduct), but which, on the whole, is refreshing. Today’s youngsters despise the “snow job,” no matter how prestigious the individual or institution that tries to “snow” them.

4. These kids are, simultaneously, very selfish and very idealistic. They want what they want when they want it, and they want a great deal. But one of the institutions which they respect most is the Peace Corps, and many of them hope to serve in it. Their disposition is to “play it cool” and remain as uninvolved as possible, but they believe passionately in a continuum between belief and action.

5. In every stage of their maturing — grade school, high school, post-high school — they reject the beliefs of the previous stage and fear that they are losing their faith. For the teacher of religion, especially, this means that he dare not give them the impression, at any one of these stages, that he is merely re-hashing what they had learned in an earlier stage. And it means also that they need parental and pastoral reassurance that the healthy process of “putting away childish things” is not, in itself, apostasy.

These are, we think, significant observations which ought to be taken into account by all of us who consider ourselves called to “do something” for these young people. It is a natural temptation to want to create a new generation in our own image, despite what we say about ourselves on Sunday mornings as “poor, miserable sinners.” And it can be a profound love that tempts us to force upon our children a prefabricated set of values, dogmas, and mores. But we have to deal not with what might have been or even with what ought to be, but with what is. So (quite literally) for God’s sake we can at least get off the backs of those among us who do understand this generation and who, in their strange and sometimes disturbing ways, are trying to communicate to them the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
The Try That Must Not Fail

Fourscore and seventeen years ago, the fathers of Canadian confederation brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in generous compromise and dedicated to the proposition that men of reason and good will, whatever their differences of language and religion and culture, could live together in freedom under law.

For the past three years, Canada has been torn by separatist movements, testing whether Canada or any other nation which respects and encourages cultural diversity among its people can long endure. For Canada this time of testing could end in the tragedy of secession and atomization. For men of reason and good will the world over, the failure of the Canadian experiment would kill a dream which has never seemed possible of attainment, except that in large measure it has been realized in Canada: the dream that in some pleasant corner of the earth men might live and work together in peace and mutual respect without having to lose the great and admirable legacies of their past for the sake of some synthetic nationhood.

That this dream could never come true without tensions and frictions must have been obvious from the start. There is a tried and tested way of forging unity out of human diversity: destroy those who will not conform to the new pattern and reduce everyone else to a faceless form in a colorless mass. This has been the way of the tyrant, whether he be autocrat or democrat. It was not the way the Fathers of Confederation chose and it is not, we dare to believe, the way that the great majority of Canadians — French-speaking or English-speaking — would choose today.

But if homogenization is not the way, neither is secession and atomization. The greatness of Canada is more than the greatness of any one of its nationalities. Cartier, MacDonald, Mackenzie, Smith, Laurier, Borden, Osler, Bell, Mackenzie King, Massey, St. Laurent — these were not provincial men content to drift with the current of the past; they were Canadians who built the greatness of many traditions into a country whose voice is heard and respected in the counsels of the nations.

Why all this passionate concern south of the border? Because Canada is an experiment that must not fail. Someone — and history has assigned this high mission to the Canadians — must prove to the world that reasonable men of many languages and cultures can sit down together in parliament and work out ways of living together in harmony and mutual respect. If Canada can't do it, why even hope for a parliament of man, a confederation of the world?

Vatican II:3

Only time can tell whether a New York Times reporter was right when he prefaced a report on the third session of the Second Vatican Council with the statement that “The Roman Catholic Church has made more progress toward renewal and modernization in the last two weeks than in the last century.” If he is right, this is an occasion for rejoicing. But whether he is right or not, the Council has accomplished one great thing; it has shattered the old Protestant image of Rome as a monolith impervious to those winds of change which have sculptured and changed the rest of Christendom.

What we have seen is a Church patiently and carefully trying to decant new wine into old wineskins. Some, at least, of this new wine is Wittenberg vintage 1530, and no one is quite sure how it will mix with Trent, vintage 1563. It is heartening to see that the two have blended in certain of the Council Fathers with happy results. They are living refutations of the old cliche. Roma semper eadem.

It is worth noting that these champions of reform are men who first came to the attention of the Church as Biblical scholars. Few Protestants are yet aware of the renaissance of Biblical studies which has been going on in the Roman Catholic Church in the past fifty years. But it is the flowering of this renaissance that we have seen in Vatican II. And there is a kind of irony in the fact that this rediscovery of the Scriptures should have taken place in Roman Catholicism at the same time that so much of Protestantism has been abandoning the Scriptures in favor of books about the Scriptures. It would be an even greater irony if the day should come when Roman Catholics and Protestants should find it difficult to talk to each other because of Protestant ignorance of, or indifference to, the Scriptures.

Meanwhile, of course, we must regretfully accept the fact that the reunion of Western Christendom is not a thing that any of us will see in our lifetime. Our generation, too, must live with the tragedy of a divided Church, the scandal of a fractured una sancta et catholica ecclesia. But if we must live with it, we can at least live with it in penitence and in charity toward those brethren from whom we are outwardly divided. This is far less than the oneness for which our Lord prayed on the night in which He was betrayed, but it is far more than we have been able to manage these past four hundred years.
Who's afraid of electronic computers and their effect on the future? Almost everyone, except Henry M. Boettinger and the people who make the machines. I have not talked with anyone who is an authority on the subject, which is to say, I have not talked it over with my barber, but I gather part of our fear is based on a lack of knowledge. However, the more I find out about the computers, the more frightened I get for the future.

Mr. Boettinger, assistant comptroller for A.T. & T., is an authority, and he is not concerned over what computers might do to the future. In an article in the Bell Telephone Magazine, he expresses the opinion that computers not only have a salutary effect on the present but they will also produce secondary effects which should make for interesting social changes.

No one can anticipate these secondary effects and Mr. Boettinger cites an interesting example of this. For well over a thousand years, no one heard anything about the Arabs. They had little effect on history in that period of time and Europeans tended to treat them as sub-human. But for the last decade, the Arabs have been jumping. Not only are they active, but they also have a sense of destiny and some show of unity. What caused this change?

It wasn't Nasser nor was it the oil under Arab soil that were the primary causes of this change, says Mr. Boettinger, but the invention of the Japanese transistor radio. Now every Arab village, every oasis, in fact, almost every Arab owns a cheap transistor radio. And every radio is tuned to Radio Cairo, "the voice of the Arabs," which broadcasts twenty-four hours a day. At last the Arab, whose illiteracy has prevented concerted action in the past, can hear broadcasts in his own language, broadcasts which remind him of past glory and call him to present action. This is an example of the secondary effects of an invention.

Many historians have pointed out that one reason for the success of Luther's theses and the change they made in the world was the invention of the printing press. There was little new in the theses Luther nailed to the door of the Wittenberg church, though his strong prose style gave them a new cast. But the printing press made it possible to reproduce and distribute Luther's message and thus helped to change the course of world history.

These are secondary effects of inventions and they are impossible to anticipate. Surely no one asked a Japanese manufacturer, "What effect do you think these new transistor radios will have on Arab unity?" And no one asked Gutenberg, "What effect do you think printing will have on European society?" That computers will have strong secondary effects is beyond doubt, but only time can tell what they will be. We can hope they produce changes which are personal and warm, or just the opposite of the effects the computers are now producing. It is this impersonality of computers which scares us now.

Not long ago I watched a demonstration in Chicago where a typewriter was attached to a phone line, called Data-Phone. At the other end of the line was a computer belonging to a company located in Massachusetts. By typing a few code letters on the typewriter, the operator asked the computer for the current inventory status of a certain item of stock carried by this company. The computer answered by typing the total on the typewriter in Chicago. Next the operator "ordered" three of these items and the machine typed out an invoice complete with shipping data.

Within a minute, the operator sent back the code asking for current inventory status and immediately the new total came back and it was minus the three just ordered.

From this demonstration it was apparent how many persons the computer can eliminate, but it was more than that. The whole transaction had been so impersonal, so fast, so exact, that it was frightening. Although big business has tended to make relationships more impersonal, there is still a great deal of person-to-person relationship in any company and people still make decisions with other people. With computers much of this personal transacting will disappear.

Those who know keep saying that machines can't make decisions and they can only do what people tell them to do. I wish I were more comforted by these statements, but I'm not. To me at the moment, the high stool, the celluloid cuffs, the eye shade, and the quill pen are symbols of the golden age in accounting. But these are long gone and the computer is in.

Here is a case where things are likely to get worse before they get better. For the continuing advance of the computer will probably not be stopped until that day when a misguided person in the computer center of some company suggests mechanizing the board of directors.
Faith as Community

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In view of St. Paul's emphasis on faith as central to salvation and of Christianity's emphasis on the Gospels, it is not surprising that much theological discussion has centered on the concept of faith and that it has been treated in a variety of ways. Since it is a pivotal concept in Lutheran theology through the concept of justification by grace through faith, it might be expected that an analysis of this concept would give an insight into this theology; for a theology, like any doctrine, is a system of concepts. Since the Christian life and religion in general get their expression and justification in theological language, such analysis might further clarify the relation between religion and thought both in intellectual formulation and in institutional embodiment. Particularly I hope it will shed some light on the question of the value of the Christian university.

An analysis which does not use the traditional theological language is apparently open to suspicion from the beginning. It is a much re-echoed complaint — in the daily papers as well as in pulpit pronouncements — that the demythologizers from Bultmann through Tillich and Robinson have robbed theology of its true content, since God has been brought down from his transcendent throne outside the world and made just an account of all beings, since they are of different kinds. Of God and of man, of their differences and similarities, the three beings whose nature they considered were asserted things. When they talked about faith, they considered it as a kind of thing too. In such terms it might be thought of as, for example, a "habit" or virtue which we have when trained in the fear and admonition of the Lord, or as a kind or degree of knowledge which might be taught and learned, or as itself a state of being in which the soul is at one with God.

At other times, however, the talk of thinkers has turned to our knowing rather than to the nature of things on the assumption that before we can say what is, we must be sure what we can know and what the limits of our mental powers are. Knowing and judging may be held to depend on will and feeling as well as reason and sense, so discussion turned to the relation between intellect, feeling, and will. If intellect came off well, it appeared as a faculty which could grasp the nature of at least conceivable things and could reason back with probable arguments to the existence of God, though it could not define His nature. Or, as with Hegel, it was a faculty which, being in harmony with the principle of the world, could allow one to become identified with it through a process of dialectical approximation and growth. Faith, also discussed in terms of the powers of the mind, could be thought of as an accepting of knowledge given in a revelation which went beyond our powers to grasp but which could be buttressed by argument. Or, as by Kantians, faith might at least be something akin to knowing and was justified by postulates of practical reason.

If reason came off badly, the emphasis had, of course, to be on feeling or will. Then faith too was talked about as a religious feeling, a creature feeling, or, as with Kierkegaard, an irrational leap of the will into the ambiguities and paradoxes of existence, into the rationally unknown but existentially enacted reality of God's relation to man.

But nowadays talk about a mental faculty of reason, of transcendental powers of feeling, or of decisions of the will, although these all have their echoes in the talk of theologians, psychotherapists, ministers, and evangelists, seems to most people to be made up of fanciful or at least unverifiable statements about entities we couldn't possibly have any meaningful knowledge of. Contemporary thinkers have consequently turned to what is immediately given — the facts. By "facts" I mean the observable events: occurrences of nature, the social processes of law, government and science, the operations of investigators and thinkers; in short, the things which actually go on, including our ways of speaking.

While we cannot see reason reasoning, we can hear
ourselves talking. The question about how we think is now translated into one about how we talk; so there is much talk about meaning and language — talk discoursing about its own meaning instead of reason examining reason, or man investigating nature, including his own. But actions and feelings are as much "things that go on" as are speaking, and therefore pragmatisms and existentialisms, which emphasize respectively action and feelings, share the intellectual field with linguistic analysis.

