The
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A REVIEW OF LITERATURE,
THE ARTS, AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Back in the Saddle Again

The great Dante (on whose name be peace) saw with the prophet's far-seeing eye the shades of those who had done abomination upon the earth and the level of Hell to which each had been consigned. But not even to him was it given to pierce the sulphurous darkness to that level where, wrapt 'round in awful silence, lie those who, in the days of their flesh, returned from foreign lands to corner their fellowmen and anesthetize them with exhaustive accounts of My Trip.

Being already in danger of condemnation to that deep level of Hell which is reserved for original theologians and active churchmen, we have no intention of inviting an even worse fate by telling in detail the story, fascinating as it is, of our nine months in Cambridge. It is enough to say that if there is a lovelier place on earth, we don't want to go there. One can't go leaving great chunks of himself scattered all over the earth.

We went to Cambridge with a question which, we think, must trouble most Christians who are at all aware of the searching questions which are being put to confessing Christians not only by those outside the Church, but by a growing number of honest and reluctant doubters who wish to remain identified in some way with the Christian community. Essentially, it is the question which Saul of Tarsus put to Whoever it was that had blinded him on the road to Damascus: "Who art Thou, Lord?"

We were quite aware that the Church had long ago answered that question as clearly and as completely as its best minds have been able to do it in words. We were equally aware of the fact that, for millions of the faithful, living and dead, these answers have been apparently meaningful and obviously satisfactory.

But for us, whose calling it has been to turn out each month some eight typewritten pages headed "In Luce Tua," the time had come when it was no longer possible to make do with other men's answers to the question. That there was indeed a living Lord with whom we have to deal was evident enough from the experiences of almost half a century of living. So there was no temptation to waste time exploring the possibility that He was dead. But beyond that we were willing to be instructed by anyone who could present the credentials of having met and known Him.

We return with the feeling of having seen Him from afar. For a while, we toyed with the idea of writing a book which would set down, as clearly as possible, the answer which has come to be our own answer to the question: "Who art Thou, Lord?" Unfortunately, the book has already been written. It is called The Epistle to the Galatians.

Viet Nam

During much of the time we were in England, the British people and government were preoccupied with the situation created in Rhodesia by Ian Smith's unilateral declaration of independence. One of the political writers described Rhodesia as Prime Minister Wilson's Cuba; it would seem perhaps more appropriate to describe it as Mr. Wilson's VietNam, for in Rhodesia as in Viet Nam the problem seems to be how to get disengaged from a messy business in which many good people feel that we (in the case of Viet Nam) and Britain (in the case of Rhodesia) should never have gotten involved in the first place.

We would not pretend to be able to offer Mr. Wilson any constructive advice on how to handle Rhodesia. We are not sure that we can say anything particularly useful to Mr. Johnson about Viet Nam, either, but it is hard to see how a responsible review of literature, the arts, and public affairs can avoid saying something about the war. What we have to say is offered very tentatively and with an unquiet mind and will surely reflect the ambivalence which seems to characterize much serious American thinking about the war.

So far as the war itself is concerned, we believe, to borrow General Bradley's trenchant comment on the Korean War, that it is "the wrong war, in the wrong place, at the wrong time." We believe that we got involved initially as the result of applying to the post-
Hiroshima world a theory of strategy — the so-called domino theory — which was no longer valid. We believe that in the prosecution of the war we have been guilty of a considerable amount of duplicity, a certain amount of militarily-unjustifiable barbarity, and a dismaying lack of concern, amounting almost to contempt, for the opinions of longtime friends and allies.

But having said all of this, we are still stuck with the fact that our national word has been given. It may be Realpolitik to honor only those commitments which it is convenient and profitable to honor, but a nation, like an individual, must live with itself. Weary of war and hungry for a peace which we have not known in our generation, we would gladly, like the traveler in Frost’s poem, stop by the clean and quiet woods, but like him we have promises to keep and, it would appear, miles to go before we sleep. So — not with joy and not even with the conviction that we are doing the best thing, we continue on a course which we apparently can not alter without doing something worse — to ourselves, to a world which looks to us for leadership, and, in the long run, even to those whom we now call our enemies.