Since the changed forms of discussion involve new controversies and departures from old habits, one may think that this turn of events is unfortunate, that the old way is better. If so, one will applaud the signs of returning metaphysical consciousness among some recent writers. But nonetheless this is the way people talk now and it is valuable to follow suit for two reasons. First, communication is scarcely possible in any other way and theologians especially want to communicate. But second, a discussion of religion and faith in terms of processes and operations holds some promise of emphasizing one of the traditional elements of Christian practice which had for some time been lost, at least among creedally minded people. That is, it emphasizes the effects on life of the Christian Gospel and its historic and institutional processes and contents.

It is in such terms that I wish to speak about faith. Faith will still be taken as one of the fundamental terms of theological discourse, or as the fundamental term to be applied to the individuals' state of religiousness. But it is not then to be discussed so much as an existing thing nor as a faculty of the mind or an association of ideas which needs accounting for. I shall try to discuss it rather in terms of what faithful people do and say and have done and said in the historic community of believers.

A further preface is, however, required from anyone who wishes to be an apologist. For in view of the continual rejection of religion and of the continual identification of faith as an allegedly queer but unverifiable and hence, to the rejectors, meaningless kind of knowledge, a justification is required for discussing religion at all. This is further true because the traditional theological statements do not carry conviction, value, or even meaning to many people brought up in the churches.

**Religion as Experience**

It is said that God himself is the source of religion. This is no doubt objectively true, inasmuch as God is the object of religious doctrine and practice. But inasmuch as talk about God is what is in question in current discussions of religious knowing, the justification must rather take its beginning from the facts. The form it will take then is that of showing what religion is as a human phenomenon — what it is that religious people do, and how what they do is meaningful.

One must simply assert, then, that the origin of all true religion is in experience and that religious statements are justifiable in substantially the same ways that any other kind is. But, of course, one must immediately add that by "experience" one does not refer to the "sense-data" of early positivism. Such entities are less data than they are results of an abstract analysis of a grosser kind of immediate experience. Given in immediate experience are persons and things in relations to each other and to us. Among the relations are, for example, temporal and causal orders.

It is irrelevant to my purpose to ask how such experience is psychologically generated since most of the mechanism is unconscious and since neither is there any conscious state which one knows as its beginning nor is there any time in the history of the individual at which he can say that experience was generated or constructed out of prior materials. At any time the individual has self-conscious knowledge of a world or may be said to have experience, he has persons and things in relation. What is important to say is that not only our apparatus of perceiving, but also our apparatus of thought, and just as importantly our action and hence our valuations determine the experienced nature of the objects. Hence, a significant conclusion, we experience our world as having existence, meaning, and value at the same time.

Initially our knowledge is limited by narrow perception, action, and purpose. We do not experience all things at once and consequently the orders of things known to us may initially be partial or inconsequential. But successful action as well as objective knowledge and production of beauty depends on the discovery of the identities of objects, their causal, temporal, and other relations. Hence, as our action, interest, and valuing become broader in scope, our need to discover such relations becomes greater, our methods more exact and comprehensive, and our knowledge of the real world more adequate. Conversely, the new and better knowledge may react to reform purposes and broaden value structures.

The point I want to make is that orders as well as entities are both given and progressively discovered and clarified and, what is more, the idea of order is implied in the very possibility of experience and action. The latter being possible and actual, the former is too. In addition, since all experience and action have an orientation toward the future and the unknown, the sense of and the quest for order and value always transcend what is known and the idea of the harmony of things and persons becomes an ideal of inquiry, action, and symbolic production as well as a perceived reality.

It is, of course, true that we do not see or know the whole order of the universe — if there is such a thing. If we did, there would be no problems of knowledge. On the contrary, it sometimes seems that we perceive absolutely isolated data. This is not literally true, since every datum is given in some context or other. But some of our experience is not well related to other parts of it. Sometimes, also, we seem to see structures and orders which counteract or contradict each other, as when we see water run up hill or watch men passionately pursuing
a self-destructive life. The point, though, is that we look for the structures that explain the contradictions and that the ideal of knowledge is the progressive comprehension of initially partial or unrelated experiences into larger frameworks of explanation.

The sense or recognition of orders in things carries with it a sense or recognition of powers in things, the energy systems or exchanges that make things go. Many of the relations we perceive are no doubt trivial; but broadly speaking, there are four areas in which we find such essential and causal orders.

1) We grasp existential relations which govern the character and processes of nature, including human nature considered simply as an object of investigation.

2) We recognize, choose, and enact structures of value and law which govern human agency, that is, those things and relations which because of our nature excite our appreciation, desire, and directed action or which, if enacted, produce greater fitness and happiness of life.

3) We recognize and construct satisfying and symbolic forms which express known or felt relations and stimulate new or better attitudes and actions.

4) Finally, we have a reflexive grasp of the structure of experience itself. We can recognize the basic concepts which structure the language we use, which are implicit in all our experience or talk about it. We know ourselves as having knowledge.

As ourselves objects in the natural world we can recognize similarities and differences of structure between ourselves and it, and thus identify ourselves with it and recognize directions of movement and change. It is trivial to state that we could recognize nothing which was in every respect different from us, since it could have no effect on us. Conversely, it is obvious, but important, that because of the similarity we can have a sense of community with nature.

As rational agents and to that extent different from other things, we can recognize rational agency in others. That is, we can identify values and imperatives as ends and grounds of action in individuals and in communities and institutions. It is the harmony of orders in things with our own orders of experience and action which we experience as beauty and fitness, and conversely the idea of such a harmony is unconsciously a value and may be developed self-consciously and rationally as an ideal governing behavior and serving as the basis for the self-legislation of the moral agent.

The experiences which we call religious may have their sources in any of these. The first is perhaps least important, except in the tradition of the nature mystics, but the ordinary sense of the sublime in nature as well as the scientific ideal of an ultimately unitary source of energy in the universe may lead to speculation and devotion of a religious type.

Analysis of experience itself — both of the individual and of the recorded experience of men and civilizations — leads to the recognition of recurrent basic ideas which structure all thought. Reflection on the idea of goodness as an ideal relation of things to our constitution, on the idea of truth as an objective relation of things to our powers and techniques of knowing, or the ideas of cause and effects, time and space, and even the very idea of a thing lead men to recognize and identify themselves as unique creatures whose being can be asserted or denied and preserved and developed or degraded.

Such ideas are a priori in the sense that one cannot speak or think without making implicit reference to them. It is by rearrangement of the basic terms — particularly of thing, being, and existence — that different systematic structures of thought and language are erected or implicitly entertained. To discuss them, in fact, requires an antecedent commitment to some use of them. That is to say, there is a sense in which we can never break out of the net of language to apprehend realities directly. This very fact, together with the fact that we nonetheless do contact reality in our being and action and that language is senseless without a real world to refer to, while it is a cause of some skepticism is at the same time a cause of a search for, a devotion to, even a worship of a truth independent of statement. It is further a cause of constant reformation of the theories and doctrines through which we know what is, and hence a source of theological speculation and religious devotion.

Artistic expression, at least literary art, is at its best when it is a crucible in which representation of the realities of character and action is so combined in expressive form with an intuition of new or permanent possibilities of life as to make us yearn for levels of feeling, thought, and action seemingly possible, but not or not fully realized, to release us from dogmatism and prejudice, and to stir in us at least the incipience of new character, motivation, and action. To do so requires that the expressive form so harmonize with the structures of our own natures, inherited or acquired by acculturation, as to evoke a responsive harmony. Perhaps music is the best of all arts in the respect that, unencumbered by the weight of a concept, it can in the simplicity and perfection of form evoke a longing for the unspoken together with the peace of fulfillment. But to accomplish fully the end indicated requires the spoken word which pictures the miseries and the merriments of men and suggests causes and solutions.

Insofar as it does this, art broaches religious concerns, and one man's creation may be the instrument of another's salvation.

But the rational justification of religion and the pragmatic description of faith given here has its basis in the knowledge which bears on practice. This is so both because, as mentioned above, our practical concerns determine the direction and adequacy of our inquiries, and because religion is concerned with the most fundamental of all our concerns — life, and the values of living. Since this is our fundamental concern, its end — a good and blessed life — directs all our activity, including our inquiry, and assimilates to its use all the knowledge we find in whatever sphere; for there is no fact that may not
bear on our purpose. As our end influences even our perception of phenomena, there is no fact which does not come value-loaded. There are only facts more or less adequately related to the whole fabric of our lives, or values more or less rationally related to the facts of those same lives.

It may seem to be a difficulty that no one really knows the final purpose of human life, if there is one, and that, therefore, no one can define the value of anything for not knowing how it bears on the end. This is true in the sense that we do not know the final term to the existence of humanity nor an external purpose imposed on us from without. The fact that this is so surely shows that our problem is badly posed in terms of external purposes; yet since we are purposive or goal-oriented animals the problem is nonetheless one of ends, and we must look rather for an end internally defined.

One might equally say that no one knows what man's nature is in the sense of having the final formula of his structure, if such a thing exists, nor in the sense of knowing the sum of all the unrealized potentials of human nature. Nevertheless we know enough of the basic facts to know what makes life problematic. It is with this that we begin. Life can be beautiful, but it isn't always. The problem thus becomes how can we make it tolerable and perhaps better or how we should live in view of our small knowledge and weaker will. (There is no problem about the meaning of "good" and "better" here. We indicate our knowledge of its meaning quite commonly enough when we say "Life can be beautiful, but it isn't.") It is thus futile to reject moral and religious claims on the ground that we do not know enough to justify them. They are concerned with how we live — and die, since dying is sometimes an act. But while we live we must work with the problem. There is no choice, at least no choice but to work it out or die.

Since the end is not fixed in the literal sense, but since the conditions and elements of the problem are broadly known, though the specifications change, the problem of dealing with it in thought and action is a problem of method. It is how we should choose to live rather than what we should choose to get or live for which requires our attention. The method is nonetheless controlled by consideration of an end to which it leads and the conditions from which it works.

The Development of Community

It is the problem of life, then, and the fundamental concepts, theories and methods with which it is posed and resolved in thought, feeling, and action with which we are now concerned. My claim is that it is this to which religion is addressed and this to which Christian faith preeminently gives the answer.

Now we do not live by ourselves and we do not think in a vacuum. Each man is physically individual. But even in a biological sense, though each has all the unity and self-sufficiency of an organism, individuals are inter-

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We are able to dissociate thought, feeling, and action, as well as to integrate them, and we tend to form rigid habits as well as to think and act rationally and responsively. Nevertheless both thought and living proceed through the developing traditions of communities. Their validity lies in their being continuing representations of the experience of the community which give insight into the realities of the world and thus provide the possibility of an objective basis for action. No less, nor any more, can be said for traditions of religious thought than for scientific. Each is valid insofar as with the fundamental tools of thought it gathers experience together, discovers its regularities, integrates these wherever possible with others, purges itself of partial or unclear dogmas, and reaches out to include more. The difference between them is thus not one of basic method nor ground of validity. Both are valid when and only when they operate so. The difference is in their ends. The end of science, for some at least of its practitioners, is the discovery of structures in nature regardless of their bearing on action. It may even include religion as a phenomenon to be explained, though in doing so it abstracts from its own quasi-religious devotion to truth. The end of religion is the whole good of life. As such it calls for, in its best practitioners, the best of scientific knowledge and ultimately includes all knowledge in its scope since the whole good of life includes values to be created and enjoyed as well as virtuous character and action. Religious knowing, thus, is justified in general as practical knowing. In particular it is justified if the facts of experience it deals with and represents are shown to be crucial to an understanding of life. Religious practice is justified if it is integrated with knowledge and warranted by what is known.

To discover whether it is thus justified means necessarily to turn to the community in which it was formed and to trace out the meanings it has found in the basic facts it has discovered. The question here is specifically about the Christian community and its faith.

**Human Nature and Conduct**

The basic experiences or facts are simple enough, as is to be expected if they have sufficiently permanent status to be open to all; but consistently with what has been said, they need to be restated, if belief and practice are to be justified in pragmatic terms.

As was stated above, in our activities of knowing we look for regularities and orders. This is not to say we find no irregularity in the world. On the contrary, we look for order because things sometimes appear unrelated and irrational and because action requires structure and predictability in events. We find evidence for thinking that particular actions and events in nature are spontaneous and irrational or ungoverned. Yet together with this we note that irrational phenomena in the aggregate as well as grosser phenomena become predictable. Nature is habit governed or lawful; and though it seems sometimes irrational the aim of theoretical thought is to reduce irrationality by progressive inclusion of the unexplained in the body of the known and lawful.

But specifically the problem of religion is a problem about human nature and conduct. There are four important facts of our behavior that the Christian tradition has taken account of.

First, our reflection on our own experience leads, as noted above, to our identification of ourselves as unique kinds of being. We separate ourselves from the rest of our local world by our ability to speak, to have concepts, and to know the world and govern our action according to our thought. We are free and rational and therefore have the potentiality for self-government.

Secondly, self-government becomes an issue only because there is something to govern — our emotions and actions. Emotions leap up in the fire of impulse and, if left uncontrolled, consume the integrity of the person. Fulfillment of life, even mere self-preservation, depends on the organization of impulses into an economy of the passions. Ideally, then, we should govern ourselves rationally according to our knowledge of the causes and the effects of our passions on ourselves and others in the circumstances in which we find ourselves. That we can govern ourselves at all is the proof of our capacity to do so, and that certain passions when in control do in fact lead to disintegration of personality is the proof of the fact that ideally we ought to institute a complete economy of passion under the autonomy of reason. But the crucial fact is that the passions are forces on their own account, or rather, they are a moving flux of power in the personality, moving often far below the level of conscious reflection. If in the name of our fullest development and of the best life possible for us we place ourselves under obligation to govern ourselves, we find ourselves unable to meet the counsel of perfection. Impulse and the unreasoned, unintended actions consequent on it always break out in new directions and require new controls. Further, if rational self-government is weak in a person, as in a society, other elements come into control and form our “intentions” so that we may sometimes even be said to intend our own destruction. Yet by nature, if, as Aristotle said, the nature of a thing is its end, man places on himself the unconditional demand of self-control whenever he reaches the maturity of self-conscious rationality, which is to say, whenever by insight or through teaching he is led to reflect on his own experience and its conditions.

Thirdly, it is not only the case that human nature is both impulsive and rational, but we observe that both thought and feeling tend to take on structures. They become habitual. It is astonishing with what ease habits are formed but with what pains bad or outmoded habits are broken. The mindless impulses which flash out to destroy momentarily the community between two persons or notions are strengthened by the answering fire and hardened into habits by the cold truces that follow. Repeated, they help charge the atmosphere in which
children still bristle and do battle in the third and fourth generation. We could, of course, not do without habits, for no one can think out every action. Yet since circumstances change, it is necessary to change even good habits or sets of character. We should ideally develop the habit of rationality to control other habits; but the fact is that habits, often unconsciously developed, resist not only new and creative control, but even identification.

What rational self-government concretely demands in the way of character and action is well enough set out in the great moral systems not to need detailed treatment here. Respect and love for self and others, integrity, good faith, courage, fairness, and equality of distribution under the circumstances of society are ancient and well known values and claims. If the moral injunctions people cite are usually negative, the great systems more adequately include positive obligations to develop one's own talents, increase knowledge and creativity, and do social and political service. I have said that a man who is maturely aware of himself and his unique nature lays these on himself as absolute demands.

What has been said about the emotions and habits, however, indicates the fourth fact: it is never possible for man to meet his own absolute demands, and hence such a person convicts himself under his own law.

Actually, of course, not all men convict themselves nor feel any guilt. Many have not by experience, instruction, or reflection become aware of the possibility of autonomy or the achievement of even a limited self-legislation grounded in a comprehensive ideal of life. Among those that have, the experience is not always one of guilt, but sometimes one of anxiety, frustration, or the meaninglessness of life.

The sense of meaningfulness is created by structure and purpose in human lives. Strangely, as it seems, their fulfillment in saintly persons is as apt to make us feel envy and consciousness of our own failings as emulation. But perfection in some form makes a claim on every man. The finished form of harmony calls so strongly that it seems we can only feel our inability as willful and guilty or cover our despair by rejecting its claims as alien and setting up another norm. Or if we make no identification of the end, we may feel what has been called estrangement from ourselves or our being.

Concretely, because of our social nature and our necessary lives with others, perfection is now likely to be seen as a human order in which each treats every other as a free person with rights and worth equal to his own. Trespass on the rights and claims of others and grasping too much of what is valuable for oneself tend to be more dramatic and painful than our personal failures. Hence I should think, this fourth basic fact of experience might find its clearest formulation not in terms of vague anxieties, but in terms of legislation and guilt.

Unfortunately, there is no mechanical way out of this human situation. A violation of man's autonomy is a violation of himself at the root, for his being must be defined in terms of it. As the claim is absolute, so is the violation, and so is the guilt.

Now it is to this situation arising from these common facts that the Christian faith provides an answer, and it is through the many-faceted interpretations and expressions of these facts and the answer that the Christian tradition grows and gains new strength and purpose. Against the despair which might be the natural consequence of the situation, against the pleasure-seeking life and other opiates with which we might conceal it from ourselves, and against the merely social life whose values we may settle for, the faith calls on us to face the real situation with courage and to live on with hope because life with supreme values is possible nonetheless.

The fact that man has naturally the potentiality or the instruments of self-government together with the fact that through thought and feeling he can cooperatively, standing on the shoulders of his predecessors, create wonders and values after new values is the plain sense content of the “history” of Genesis. (In a substantial section of the tradition, notably the apocalyptic writing, there is no essential distinction between history and myth.) Man is created in the image of God, free, and with the power of reason to name the animals, i.e., discover their natures and subdue the earth. ("Subdue" differs from "subject" in the rationality of its purpose to bring each thing as a unique thing of its own character under a common law rather than to do it violence under the whims of self.) But, through the devil and his own flesh, that is, because of disordered powers in himself and nature generally, he gives up his autonomy, consigns his action to a “foreign” rule, and thus loses integration of personality and assumes another character, a fallen state. The consequences, of course, are radical degeneration of his whole condition. The rule of passion and bad habit leads to the rape of his environment and the people in it. The self which remains, the old Adam, becomes grasping for two important reasons. One is simply that the desires grown strong grasp their objects without regard to the integrity of the objects. The other is that the changed state is unconsciously felt as a degradation. The submerged urge to attain the better state may prompt misguided attempts to get it by force of power and thus to reach for greater and greater power of a kind which cannot have the intended result.

The idea of God is not drawn into the account arbitrarily or by sheer imaginative invention. It is a response to, or rather the meaning of, the recognition that the whole structure of causes and effects in the world is not self-explanatory, but itself requires a cause. Similarly, the ability to live according to his best nature is recognized by man, if he makes any statement about its nature, as requiring a power beyond his own unassisted and dependent actuality. Powers can, of course, be misidentified, and the fallen man, especially the primitive whose knowledge and moral culture are not developed, finds gods and demons everywhere. But the power to recognize the cause of despair and to live joyously in spite of
it is above all recognized as more than the ordinary human being can manage. Man believes in God, consequently, not because someone told him God exists, but because he recognizes God in his world and as the condition of what is. By nature he walks with God in Eden. It is these real insights which account pragmatically for the traditional talk of the creation of the world and of man in the image of God, of the fall of man, of his misery, his conviction, and his guilt before God. In these terms, it is as the image of God — as free, creative, ordering power — that man judges and convicts himself and aspires to a better state of character and action.

Important in the tradition is that God speaks to the essential nature of man, to Adam, and so does the devil. Adam is in pristine community with God. He gives this up in favor of a community with one who speaks a different word. But recognizing his bad faith with his pristine community and his desire for it, Adam feels shame and accepts a new community with God, a community which involves misery, but when accepted also gives the promise and the actuality of life. He accepts it, that is, when it is offered to him. He has to hear it before he knows the possibility of the new community. But when heard, this word has power to call into being a new life in a new community.

The word is very simply that while the past can in one sense not be erased, there need be no guilt nor sin involved. Nature is what it is in man and in the world. Our actions have consequences in the formation of our own and others’ characters, in the pleasures and pains we cause, in the things we create, and hence in the whole condition of our lives. Insofar as we choose acts and consequences which are less than ideal we commit sins. The whole force of rational law is against them. Insofar as we have the settled character and intention to act thus, that is, for the sake of ourselves rather than for the sake of the right and integrity of each individual under law, we are in a state of sin. In this state one normally or intentionally violates the image of God in himself, which is the same as to say one violates true human nature and thus incurs absolute guilt. The final consequence of this if left to go to completion is a hellish state of separation from God and men.

The Forgiving Community

But insofar as we can forgive sin and accept forgiveness, though we may not have nor be capable of an ideally perfect existence, we are free of guilt and of all the psychological and practical consequences of a guilt-ridden personality. We are free to do within the limits and with the tools we have inherited or made for ourselves what is possible to man: to enjoy the world which is given to us, to learn to know it, and to broaden the scope of our activities in it. We can be men.

The word of the forgiveness of sin is spoken from one man to another. Insofar as it becomes an operative concept, that is, insofar as it becomes a source of integration of emotion, thought, and action, it remodels the characters of the individuals who speak it so that they may really achieve a new being or a new kind of community with each other. It can only become operative in a community. In the individual, to say the least, it must fight for its life because of the way in which impulse and habit tend to evict it or make it mechanical. But when it is continually enacted and felt, as well as spoken, toward one by others it can be communicated and established in feeling and behavior as well as words.

How this is so can be seen better from a description of the meaning of forgiveness and the nature of the forgiving community. To forgive is not simply to utter the formula, “I forgive you.” For as anyone even slightly introspective can attest, it is possible to say this to a person and continue to feel indignation or hurt and to let one’s treatment of him be prejudiced by the past act, even to break off friendship, though retaining formal civility, with him. Community, friendship is broken by a wrong act. It causes hurt, raises suspicion and mistrust. Men cannot live in such a state, as Hobbes noted, since their lives depend on common action. Therefore laws and traditions of civility grow up which enable us to minimize gross wrongs and to maintain some economic and social contact with each other in spite of the submerged feelings and habits which remain after the wrongs. Polity and civility are very helpful. Indeed, they are natural and necessary to man.

But they are not yet forgiveness. To forgive a person is first, no doubt, to recognize that there was a wrong. But secondly it is to reestablish active community with the one who did it. This means that one must have some understanding of the causes why men hurt each other — causes in hurt feelings, fear, guilt, pride, impulse and habit, even in intentional wrong. Understanding these as effects of what was called the fallen nature of man to which one is oneself subject and which is therefore cause for sympathy rather than superiority, one can refuse to impute guilt on that account and refuse to lash back in kind. To remove the guilt is to take away the cause of despair. The grasping impulse not met by a like opposing one can weaken or die, and it becomes possible for two people to treat each other as friends and to begin the re-education of habit which is called sanctification.

To be a friend to a person means, among other things, to help him with the things that beset him and cause him to despair. It means to heal the sick, feed the hungry, to give back their rights to the oppressed, to help the underprivileged develop their potentials, and to do all these not simply for the advantage one’s own fallen nature can gain from them, but for the sake of one’s respect and love for what may be called indifferently the true nature of man, the created possibilities of humanity, or the image of God in us.