No More Games

The war in Viet Nam is the kind of war we should never again allow ourselves to become involved in, not only because it is a nasty business for us but because it requires some little country to take the brunt of what is really a quarrel between the big powers. And there is no better time than right now to make it clear that we are not going to get involved in any more murderous games of Let’s Pretend.

The whole world knows the facts of the present power structure and nobody really thinks that it has anything to do with what one sees on a political map of the world or on the roster of the United Nations. The fact of the matter is that effective power is now clustered around three centers — in Washington, in Moscow, and in Peking. For many geographical and economic reasons, it is most unlikely that any additional power centers of this order of importance will develop in the future. Wars can break out and rage in the future, therefore, only by the sufferance or at the instigation of one or more of these power centers.

For reasons which are not altogether creditable to us, our foreign policy can be summed up as a desire to see the world of the future evolve from the status quo of approximately 1955. Moscow professes to desire, and Peking probably does desire, revolutionary reversals of the status quo of approximately 1955. Our acceptance of a status quo which we would wish to see modified only by evolution naturally makes us a peace-loving people; it is only in a world of peace that our policy can succeed. Moscow’s theoretical and Peking’s actual commitment to the destruction of the status quo and the creation of a new order of things by revolution rather than evolution just as naturally causes the maintenance of peace to rank much lower on their scale of values than on ours.

What we have to get over is the priggish notion that we are nicer or more moral than the Russians or the Chinese because we are — as indeed we are — more fully committed to maintaining peace in the world. Peace is to our advantage. It is not necessarily to the advantage of the Russians or the Chinese. It must be our policy to persuade them that it is as much to their advantage as it is to ours, and in this naughty world the best way to do that is to present them simply, clearly, and with obvious seriousness the options to peace which are open to them.

In terms of specific policy, this means making it as clear as we possibly can that we will engage in no more games of Let’s Pretend; that at the next attempt to draw us into a Viet Nam-type war we will look beyond the appearances to the realities, beyond Hanoi or Havana to Peking or Moscow; and that we shall use all effective force at our disposal to end the threat to our interests swiftly and decisively.

We are big boys now — we and the Russians and the Chinese — and if we cannot settle our fights among ourselves we can at least have the decency not to let the little kids get mixed up in them. If we can persuade our adversaries that, from here on in, they must expect to deal directly with us and not through a pair of straw men (theirs and ours) we may get a real balance of terror operating in world affairs. And out of that may come, if not peace, at least the absence of war.

Meadows or Car Parks?

It will be evident from what we have just said that we are in fundamental disagreement with those of our colleagues in the academic community who have protested the continuation, expansion, and escalation of the war in Viet Nam. We are not happy to find ourself divided against so many whom we respect and allied with so many flag-wavers, rub-thumpers, and hot-rodders. But the crises of life have a way of putting men under the covers with strange bed-fellows.

We can’t help feeling that the good people, whom we like and with whom we wish we could march side by side against the forces of barbarism which are everywhere ascendant in the modern world, have not really looked the enemy full in the face. They still possess, at least in some degree, that innocence which was one of the fairest flowers of Western civilization and the loss of which is the saddest deprivation of our generation. And in their innocence they do not — perhaps can not — recognize that the Age of Reason is past and that we are up against a view of life, among our enemies and among our own people, which is frankly and even defiantly nihilistic.

These new barbarians would have no place in their faceless assemblies for a J. William Fulbright, no place in their academies for a Bertrand Russell, no patience with young people singing songs of protest. We like to think — no, we deeply believe — that in some paradoxical and perhaps even ultimately futile way we are trying,
in Viet Nam, to preserve a society which values its Ful-brights and its Russells and its young people singing their songs of protest. And we are doing it in the only way open to those of us who believe that there is in man a fatal flaw which the old theologians called original sin — that is, by sheer, naked force.