To forgive is to do these things, not to mumble formulas. The community in which these things are done in this spirit is indeed the community of a new spirit and a new being. It is not identical with political, economic,
or social community or the academic or any other community, but it may include them or inform them all. It is a community of trust in which each acts on the faith that the others will forgive him and faithfully forgives them. Without such faith there is no real community. Hence it follows that faith is not, as is now commonly noted, an intellectual assent to putative propositions. Faith is a whole way of living which organizes thought, feeling, and action. Thus it is a state of being — a state of active unity within the individual and of actively loving relation with others. Faith is the bond and principle of a loving community. In its highest sense, faith is community.

How faith comes to be has always been noted as a mystery for the very good reason that there is no mechanical or necessary way of producing such a community or giving its principle to an individual. It is not done simply by saying traditional words, for like any other words they may be misunderstood and thus not heard. It is done through discourse, but no discourse can be guaranteed to do it. The word can only do its job when it is a living word, operative in persons and personal relations. As far as verbal discourse goes, it does its job only when it proceeds together with a powerful example. The Scriptures are full of examples, but the chief one, of course, is the figure of the Christ. Performing all the activities and granting the freedom which were held above to be the meaning of forgiveness, this Person is recognized as fulfilling, as men cannot, the perfect intention of creation and demonstrating the possibilities of life in the actual state of the world. The acts of the Christ are expressions of the kind of unity of being in which men are free to develop their different personalities and capacities. Our only appropriate expression for this state is that it is the unity of God himself.

Even preaching with example does not guarantee that the message will be heard. It is for this reason that the churches have always used every instrument of music, art, and ceremony to enable the message to be grasped insightfully. The fact that even these give no mechanical means of producing insightful commitment and that the concept of faith thus eludes every formula or isolated act — and it does so precisely because it is the state of being and not simply of knowing or feeling — is the essential meaning of mysticism and of the doctrine that the spirit of God bloweth where it listeth.

The Being of the Ideal

The sequel to this article in the next issue of The Cresset will apply this notion of faith as community to the idea of the Christian university. It remains to add here that the verb "to be," in fact all the indicatives, in the preceding paragraphs have a curious modality. No one can point to an existing community in which things are actually this way. If the church is taken to be congruent with it, the churches are often as full of strife and rancor as any other group of people. Children do not grow up automatically faithful, and people in non-Western countries do not, when missionaries preach to them, automatically adopt orthodox piety nor ecclesiastical morality. When faith exists, it is at best imperfect. Yet without it, truly human life is impossible.

These things point to the fact that the being of the community is the being of the ideal. (For this reason Christian thought has always been teleological or eschatological in character.) But our warrant for asserting the reality of the ideal is in the empirically recognized potentialities of human nature. It is these facts which govern the curious way in which religious language works and which account for the absence of positivistic verifiability. They also account for the fact that questions of the morality of intention as well as religious and aesthetic questions are badly posed in positivistic terms. But that is the subject of another inquiry.

The treatment of the subjects of faith and religion attempted here was to have been a pragmatic, not a metaphysical one. In effect, it is in transition to the metaphysical. Its purpose was to elicit meanings which would show the rationality of religion and its justification in life. But I have said that the problem of faith is a problem of being and this treatment is thus a prolegomenon to the new metaphysical inquiries to which Christians must soon address themselves.

The Heart Will Know

Sometimes the tortured heart will scale
The pulpit of the skull to preach
A whine of words that grate and pale
Like pebbles, bone white on a beach.

When those wind-caught thoughts slow
And lock in a dreamless drift of weed,
Then that wounded heart will know
Its only language is to bleed.

—GORDON GILSDORF
The season began with a whimper and a musical bang. Jean Anouilh will have two plays on Broadway this season, “Poor Bitos,” written in 1956, and “Traveller Without Luggage,” written and produced in 1937. The latter opened first and harvested mixed notices. The lukewarmness of its reception is somehow justified and, though it may not be the best Anouilh who, at that early stage, tried to handle a Pirandellian topic in an Anouilh-esque way, it provides enough theatrical meat to keep you interested and, above all, it will be fascinating to compare the earliest with the latest this playwright has produced.

The trouble with this production is that some of the best actors (Ben Gazzara, Mildred Dunnock et al.) and a seasoned director (Robert Lewis) failed to get into the spirit of the play, which pictures a soldier of World War I who lost his memory and for whom the process of regaining it and finding out that the man he comes to loathe is he himself is a shattering experience, and he decides to walk out on himself.

It is full of tricks and artifices which would have meaning if the people involved in it would only understand it. An amnesiac is not a sleepwalker, but this is the impression you get from this production, which does not know how to make head or tail of it and which, from Anouilh’s viewpoint, is so obvious and obviously part of the mystery. Perhaps the misunderstanding and misinterpretation begin with the title, in its original called “Le Voyageur sans baggages.” The English word voyager — purely phonetically — seems to traverse something yet unknown, to overcome space in a symbolic way; he is a passenger who passes from now to then, not a traveler who always has a ticket in his pocket and knows his destination. Our hero Gaston does not know his destination, nor where he comes from. He voyages from now to then. To have made this mysterious journey rather a bore is the mystery of this production.

The production of the “Fiddler on the Roof,” a tale of Sholem Aleichem, is quite a different matter. Aleichem was a genius in portraying the common Jewish man, usually a shtetlach, who is a failure in life, but a good man who can laugh about himself and express himself with a touch of sentimentality free of mushy feelings; he can say the most ordinary things with endearing pathos and the penetrating look of philosophical depth. He is a fiddler on the roof whose entire life is a long dialogue with himself and an even longer monologue with God. This milkman Tevye and his Jewish horse know about the tribulations of existence. Tevye realizes, though he is never disrespectful, that one has to make things clear to the Lord once in a while. “Send us the cure, we got the sickness already.” And when his less philosophically inclined wife injects some realism, he would, before taking things up with her, politely point upwards, “I’ll talk to You later.”

A musical hasn’t much chance to develop characters or a theme, but Jerome Robbins has the flair for putting meaning, irony, and depth into the atmosphere of a higher reality which holds the impenetrable mystery of our existence captive. There is the life that lives in a gesture, in a movement, and the improbability of hearing the wonderful Zero Mostel put his misery into a song like “If I Were a Rich Man” is wiped out by the film of magic that keeps us removed from the very reality which becomes so real. There is humor and theatricality, music (Jerry Bock), and dance. But what matters is that there is life, bigger than its littleness suggests, lovelier than its tears indicate, transcending that one tiny notch that gives the audience the feeling of a huge added dimension.

Imitators of “From the Second City” came from the West Coast, calling their brand “Committee.” The satire is dulled by such cliches as liberals courting the Negro, or girls talking about sex. Nationally advertised topics must be very clever not to sound parochial.

Where Broadway so easily misses is in the realm of humor. The “Absence of a Cello” had a better sound than “A Girl Could Get Lucky,” a two-character comedy by Don Appell playing on a low-brow string, on the poverty of mind and purse. One could never be sure whether the dialogue was real or a parody of low-grade tough talk, but for sure it is tough to spend a whole evening with two such people. When Betty Garrett asks Pat Hingle whether he would marry Grace Kelly if she divorced the Prince, his reply is that there is no point in talking about it, she is a Catholic and wouldn’t get a divorce. With such a man no girl could ever get lucky, nor could Don Appell, whose modest wit defeated him.

Ira Wallach’s absent cello is more whimsically tuned, but doesn’t quite ring true. It has comic invention, well paced, it has funny characters, it has a satirical aim which tries to hit conformity in a typical American suburban atmosphere. The playwright could not make up his mind whether to write a satire, a farce, or just gags on the thin string that a brilliant scientist must pretend to be a conforming nonentity to get a job with a big company.
I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

—II Corinthians 12:9b

All Saints Day is the day on which the Church is to think about all the saints. This seems to be rather obvious. What seems to be not so obvious is the harmful heresy which has come to accompany current Protestant meditation on the saints. Note carefully the emphasis on “Protestant.” This correctly indicates that we shall not waste a moment’s time wagging a critical finger at “those people” who pray to saints or stick those little “idols” on their car dashboards. The fact is there is far too much heretical usage of the saints on both sides of Christendom.

The heresy involved on the Protestant side might be called the “Strong Faith” heresy. It begins with the “Jacob’s Ladder” approach to Christian faith and life. It implies that Baptism places the new Christian on the first rung of this ladder, and then, through a lifelong process of education, church and Communion attendance, Bible study, and prayer, the Christian continually climbs one rung of the ladder after another (i.e., “grows stronger in the faith”) until finally he has reached the top rung of the ladder and can safely be called a “strong Christian.”

Such “strong faith” can be recognized by certain characteristics. At the risk of a bit of exaggeration, several such characteristics are worth noting: (1) The strong Christian smiles benignly . . . always! Whether his wife has just presented him with a newborn son or has just run off with the plumber (the latter being the more likely of the two), his reaction is always the same — a benign smile. He strives to be emotion-less or, at least, to be able to perfectly control his emotions. Only one thing makes him mad — to slip a rung on his climb up Jacob’s Ladder. (2) The “strong” Christian at least tithes, and, in his own humble manner, somehow gets the message across that this is before taxes, not just from his take-home pay. The church is the recipient of all his gifts because, not being of this world, he doesn’t believe in supporting non-Christian, secular charities. (3) If he is “strong” at all, he has successfully learned never to use naughty words. He has learned the proper interpretation of the Second Commandment well. Thus “helluva” is accurately regarded as taking the Lord’s name in vain. Once he has reached rung #8, he abstains from such coarse ejaculations as “Gosh” and “Shucks” and “Wow!” And rung #12 finds him a perfect Christian counterpart of Pavlov’s dog: he automatically coughs uncomfortably the moment anyone uses naughty words in his presence.

(4) The “strong” Christian prides himself on his humility. With wild abandon he cultivates the practice of dropping phrases like “You’re too kind” or “It really wasn’t anything” or “I’m really inadequate, but I’ll try my best!” (5) The “strong” Christian learns soon to “speak Scripturally,” preferably based on the King James Version, of course. (6) And above all, the “strong” Christian is rarely bothered with any doubts concerning God, and the real “saint” no longer knows what such doubts are like. Thus the Christian on the top rung has this infinite Creator-God tangibly boiled down to his own little size and claims Him for his personal prize and possession. He naturally enjoys “feeling God’s presence” much more continually than his “weaker” brothers and sisters.

Now, a few things should be immediately clarified. This is not a campaign to stamp out genuine humility, tithing, or Scriptural language. Nor is it a campaign to promote profanity, naughty words, or God-doubting. Also, that “bit of exaggeration” mentioned earlier surely enough came to pass. But even this will have been worthwhile . . .

if we can now better rid ourselves of our natural and diabolical determination to “climb Jacob’s Ladder” . . .

if we can better stop now the useless and harmful practice of, as one “weak” Christian expressed it, “theological navel contemplation” . . .

and if we understand more clearly that such obsession with our spiritual progress almost inevitably ends up with our making our “strong” faith actually our best and only good work, the reward of which is God’s grace and favor!

In fact, if you closely consider the lives of the apostles and prophets (or your own, for that matter), you will most likely discover that the Christian’s faith and life is most often a matter of great ups and downs, heights and depths. This seems to be part of the gracious and realistic design of the Father Himself. You see, we can count on it that, just about the time our faith does really flourish and grow strong, the Evil One will somehow let us know about it, and the faith itself will begin to replace God. So it is a thing to be thankful for that our gracious God will sooner or later knock the props out from under us again to make it painfully and joyously clear that apart from Him and His grace we not only can do nothing . . . we are nothing! Praise Him that we can count on His making us weak, too.

November, 1964
Aside from the work-righteous heresy involved with "ladder-climbing," the practical, corporate results within the Church of Christ as she attempts to function as His redemptive agent in this world are especially disastrous. The Christians who succumb to this dangerous obsession find themselves involved in the pseudo-Christian game of "buttering up God," of "keeping God where I want Him," of "keeping God informed and appreciative of my progress," etc. And all the while the game is being played, those Christians become almost totally useless to God, His Church, and His world!

No, the saints have great lessons for us this All Saints Day, but they have nothing whatsoever to do with "theological navel contemplation" or games. We remember the saints wisely for two main reasons.

Whether it's a Joseph or a Jacob, a Paul or a Peter, their very lives all point us to the grace of God! We're caused to live again, for example, with a fallen David who hears the divine judgment: "You are the man!", and share with him that grace which brought him the great news: "The Lord has also laid aside your sin." Or we watch with alternating joy and despair the escapades of a paradoxical Simon Peter, and then note with special astonishment as the gracious Lord picks him up every time he insists on falling on his face, always prodding him on: "Get on with it, My Rock! You have a Gospel to proclaim, a Church to build, a world to regain!" And then, of course, there is St. Paul who, after a rather enviable record of discipleship, comes up with the tradition-shattering remarks in 2 Corinthians 9. How beautifully God kept Paul where He wanted him via that "thorn" Paul hated so much! But it was necessary for Paul to learn over and over again the very same lesson we must keep on learning, too: God's grace really and truly is all we need. He really can't or won't do a thing through us if we insist on being strong! Thus the great St. Paul chooses to glory in his weaknesses. How un-saintlike! How un-American even! Yet, in viewing the saints in this manner, it dawns on us that we are not pondering fairy tales today. Instead we ponder real flesh-and-blood people who lived whole lifetimes under the judgment and grace of God, and, in that grace, were called to follow in the Master's way. Strangely parallel to our condition and calling, isn't it?

That brings us to the other important All Saints Day lesson. The saints of old clearly demonstrate that the people of God are to be useful to God. It remains the amazing nature of the grace of God that it places the "graced" ones so beautifully at the disposal of God and His world. So, that world which He so loved and into which He sent His beloved Son is the world which He still loves and into which He still sends His beloved sons, His Church! That world still stumbles in dark nothingness and meaninglessness. It still needs its gracious Father as desperately as ever. Yet it will not know this Father unless the Church follows her living Lord in proclaiming and being His unbelievable love!

To this we have been called . . . as were the saints. For this we have been and will be graced . . . as were the saints. Let us get on with it . . . as did the saints!

On Second Thought

A respected elder brother in the ministry explained it to me: "Before men I can claim to have accomplished something, and know that I have excelled. Before my God I know that I am worthless, and I am humble." I nodded my assent, troubled by my Lord's judgment on the Pharisees: "You are those who justify yourselves before men." The whole fact of the Gospel denies my friend's statement. Before God we may claim to be good, and worthy, for He has called us good. Before men we may never boast nor claim any worth, for we have nothing which has not been given us, and every virtue has already been its own reward.

The primary theological evil we have called self-justification does not mean that we justify ourselves before God. The Pharisee is not really concerned with God at all. If he speaks to God, it is only to call God in as audience, as witness to the fact that he is justified among his fellow men. He does not claim to be sinless, he only claims to be more sinless than his neighbor. He does not want the praise of God, he only wants God to assure him of the praise of his neighbor. "I thank Thee, God," he says, "that I am better than these other men."

We are, all of us, justified before God. Justification has been ours all the way back to God's judgment on creation, that it is very good. We certainly have this justification, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them. This is the grace of God, that He does call us good in His love. Because He names us so, we are good.

But justification is received through faith, and before we receive it we must die before the face of our fellow man. The word that calls us good has called our neighbor good also, for it is a word of grace in forgiveness that has no limits. If we would have God call us good, we must know our common weakness among men. Before men we must surrender our claim to worth and value. Before men we must abandon boasting, among men we must be humble. Before God we know our goodness in His love. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Jesus Christ my Lord."
Richard Strauss

By Walter A. Hansen

The other day a long-suffering reader aimed a blow at my solar plexus by asking whether I had forgotten to devote a column to Richard Strauss. “Don’t you know,” he inquired, “that during the current year the world of music has been observing the hundredth anniversary of this famous composer’s birth?”

Fortunately, I was able to parry the blow. “I have not forgotten Strauss,” I replied. “How could I? In fact, I have been planning to say something about him ever since 1963 began to make way for 1964.”

Strauss was born in Munich on June 11, 1864. He died in Garmisch-Partenkirchen on September 8, 1949. It is not my purpose to regale — or bore — you with a biographical sketch. I prefer to evaluate some of Strauss’s achievements on the basis of my own personal judgments and reactions.

I cannot remember when I came under the spell of Strauss’s orchestral works for the first time. But this is utterly unimportant. I do recall, however, that an ingrained spirit of rebellion reinforced my determination to devote a large amount of intensive study to this man’s music.

Rebellion against what? Well, long ago I used to bristle with indignation whenever I heard acquaintances of mine vent their spleen on Richard Wagner. Since I happened to have a penchant for this master’s works, I could never succeed in squelching the repugnance that permeated my whole being whenever I was exposed to such derogatory judgments. I regarded all those venomous remarks about Wagner as hogwash of the most genuine kind. This, of course, was a purely personal opinion of mine, and I did not for one moment deny Wagner’s voluble detractors the right to give emphatic expression to their own views.

But when I read articles in which Strauss was described and, shall I say, psychoanalyzed as a slavish imitator of Wagner, I decided to investigate. What did I discover? Naturally, I found out that Strauss had learned much from Wagner — particularly in the domain of instrumentation. Was this a crime on his part? Assuredly not. If you can show me a composer who is completely original in every nook and cranny of his music, I shall be more than willing to eat a storeful of hats.

When Strauss bestrode the scene as a full-fledged composer, the Wagner baiters immediately lifted up their voices to shout, “Now we have another Wagner! Music has suffered another serious blow!”

It did not take long for me to realize that although Strauss and Wagner have some things in common, there are striking points of dissimilarity.

I do not minimize Strauss’s skill as a melodist. Yet no one can deny that he did not match Wagner in the ability to create tunes that are played, whistled, sung, and hummed all over the world. Think, for example, of the widely known melodies in Lohengrin and Tannhaeuser, to mention only two of Wagner’s music dramas. How many tunes from Strauss’s Salome and Electra have made their way into the memories and throats of the people at large? Not even that great masterpiece titled Der Rosenkavalier can be called an exception.

I am not forgetting the many art songs from Strauss’s pen. In numerous instances their melodic content is enrapturing beyond description. Wagner, as you know, did not achieve phenomenal distinction in the domain of the art song. But Strauss did. In this respect he is related to Schumann, Schubert, Brahms, and a few others. How could this prophet of raucousness and cacophony, as the rabid anti-Straussites took pleasure in speaking of him, become a master in the field of the lied? Strauss’s detractors will deny to the top of their bent that his songs are genuine jewels. In my opinion, this judgment is tragically warped and lopsided.

I like Strauss’s songs. I like parts of Salome and Electra. I treasure most of Der Rosenkavalier. But I am exceedingly fond of this composer’s symphonic poems. Till Eulenspiegel’s Merry Pranks heads my list by far. Don Quixote comes next. Then there is Ein Heldenleben. Also sprach Zarathustra strives in the sweat of its color-laden face to be philosophical. The autobiographical Sinfonia Domestica leaves me somewhat cold, and I can take or leave Death and Transfiguration.

The operas Strauss wrote during the latter part of his long career do not fill me with ecstasy. To my thinking, he was at his best during the 1890s and for a few years beyond the turn of the present century. Subsequently one often had more than a little right to speak of him as one who used to be a great composer.

Why should I hesitate to say that I am thrilled to the marrow by Strauss’s orchestral magic? In this exciting domain he is unsurpassed by anyone. Even those works of his that are a bit jejune from a thematic point of view are filled to overflowing with instrumental wizardry.

Yes, Strauss learned much from Wagner, from Liszt, and from other composers. But it would be decidedly unfair to speak of him as a man who lacked striking originality. He owed much to his own efforts, and he was by no means an apostle of deadening cacophony.

He was far more important, I think, than Stravinsky or Schoenberg. Like Haydn, he seems to have been henpecked — to a degree. Maybe this was good for him.
Hor-Em-Akhet
The Sphinx at Giza

By ADALBERT RAPHAEL KRETZMANN

. . . . they are perished also,
Those walls of Thebes which the Muses built;
But the wall that belongs to me has no fear of war;
It knows not either the ravages of war or the sobbing.
It rejoices always in feasts and banquets,
And the choruses of young people, united from all parts.
We hear the flutes, not the trumpet of war,
And the blood that waters the earth is of the sacrificial bulls,
Not from the slashed throats of men.
Our ornaments are the festive clothes, not the arms of war,
And our hands hold not the scimitar.
But the fraternal cup of the banquet:
And all night long while the sacrifices are burning
We sing hymns to Harmakhis (Hor-em-akhet).
And our heads are decorated with garlands.

Scarcely anyone in the whole civilized world can fail to recognize the great man-headed lion that guards the eastern approach to the pyramids of Giza. Because no full explanation of its significance and existence has ever been given, the Sphinx has become synonymous with mystery. It was built, undoubtedly, by Khafre, the builder of the Second Pyramid.

The Sphinx occupies a hollow which is part of the great quarry from which workmen cut stone to build the pyramids. As they took out the hardest and best stone, this mass of softer stone lay in the middle of the quarry. To say the least, it was unsightly and it blocked the view of the Second Pyramid. The builders then faced the problem of whether to remove the unsightly mass or to utilize its shape in the carving of a great monument. Perhaps the natural shape suggested the form of a crouching lion and so the eyesore became a sublime monument.

The Sphinx is about seventy feet high and about two hundred feet long. Since the stone was so soft, the body and paws became eroded by time and countless sandstorms. Later rulers repaired this damage with stone blocks. The figure faces the rising sun and the face, framed by the royal headdress, is an idealized portrait of Khafre himself. The oft-repeated story that Napoleon's soldiers broke off the nose of the Sphinx when using it as a target for rifle practice is refuted by an Arab historian of the fifteenth century:

In our time there was a man whose name was Saim-el-Dahr, one of the Sufis. This man wished to remedy religious matters, and he went to the pyramids and disfigured the face of Abul-Hol (one of the Arabic names of the Sphinx), which has remained in this state from that time to the present. From the time of the disfigurement the sand has invaded the cultivated lands of Giza, and the people attribute this to the disfigurement of Abul-Hol.

By the time of the New Kingdom, the Giza Sphinx had come to represent the sun-god. It became a place for pilgrimages, but in spite of this the desert sand continued to half-bury it periodically. Later New Kingdom representations show a colossal statue of a king standing before the breast of the Sphinx. All that now remains of it is a large, uneven vertical projection from the chest of the Sphinx. All details of form and features have been eroded away.

It is always a mystery why Herodotus did not mention the Sphinx in his account of the Giza pyramids. During the Roman period the Sphinx still continued to be a popular place for pilgrimages and sightseeing. Travelers also scribbled their names and comments on the paws of the Sphinx.

The beauty of the lines of the Greek poem, scratched on one of the toes of the Sphinx (quoted above) is best illustrated when you see the young people of Cairo singing and dancing on any summer night at the time of the full moon. In the peacefulness of the desert, with soft moonlight making the calm features of the Sphinx come alive, one's thoughts turn to peaceful things and blessings.

The scene pictured is a very familiar one except that the camel looks far more majestic and learned than the author of these lines.
Church and Change

Change is a law of life, and the ability to deal with change is a capacity both men and institutions must develop if they are to endure and mature. Dealing with the phenomenon of change is also a fascinating problem in the history of the church. There are strong continuities which link Christians together from generation to generation, but how much anguish, for example, is compressed in the touching correspondence between the young liberal Harnack and his conservative father, anguish in which both the giving and the receiving generation shared! In times of rapid change, determining the continuities is a difficult burden, but a burden which each generation must bear. Church denominations often find it necessary to declare that they have not changed and are not changing. This, of course, is not possible, if only because the Spirit lives.