One of the things we learned at Cambridge is that the human race can roughly be divided into two groups: those who think that the Backs ought to be left in lawn and meadow for those who enjoy the sight of lawn and meadow, and those who deplore this "waste" of land when there is such an obvious and urgent need of more car parks. We proudly, defiantly, and, if need be, beligerently proclaim ourself a lawn-and-meadow man. We are aware of the fact that the tide is running against us. But every day that it is held back is one more day denied to the barbarians.

Sensitive and literate senators, dissentent philosophers, young folks singing about answers blowing in the wind, earnest young professors denouncing our policy in Viet Nam — these are the lawns and meadows which we are determined, at all cost, to preserve. Ideologues, social engineers, mass audiences shouting trite and prefabricated slogans, fat Messiahs in baggy pants — these are the car-park types. Sooner or later we have to confront them, eyeball to eyeball. The only questions are when, where, and how. As we have said, we don't think that Viet Nam was the place for this confrontation, but there we are. So that is where the job has to be done.

**Selective Service and the College**

As we look back over our years as a classroom teacher, the single most difficult and distasteful job that we can recall is writing down that final grade that goes to the Registrar's office and becomes a part of the student's permanent record. In the case of the women students, it wasn't so bad: those who were determined to go on to graduate school had more important things on their minds than grades. But with the men it was always a question of what the grade would mean not only for their progress towards a degree but for all that would follow from their getting (or not getting) the degree. As we have said, we don't think that Viet Nam was the place for this confrontation, but there we are. So that is where the job has to be done.

Underlying this request is the assumption that the dumber you are the less right you have to live — an assumption which we would challenge on moral, ethical, and constitutional grounds. We think it is a matter of regret that the nation's colleges and universities have not risen up in full-throated protest that military service is either an honor to which all citizens are entitled by virtue of their citizenship or a chore to which all citizens are equally liable, but that it is not a device for attempting to control the future intellectual evolution of the American people. Such a protest would comport fully with the sorts of things presidents say at opening convocations about "the great liberal and humane traditions which are nurtured within these hallowed walls." And it would dissociate the colleges and universities from the intellectual snobbery which, however much it may be disguised as a concern for the national welfare, still says, "You're more expendable than he is because you're not as bright as he is."

**First Step, We Hope**

It has been two months now since Medicare went into effect and there are still no signs of the predicted swarms of the elderly descending upon hospitals to have something taken out at government expense. Indeed, given the very meagre assistance which Medicare provides for those who actually need medical attention, it seems probable that a great many eligible people will continue to avoid doctors and hospitals for fear of bankrupting themselves.

In view of the fact that its sponsors probably got the best bill that is possible in present circumstances, it would be too harshly judgmental to call Medicare a fraud. But certainly it must be said that it is a disappointment to those of us who had hoped that our country — the richest country on earth — might at last be willing to adopt the civilized and humane view that all of its people have the right to adequate medical care, just as they have the right to an education. If there is any moral justification for free and universal education there is equal justification for free and universal medical care.

And we are not impressed by the red herrings that are forever being drawn across the trail of this argument. Talk about the intimacy of the doctor-patient relationship is, for the most part, hogwash and, in any case, assumes that such intimacy is impossible under socialized medicine; we can testify from personal experience that this is not true. Nor do we want to get into any arguments about how malingerers will take up most of the doctors' time; they already do in this country, and they seem to take up no larger a part of the doctors' time in countries which have socialized medicine. Nor do we want to see doctors' incomes reduced to a level more in line with that of equally useful people (clergymen, teachers, lawyers, etc.); we have never advocated sharing poverty under the guise of sharing the wealth.

All that we want to see is sick people getting the treatment they need — as a matter of right. If we can't afford
that, we can’t afford an awful lot of other things we are doing with public funds.

Black Power

The four most recent mayors of Milwaukee have been Carl Zeidler, John Bohn, Frank Zeidler, and Henry Maier. This is the meaning of “German power” in Milwaukee.