One important way of dealing with change so that one does not become captive to the stream of historical events is to study history itself. We study history to determine who we are and how we became that way. Interestingly, one of the denominations most often given to declaring its changeless character has produced some of the most sturdy denominational history available anywhere. To Forster's Zion on the Mississippi and Mundinger's Government in the Missouri Synod, both of which dispelled much of the mythology that frequently attends the story of denominational origins, we may now add a third volume. Dean Lueking's Mission in the Making (Concordia, 1964, $7.50) excels the other two excellent volumes because the author is not only a historian but also a theologian, and can draw important conclusions about the church and her theology which the first two authors failed to do. Lueking proposes to narrate a history of Missouri Synod missions; but mission is so central to his understanding of the church's life and theology that much more is found in the volume than is suggested by the title. There is history of Missouri Synod theology and ecumenical relations here as well, and done in such a compelling way that the reader is forced into a significantly higher sense of self-awareness. Lueking sees Missouri Synod theology resulting from the peculiar fusion of scholastic and Pietistic currents which took place on the Continent in the early part of the last century. The fusion was particularly peculiar because, historically, Pietism had arisen in protest against Lutheran scholastic orthodoxy. Now the opposites embraced, producing bipolar tendencies, scholastic and evangelical. New to the nineteenth century was a renewed preoccupation with church relations and thus a new concern with the Lutheran confessions, shared by both tendencies. The scholastics tended to regard the confessions as constituting a protective barrier against overzealous intimacy with non-Lutherans; the evangelicals tended to regard the confessions as a bridge toward unity. From the latter group came the impulse for mission. Lueking's thesis, as it finally emerges, is that from the experience of the latter group we can find the resources in the Missouri Synod for a vision of the church's task that can measure up to the contemporary challenge. The narrative is fascinating; the thesis is constructive. For those of conservative temper, attached to the Missouri Synod on account of the many values preserved through periods of erosion in Christendom, this thesis offers a meaningful way of not repudiating the past uncritically but appropriating that which has always vitalized the denomination even though for decades it may have been largely underground (or overseas).

That this theological point of view is now stronger than ever within the denomination is attested by many signs. Henry Reimann's Let's Study Theology (Concordia, 1964, $1.50) is "an invitation to the excitement of Christian thought in the 20th Century." It might also be correctly sub-titled a summary of that evangelical catechetical theology which, in a widening stream, has come from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, since the mid-forties. Anyone who has attended that institution since that time should recognize the currents of thought which here are so plainly summarized. The liturgical movement, the new awareness of confessional teachings, the new biblical studies, the ecumenical perspective: all these are brought together in a statement of a gathering tradition. The tragic recent death of the author cannot be minimized; but he did articulate a tradition of evangelical theology which is vital today. Gone is the fundamentalistic attitude toward the Bible. Gone is the separatistic attitude toward the church. The result is not a watered down theology but a vintage one, while breaking old wineskins, can vivify and excite good preaching and intelligent response today.

Concordia Theological Monthly is now undertaking its responsibilities with much greater sensitivity to the explosion in theological knowledge which has marked this half century. This venerable journal, long Concordia Seminary's semi-official voice, has in the past decade become increasingly responsive to current studies and trends. Now, more venturesome than ever, the journal is attempting to communicate to its readership some of the more important results of contemporary theological scholarship. The first such special issue is out, devoted entirely to Old Testament studies. The issue represents a cautious consensus of theological scholarship, the sort of thing that should elicit more trust than suspicion. It is a good issue, and deserves serious treatment. The new biblical theology can much facilitate the development toward a more adequate evangelical theology. But it will be a pity if biblical studies will now attract all our energies while systematic studies fall into disrepair. This seems, in fact, to have happened. Thus in this issue certain contemporary slogans may have been accepted too uncritically. The concepts "Heilsgechichte" and "covenant" are common coin in biblical studies; they are central to this issue of the CTM. Yet they have theological implications which ought to be made very clear. Covenant theology has a long history behind it, most of it in strict Calvinistic and Arminian traditions.

The notion of "Heilsgechichte" has received some important criticism by a number of theologians. The entire "acts of God" approach tends to obscure Lutheran insights which the Law-Gospel distinction seeks to protect, and disregards other modes of revelation found within the biblical writings themselves. In this connection we cannot recommend too highly a brilliant little article by James Barr, entitled "Revelation Through History in the Old Testament and in Modern Theology." This is included in Marty and Peereman's excellent collection of articles entitled New theology no. 1 (Macmillan, 1964, $1.95), which will annually present a cross-section of interesting work done around the world in theology. In this article Barr — who has a talent for discovering the meaning of the obvious — shows how the elusive concept of history unites all major theologies today, but at the same time obscures the vast differences between some of them. The use of this term, therefore, is a clue to some very fuzzy thinking. After reading this article, few will dare to use "history" without sober reflection.

Systematic and dogmatic studies have been in decline recently. It is timely, therefore, to point out that the John Knox Press has been publishing inexpensive but valuable works connected with the formation of Barthian theology. One does not have to be a Barthian to know that conversation with this modern church father is essential to any recovery of dogmatics. A collection of correspondence during his formative theological years, between himself and his collaborator Thurney sen, Revolutionary Theology in the Making (1964, $5.00), is fascinating reading, particularly for parish pastors. Thurney sen's study on Dostoevsky, constantly referred to in the correspondence as the little volume which prepared the way for Barth's new standpoint, is out in paperback (1964, $1.50).

Even Karl Barth's table talk is available in a volume by that name, edited by John God-
Tale of Two Cities

In 1947, in the case of *Everson v. Board of Education*, the United States Supreme Court refused to disallow the expenditure of state funds in transporting New Jersey children to parochial schools. A state law had authorized school districts to provide transportation for school children, and pursuant to the statute, the Ewing Township Board of Education authorized reimbursement of parents who sent their children to school by public transportation. The authorization included reimbursement for the parents of children attending Roman Catholic schools.

The case came before the Supreme Court on the contention of a taxpayer in the school district that the New Jersey law was in effect an establishment of religion and consequently in violation of the First Amendment. By a 5-4 margin the high court rejected this contention. Justice Black, writing for the majority, maintained that the statute served primarily a public purpose — getting children safely to and from school — and that the aid provided to church schools was incidental and hence permissible effect.

But in framing his decision, Justice Black enunciated an edict which was to have far reaching consequences. The "establishment of religion" clause meant that neither a state nor the Federal Government could pass laws which aided one religion or aided all. Here, according to Charles E. Rice, was the "sanctum springboard for the questionable decisions to follow." The culmination of these decisions came in June of 1963 when the Supreme Court invalidated the use of the Lord's Prayer and readings from the Bible as devotional exercises in public schools. In *The Supreme Court and Public Prayer: The Need for Restraint* (Fordham University Press, 1964, $5.00, 202 pp.), Professor Rice of Fordham University's School of Law has carefully described and criticized the evolution of the court from *Everson to School District of Abington Township v. Schempp* and *Murray v. Curlett*.

One year before the *Schempp* and *Murray* decisions, the Supreme Court had declared unconstitutional the recitation in public schools of the New York State Regents' Prayer. The reader will recall the storm of public indignation that ensued. But the winds of dissent arising from *Engel v. Vitale* were broken somewhat by the fact that the contested prayer was the composition of a state agency. This feature was absent from the later decisions. Since 1963, religious exercises of any sort within the public schools have been, in the view of the Supreme Court, violations of the First Amendment.

As the qualifications of Professor Rice would suggest, this is not just another of the tiresome tirades against the Supreme Court that have been published over the last decade. Rice is thoroughly opposed to the decisions. The first sentence of his preface removes all doubt on that score. "The school prayer decisions, handed down by the Supreme Court of the United States in 1962 and 1963, were wrongly decided." And his concluding chapter is headed by a Lincoln quotation (in reference to the Dred Scott decision): "I believe the decision was improperly made and I go for reversing it." But his criticism is carefully documented, closely reasoned, and temperately argued. It deserves thoughtful attention.

Rice's argument moves on several levels. He endeavors to show, first of all, that the prayer decisions are not securely rooted in judicial precedent, but derive rather from *obiter dicta* (especially Justice Black's comments in the *Everson* case) and highly abstract reasoning. Tied in with this argument is his attempt to show that history lends no support to the meaning given by the present court to the First Amendment. Moreover, Rice argues that these decisions did not in fact make government neutral in religious matters, as supporters maintain. They rather elevated a definite religious belief, agnosticism, to the position of an official belief — contrary to the manifest will of the American people, of Congress, and of presidents from Washington to Kennedy. Finally, the logic of the decisions will compel us steadily onward along a radical course that we neither wish to follow nor ought to follow: toward elimination of tax exemptions, chaplains, the use of God's Name in public ceremonies, and governmental aid to hospitals, schools, or any other religiously tainted institutions. There is little basis for supposing that the court will refrain from pushing the logic of its own argument all the way. For judicial restraint has been sacrificed by the present court to unhistorical and abstract conceptions.

This is the essence of Rice's argument. The remedy proposed in the last chapter is a constitutional amendment, along the lines of the current Becker amendment, to restate for the benefit of the court the actual meaning of the Constitution's ban on establishment of religion or abridgment of its free exercise.

A great gulf currently exists between those who vigorously support the substance and implications of the prayer decisions and those whose religious sensitivities or just plain pietistic prejudices have been damaged by the decisions. Professor Rice's book can help fill a dangerous gap in our discourse.

Mater et Magistra, the social encyclical of Pope John XXIII, is a lengthy document in a long tradition. When it was released by the Vatican in the summer of 1961, William Buckley suggested in the pages of *National Review* that, whatever the encyclical's final effect, "it must strike many as a venture in triviality coming at this particular time in history."

Buckley is a Roman Catholic. He is also a thoroughgoing political conservative. In addition, he is possessed of a quick wit, a facile pen, and a remarkable ability to delight conservatives and infuriate liberals with almost every word he writes. Two weeks after this initial comment, the *National Review* published the following in a miscellany column: "Going the rounds in Catholic conservative circles: "Mater, si; Magistra, no."

And the battle was on.

*America*, the highly respected, Jesuit-edited journal of generally liberal outlook, led the charge. Buckley and the *National Review* which he edits were accused of abominable taste and of rebellion against papal authority. Diocesan papers picked up the attack and suggested that the whole affair might serve as a salutary warning to Roman Catholics inclined to sympathize with the political stance of *National Review*. Buckley replied quickly. After pointing out that *National Review* is not a sectarian magazine and hence could not be accused of rebelling against a church it does not represent, he offered to debate the entire issue in the pages of a Catholic publication.

The offer to debate was never accepted, but as the controversy raged back and forth the positions of the disputants became clearer. Buckley did not wish to contravene the teaching authority of the Pope nor the authority of this encyclical. But he was disappointed by certain emphases and omissions that appeared to him to open the encyclical to misunderstanding and to exploitation by enemies of its intention. He denied, moreover, that the encyclical ruled out as an option for Roman Catholics *National Review* positions on contemporary political issues.

Buckley's critics generally revolved their argument around the claim that *Mater et Magistra* had in fact spoken clearly on a range of controverted political issues, and that Buckley and company were in rebellion because the pronouncements of the encyclical squared poorly with the philosophy, prejudices, and preferred policies of *National Review*.

The affair of Buckley and *Mater et Magistra* is reviewed in Part One of *Politics and Catholic Freedom* by Garry Wills (Regency, 1964, $5.95, 302 pp.). Wills is a young Roman Catholic lay scholar who became interested, through
these events, in the larger question of the use and misuse of papal encyclicals. Exactly what authority does an encyclical possess for the faithful? When the Pope discusses contemporary political institutions and problems of the social order, does he lay down an official "line" with respect to historical, economic, and other non-theological issues in controversy? As Will Herberg points out in the foreword to this study, these questions are of interest to non-Catholics, also, as is aptly attested by the traditional American fear that a Roman Catholic president would accept dictation from Rome.

Wills provides no easy answer. What he offers instead is a painstaking, often difficult, but invariably frank and unquestionably significant treatise on the proper understanding and implementation of the papal magisterium. Wills contends, in general, that an encyclical establishes the terms of its own authority if it is read with honesty and intelligence, rather than in search of "proof passages" or with an a priori conviction that the Pope was verbally inspired even in his most incidental comments. This reviewer does not have the qualifications even to suggest that the study is definitive. But if it is not, the definitive study still to be written will have to begin with this book.

And it is, we repeat, an important book. For the thoughtful reader will be compelled to reflect once again upon the vital and constructive tension between theological commitment and human freedom. For freedom of conscience is not only indispensable; it is also empty if it does not mean "the right of conscience to recognize moral claims upon it." As Wills observes, "Liberty, like love, both looses and birds."

Paul T. Heyne

WORTH NOTING

SAMUEL JOHNSON: THE LIVES OF THE ENGLISH POETS: SELECTIONS

Edited by Warren L. Fleischauer (Regnery, $2.45)

When Sherlock Holmes told his friend Dr. Watson, "You see, but you do not observe!" he expressed a principle of literary criticism which is still the core of all good interpretation. Well, here is a convenient anthology (published in 1955 hardback) of crisp observations upon 17th and 18th Century British authors by one who still ranks high in English Literature. Notably, Johnson's language is clear, unlike, e.g., Lytton Strachey's later psychography or today's jargon.

Back in 1767 it was King George III who, in a celebrated interview as recorded by Boswell, "expressed a desire to have the literary biography of this country ably executed, and proposed to Dr. Johnson to undertake it." Thus four volumes (1779) plus six (1781) featured a selection of fifty-two poets made chiefly by the sponsors, two-score London booksellers. The naturally unequal critical estimates, colored by Johnson's honest prejudices, frankly reveal his opinions upon life and neo-classical principles. Sense of fact so dominates or excludes the imaginative qualities that especially lyric poetry is unappreciated. Johnson was under-sympathetic towards Gray and Milton, over-generous to Pope and Dryden, although the attack upon Lycidas did not vitiate Johnson's liking for L'Allegro or Il Penseroso.

In this well-bound Gateway Edition the print is remarkably legible, on quality stock. Possibly it is the flaw of merely my review copy that the pages look unbalanced, too much margin at the top, definitely too little at the bottom! The purposive yet short Introduction, sensible Notes, and Selected Bibliography reflect credit on editor Fleischauer who is preparing for the press the definitive Yale Edition. Granted it would expand this miscellany a little, but inasmuch as we here have the complete vitae of Savage, Pope, Collins, and Gray — then why not likewise (because, as given, it is merely "From") the entire Cowley, Milton, Dryden, and Addison?

Herbert H. Umbach

NIGHT COMES TO THE CUMBERLANDS

By Harry Caullid (Atlantic, Little, Brown, $6.75)

Mr. Caudill's book is a forceful reminder that the United States faces problems as grave as race and closer to home than communism. His is one of a number of recent reports which focus on the apparently substan­ tial, though usually invisible, percentage of the population for which the American dream is an hallucination. Caudill concentrates on an area where poverty is chronic and endemic: the hill country of eastern Kentucky. The book is a biography of an area which sociologists (with singular infelicity considering its altitude) term a "depressed area," an area ignored by the nation, and incidentally, by most of the Church.

As befitting a biographer, Caudill starts from the beginning, in this case the richly endowed country into which pushed the earliest settlers shortly after the Revolution. In turn came the Civil war, laying the foundation for the infamous clan feuds, then the progressive isolation of the area, and finally, coal mining, first shaft, then strip. The biography is one of progressive exhaustion of the people, the land, and finally hope.

Caudill does not sentimentalize about the average contemporary resident of eastern Kentucky: physically debilitated, uneducated, lethargic, hopelessly corrupted by the public welfare without which he would probably starve. For decades, the case has been one of reverse evolution; the young and ambitious leave, to turn up in Cleveland, Chicago — and Valparaiso. Even there, though, their heri­ tage continues to dog them. One of Caudill's most effective quotes is from a man laid off by elementary automation:

"I kept my young'uns in school anyway. I come back home to the mountains and raise me a big garden ever' year and worked at anything I could find to do. I sold my old car for seventy-five dollars and I sold all the land my daddy left me and spent the money on my children ... (My oldest boy) had good grades in school and I figured he'd get him a job easy. He went out to California where he's got some kinfolks and went to a factory where they was hirin' men. The sign said all the work hands had to be high-school graduates. Well, this company wouldn't recognize his diploma because it was from a Kentucky school ... But they agreed to give the boy a test to see how much he knowned and he failed it flatter than a flitter. They turned him down and he got a job workin' in a laundry. He jist barely makes enough money to pay his way but hit's better than settin' around back here.

Caudill's quietly controlled writing makes for fine, if utterly disheartening, reporting. The solution he suggests is essentially an updated TVA. Though the present administration is sponsoring rehabilitation measures, chances for full employment seem slim indeed. The man quoted above was probably right when he concluded:

"I reckon they jist ain' no future for people like me. Me and my wife ain' got nothin' and don't know nothin' hardly. We've spent everything we've got to try to learn our young'uns something so they would have a better chance in the world, and now they don't know nothin' either. What can one do?"

Alan Graebner

A MOVEABLE FEAST

By Ernest Hemingway (Scribner's, $4.95)

"If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you, for Paris is a moveable feast." —Hemingway to a friend, 1950.

"If the reader prefers, this book may be regarded as fiction. But there is always the chance that such a book of fiction may throw some light on what has been written as fact." —from the preface to A Moveable Feast, 1960.

When referring to his theory of understate­ment and why he did not include the old man's suicide, which was implied, in his story "Out of Season":

"This was omitted on my new theory that you could omit anything if you knew what you omitted and the omitted part would strengthen the story and make people feel something more than they understood."

To a large degree, much of what Heming­way has to impart in "A Moveable Feast" is summed up in the above three quotations. Though Hemingway writes about his first wife, Extra Pound, Gertrude Stein, Ford Mad­ox Ford and the F. Scott Fitzgeralds in the context of their early 20's Parisian relationships in cafes, bars, and Sylvia Beach's book­store, one is only dimly aware of actuality as an objective scene; rather one sees these relations­hips of the past through the eyes of a man desiring (from 1957-1960) to capture the essential human qualities and insights that
come through memory and feeling. Conversations as reported in the book are subjected to the same tests of essentialness, therefore what is reported is most likely much less than was spoken, but is concentrated in order to show the meaning of what was said in significant situations: especially when dealing with Zelda and Scott Fitzgerald's relationship to one another and to Hemingway.

There is a great deal of help in understanding the effect of poverty on the young Anglo-American writers in Paris during this period. They learned and exercised a type of transcendence of reality in order to sense the tragic qualities of life while they were certainly not always in tragic or noble situations. The hunger and companionship of the period come through as a part of the imagination of the people involved — an imagination that was able to appreciate through the poverty certain values that might not have been sensed if all had been easier. At least this is the impression that Hemingway conveys.

Gertrude Stein once stated that Hemingway's real life in Paris in the 20's might make better reading than the fiction he wrote. It is my opinion that both his fiction as fiction and his memoirs as fiction are excellent and that A Moveable Feast is a book very much worth owning.

H. Samuel Hamod

A COMPANION TO THE GRAPES OF WRATH

Edited by Warren French (Viking, $5.00)

It is difficult to determine whether John Steinbeck's Nobel Prize has found him any new friends. Most of his vocal detractors leveled harsh criticism at the Nobel Committee for making such a serious mistake. But it seems that those critics and professors and reviewers who were previously on the fence are still there. Only the college students have had a continuing admiration for Steinbeck.

A few things, however, are generally acknowledged: Steinbeck is a superb stylist, he might be more profound, and The Grapes of Wrath is his most notable novel. He has not been subjected to the same kind of formal criticism that Hemingway and Faulkner have; but there are two or three quite acceptable books about him, and one of these days he may even become a thesis topic.

In any case, A Companion to The Grapes of Wrath is not really designed to take sides in the argument over the worth of Steinbeck. It assumes that readers are still interested in the Steinbeck novel, and that they would like to know more about the background, the circumstances, and the reception of this almost-classical piece of fictional propaganda. We shudder at the word "propaganda" now, because not many writers have causes to fight for, and not many novels get very excited about anything at all. We live in a literary and social world of peace and safety (with the possible exception of the race question, which is itself calming down, or the communist question, which is largely a hobby for unemployed bigots). Nevertheless, our decade was nurtured in the thirties, and it cannot hurt us to remember the Steinbeck cause.

The surface problems of the thirties were drudgery and unemployment, but the deeper concern was humanity itself. While Steinbeck hacked away at the social and economic injustices, and awakened the United States to action, he was really concerned with human behavior and the relationships between people. His basic themes of endurance and love have been considered stale and simple by some critics; yet, Faulkner preached endurance in his own Nobel acceptance speech, and most of the major writers of this century have strongly suggested that love is the only salvation of the human race.

Mr. French's collection of materials includes the essay, "Their Blood Is Strong," which formed the basis of the later novel. Students interested in the important relationships between historical source and completed fiction will discover much of value in this essay. It is unobtainable elsewhere. Beyond that, the book has the standard pieces on the novel's reception, especially in Oklahoma, and on recent reactions among college professors. One remembers the congressman from Oklahoma who vilified Steinbeck in the Congressional Record; or the public official who condemned the novel but at the same time admitted that he had not read it. It is likely that some of Steinbeck's critics might change their minds about him if they read his books.

Quite aside from literary matters, the present college generation should find A Companion useful in establishing rapport between their own decade and the thirties. It will help them to understand the occasional plaintive remarks made by their fathers.

JOHN MILTON

THE INFERNAL MACHINE

By Jean Cocteau (A New Directions Book, $6.50)

Jean Cocteau is one of those innovators in world literature whose influence is greater and more far reaching than the works themselves. Cocteau has earned the reputation of being the enfant terrible of French letters. Because of the fact that his gifts were surprising in so many fields — he was a poet, essayist, novelist, actor, film-maker among other things — one cannot help thinking of how much he could have really achieved had he concentrated on one medium.

The collection of his plays by New Directions — it is only a small selection of his plays — shows what a unique dramatic talent he had and, reading these plays, one cannot help thinking of how much he could have given to the drama had he chosen this medium as means of expression exclusively. But it seems that his many-sidedness was part of his charm, restlessness, and temperament, which one can sense in each of his various works.

The remarkable feature about this collection is the presentation of each play in what seems to be the best available translation. The names of W. H. Auden, e.e. cummings, and Dudley Fitts as some of the translators testify to this fact. They also prove the point that American poets too rarely take time out for translations. Of the four full-length plays, "The Infernal Machine" is the best known and, dealing as they do with classic myth and legend, "Orpheus" and "Knights of the Round Table" show Cocteau's iconoclastic approach to his subject matter.

"The Eiffel Tower Wedding Party" is a ballet with words, one of those unique experiments to which we are so used by now. But it was Cocteau who showed the way. It has scintillating wit and is a tour de force as a farce and "the manifesto of a poetic spirit," as Cocteau proudly says of it in his own preface. It is to be hoped that this collection will help to make Cocteau, this fascinating experimental dramatist, better known.

WALTER SORELL

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O. P. Kretzmann
Editor

November, 1964
A Minority Report
Of Polls and Issues

By Victor F. Hoffmann

As this issue of The Cresset is being assembled, all signs point to a Goldwater defeat.

The polls, all of them, have reported large margins for President Johnson. Major metropolitan newspapers, reflecting in some measure the consumers of their regions, have endorsed the incumbent. Certainly newspapers with the larger circulations have come out for Johnson.

Persons who travel the country report little substantial enthusiasm for Goldwater. Goldwater and Miller have also confessed that they were down, the underdogs, that they have had a lot of ground to make up, even to make a good showing in November. Many prominent Republicans on all levels of government have run from firm and clear endorsements of the GOP national ticket. Betting odds have shown no trend to Goldwater. Roscoe Drummond (Chicago Sun-Times, October 1, 1964), after a ten-day trip to the states of the Midwest, calculated: "Are the polls going haywire? I find little evidence to suggest that they are. The Gallup and Harris polls and the surveys taken privately in behalf of the two candidates all point in the same direction — an overwhelming Johnson lead in the nationwide vote. Goldwater is behind in Nebraska, Indiana, Oklahoma, Wisconsin, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota and even Kansas — all Nixonland in 1960." On the same day, Samuel Lubell indicated that Goldwater is losing ground.

By the time the reader picks up this issue, he will have known the outcome, at least the winner.

Yet, what this all means is something else again.

If Goldwater wins, given the status quo, poll analysts and social science investigators will be forced to do some solid soul-searching about their tools, their techniques, and their professions. All along, it is fair to say, the pollsters have been worried.

In the first place, the pro-Johnson margins are unbelievably large, way beyond the four or five per cent margin of error which most social scientists do recognize at the outset in this kind of investigation. One of these analysts has quipped about this in private: "At first we thought the machine had gone nuts."

In the second place, there are a lot of silent people this year who "no comment" a lot of questions. Who are these silent people? Are they people who are reluctant, or even afraid, to say they are for Goldwater or for Johnson? Are they Democrats who are upset about the Negro and Civil Rights? Are they defectors who want to come home next time around?

In the third place, there are a lot of undecided voters. There always are. There is always doubt about which way the undecided voter will go. Will he go to vote at all?

Obviously, it is argued by some, a combination of "no comment" and undecided voters could easily make the difference for Goldwater.

In the fourth place, a crucial issue, even if basically trivial in nature like rocks in the Pacific, could re-arrange the election predictions implied in poll analyses. As we go to press, the Jenkins affair could be such an issue.

As a matter of fact, it appears that the Goldwater-Miller tandem has sent up a lot of trial balloons in pursuit of a crucial issue: the President's war record. Humphrey's vice-presidency in the ADA, the war-mongering president, Bobby Baker, high taxes, conventional nuclear weapons and the like. On these "fishing trips" for an issue, the contenders have seldom had a jerk on their lines. These issues are crucial and ought to be discussed but the President gives them very little attention and voters have shown very little concern. And if you were serious about issues, how would you go about discussing the great society, lawlessness on the streets, and what we should do about Vietnam? The difficulty and complexity of the issues simply compound the already basic apathy of the American citizen. No men are so perfect, certainly not Democrats, that somewhere, sometime some issue cannot be used against them.

Looking at Johnson as the projection of the Rooseveltian, progressive era, we are about ready to say that history is ready for a change and is already re-constructing the old and new forces under the surface of contemporary events. Humphrey, Johnson, Kennedy and company have all gotten about as much mileage as one can out of the liberal cliches. Goldwater's people claim to be pushing the case of conservatism but there are conservatives. In my opinion, the contenders did not present a very coherent and rational case for conservatism. This is too bad for, in my estimation, the country is ready in nearly all walks of life for a new set of concepts and hidden assumptions whether they are called conservative, liberal, or something else. The mere negativism of the "outs" soon begins to look after a while like simple irresponsibility and that can be terribly corrupt.

Who will gather up the alternatives? Time will tell.

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The Cresset
"The Shadow knows." During the heyday of radio serials these words, spoken in sepulchral tones, sent shivers of anticipation up and down the spines of countless avid listeners. With the advent of television The Shadow, The Green Hornet, and other tried-and-true radio favorites passed into oblivion. But not long ago an enterprising program director had the courage — or the temerity — to broadcast a taped transcription of an episode from The Shadow. The reaction was both prompt and surprising. Letters of commendation poured in not only from older generations who had nostalgic memories of the original broadcasts but also from younger listeners. Advertisers became interested, more than a hundred stations picked up the program, and now a full-fledged revival of the radio drama seems to be in the making. Who knows? Once again the air waves may ring with the cry "Hi-ho, Silver!"

Although radio is looking backward at the moment, the silver screen is looking forward. On September 23 and 24 an actual Broadway presentation of Hamlet (Theatrofilm, Warner Bros., Bill Colleran) was presented in 1,000 theaters from coast to coast by means of a remarkable new process known as Electronovision. This is the first stage play to be filmed during a regular performance — in this case three performances — of a Broadway presentation. Seven small electronic cameras set up at carefully selected vantage points fed impulses by cable to a standard motion-picture camera stationed in a truck outside the Lunt-Fontanne Theater.

It would be foolish to say that Hamlet, as presented through Electronovision, was an unqualified success. It was not. The lighting was poor, the images often were either blurred or harsh and coarse-grained, and the sound was far from satisfactory. I discussed these matters with the theater manager during the intermission. He emphasized the fact that Electronovision is in an experimental stage, but that methods had already been devised to correct the faults I have mentioned. When the process has been perfected, audiences throughout the nation will be able to see current Broadway plays with the original casts. There is one big IF. The success or failure of this ambitious undertaking will depend in large measure on audience response. I observed one curious omission in the elaborate and widespread publicity for the Electronovision production of Hamlet. No credit whatever is given to one William Shakespeare. His name does not appear anywhere. Instead, the play is billed as Richard Burton's Hamlet. This really is the height of the ridiculous.

Sir John Gielgud chose to mount his production of Hamlet in modern dress. For me at least the curious mishmash of drab attire, as well as the stark backdrops, are disappointing. Mr. Burton's portrayal of the melancholy Dane had depth, power, and poignancy. Alfred Drake, in the role of Claudius, and Eileen Herlie, as Queen Gertrude, towered above the other members of the supporting cast. With the exception of George Rose, as the roguish gravedigger, their performances were decidedly weak and pedestrian.

I had read Jean Anouilh's prize-winning drama Becket, subtitled The Honor of God, with keen interest. Experience has taught me that many fine plays have been utterly ruined on the screen, and I was almost afraid to go to see Becket (Paramount, Peter Glenville). For once my fears were groundless. Becket is not only a distinguished film, but the screenplay is completely faithful to Anouilh's compelling study of the bitter and tragic struggle between Thomas a Becket and his friend Henry II of England. Richard Burton is superb in the role of the martyred Archbishop of Canterbury. Peter O'Toole portrays the tormented and mercurial Henry with brilliant success. The settings are magnificent, and the direction is as sensitive as it is penetrating. Each of the supporting players makes a substantial contribution to an outstanding achievement.

Early this year two ambitious young men had the courage, the vision, and the disenchanted enthusiasm of youth to produce a film which they knew would be highly controversial. Sam Weston and Larry Peerce were inexperienced, and they had a limited budget. As a matter of fact, they ran out of funds before their picture could be cut and edited. This obstacle was overcome, and the enterprising producers entered One Potato, Two Potato (Cinema V, Larry Peerce) in the Cannes Film Festival, where it won a best-actress award for the star, Barbara Berrie.

Racial prejudice is a dangerous and unresolved issue of our day. One Potato, Two Potato makes an impassioned plea for tolerance, understanding, and justice. The simple story is told with restraint and good taste, the acting is exceptionally good, and the direction is excellent. Although this is a surface study which does not plumb the depths of an age-old problem, Messrs. Weston and Peerce must be applauded for a valiant effort in the right direction.

Polly Adler's book A House Is Not a Home stripped prostitution of every vestige of glamor. It portrayed this ancient profession as a cold, ugly, degrading business which corrupts both the buyer and the seller. The film A House Is Not a Home (Embassy, Russell Rouse) has not captured either the spirit or the intent of the book.
The World in Microcosm

I was reared on the sidewalks of New York. My earliest memories include the recurring roar of the Elevated, the steaming pavements of New York on hot July mornings, and the mysteries of the livery stable next door. Our house was surrounded by the homes of immigrants from Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and the lands bordering the Mediterranean Sea. In winter there was a long trudge to school. Concerning nature we knew only that trees were in parks and grass was something to keep off of. In the vacant lots covered with tall weeds and in the damp basements of tenement houses the preacher’s kids learned to live tolerantly and to adjust life to its immediate needs.

Our code of ethics was practical, though limited. No rocks (they were never called stones, always “rocks”) in snowballs, at least not big rocks. No telling a guy’s mother anything when she tried to quiz you about Giuseppe Mattiani or Moe Birnbaum or Paddy O’Reilly. No making fun of a guy’s religion unless he was a Catholic, in which case an occasional jeer about incense and vestments was permitted. If Paddy O’Reilly was an altar boy — as he usually was — he was compelled to defend his religious activities with everything from rotten cantaloupes to sticks every Monday evening.

Our code, however limited it may have been, was rigid. Three whistles on a late summer afternoon as the sun stood low and red beyond the Elevated meant that the Arthur Avenue gang was headed our way. All good men and true forgot home and mother and internal strife in a united effort to drive back the invader. Now, fifty years later, I read the world news and recognize with something akin to pain and surprise my friends and enemies of the sidewalks of New York. The same passions, the same loyalties, the same techniques, on a larger scale, perhaps, and with more deadly consequences, but still deeply and essentially childish. The world is not run by adult minds. It shares with those long-ago sidewalks the same absence of permanent meaning, the same loud boasts, the same dire threats, the same false sense of importance.

We too fought for “freedom.” Were we to be permitted to walk home through Crotona Park without constant attacks by marauding raiders? It was a question of life and death. Harassment could not be tolerated. We sent formal notes to the Arthur Avenue gang through Mickey, my little brother, who was so little that not even that conscienceless crowd would assault him, informing them that unless things were better by next Saturday our patience would be exhausted and we would have to fight. Our honor demanded it! Of course, like any modern secretary of state or foreign minister, we always knew what the answer would be. Mickey would invariably come back as though he were returning from a summit conference, with his shirt hanging out and one shoe left behind as a hostage. His report was always the same: “Dey said you guys can go jump in Crotona Lake.” But the amenities were observed, and our wars passed through the same preliminary steps which now mark the tactical movements of those whom we consider the great figures of contemporary history.

North of us were a few nice homes inhabited by strange people called Baptists and Presbyterians. They were all sissies. With black threats they could always be persuaded to pay tribute in the form of a nickel or a dime for a new bat or for penny cones from Mr. Goldstein’s store on the corner of 178th Street. Our Khrushchev was a big guy who strutted and shouted, but even Mickey could scare the daylights out of him by looking him straight in the eye.

In some ways, though, we were more decent than today’s grown-up tyrants. There was a truce every Sunday, not only on Christmas Day. We always forgot our differences when there was a fire or a Fourth of July celebration. Religion was stronger than the ties of race or blood. I still remember my surprise when I saw Pat and Dominic, leaders of rival gangs, walking in procession side by side at the dedication of St. Anne’s church.

It has been half a century since I left the sidewalks of New York for the sheltered life of prep school and seminary. For the past twenty-five years I have lived in a pleasant small town on the rural edge of a metropolitan district. So most of what I know, or think I know, about life in a modern big city is what I read in the newspapers and magazines. I gather that there is a new element of viciousness in it, and if this is true I am not surprised, for the life of the big-city sidewalk has, historically, mirrored the larger world. It is in the city, not the small town, that we see the world in microcosm. And I must confess that sometimes, when I look back over these fifty years and see the changes that have taken place in the city, I wonder how much farther we can impose on the patience and long-suffering of God.