The three most recent mayors of Chicago have been Edward J. Kelly, Martin H. Kennelly, and Richard J. Daley. This is the meaning of “Irish power” in Chicago.

The roster of governors of Minnesota since 1893 includes the names of Knute Nelson, Joseph A.A. Burnquist, J.A.O. Preus, Floyd B. Olson, Elmer L. Anderson, and Karl F. Rolvaag. This is the meaning of “Scandinavian power” in Minnesota.

It should be obvious that, in all of these contexts, the term “power” has nothing to do with violence. It means simply a degree of participation in the decision-making process consistent with the numerical strength of a group in a society which claims to respect the principle of majority rule. While there is a lunatic fringe in the Negro community which would, in fact, make “black power” synonymous with black violence, responsible Negro leadership is demanding nothing more than the Germans enjoy in Milwaukee, the Irish in Chicago, and the Scandinavians in Minnesota: a voice in public affairs consistent with their numbers.

This is a reasonable demand, but let us grant that reason is seldom called to arbitrate in matters which are as emotionally-charged as the relation between the races in our country. What is perhaps more to the point, the demand for “black power” is an irresistible demand. The question before the white majority in our country is not whether the Negro will make his voice heard and his influence felt in rough proportion to his numbers, but how he will do so. Chicago, for instance, must decide whether it would rather have perhaps thirteen Negroes sitting on its City Council or thirteen thousand Negroes rioting in its streets. Mississippians face the even more painful necessity of choosing, sometime within probably the next ten years, between a Negro governor who can maintain a degree of public order and a white governor who will be, for all practical purposes, a prisoner in his own mansion.

We are not saying that this is the way it should be. Both white and Negro should be all for turning the other cheek, going the extra mile, suffering wrongfully, and all that. But that isn’t the way it works even in the church, let alone civil society. It took a certain number of lumpy heads and bloody noses to persuade the majority of our citizens that Irishmen can not safely be addressed or treated as Micks, Germans as Krauts, Scandinavians as dumb Swedes, Poles as Polacks, Jews as kikes, or Bohemians as Bohunks. The word right now is that it is not safe to address or treat a Negro as a nigger. The word is Mister, friend, and you had better believe it.

Tribute to a Quiet Saint

As these lines are being written, John A. Sauerman is being laid to rest in a small-town cemetery twenty miles from here.

Who was John A. Sauerman? It would please him to know how few recognized his name and it would embarrass him to know that he was the subject of an editorial, for he was one of those Christian gentlemen of the old school who really believed that it was not only immoral but positively vulgar to do one’s good works where they can be seen of men. Officially he was, for many years, the treasurer of the Lutheran University Association—an office which, until quite recently, suffered from the same lack of scope as that of an obstetrician in Vatican City. It might be thought, therefore, that his great contribution to the cause was that of speaking a word of reason and caution when the faculty or the administration or a colleague on the Board came up with one of those gloriously hare-brained ideas which had everything to recommend it except the possibility of its being financed.

And indeed his was a voice of reason and caution. He said all of the things that he was in duty bound to say as the treasurer of a corporation that was in debt and faced the probability of going still deeper into debt. He said them simply, bluntly, and seriously. But then he would go on to speak, not as the man who kept the books and knew what they said, but as a Christian operating with an intuition for which there was no authority except past experience of the strange and wonderful ways in which God works when men are content to stand out of His way. And so, more often than not John Sauerman recommended courses of action which the treasurer of the Lutheran University Association could not recommend because the man was greater than his office and his faith saw more than there was to be seen in the books.

We had a special affection for Mr. Sauerman. He had never been to college, but he had a respect for the intellectual enterprise which is not found universally among doctors of philosophy. He disagreed with us on quite a number of points, but he knew why he believed what he believed and he did us the honor of assuming that we had honest reasons for believing what we believed. We still treasure a letter from him in which he undertook to set up right on a point of economic theory. He was right, and we hope he was pleased by our note acknowledging it. But he never alluded to the matter again. He was ready to allow even editors and academics their fair quota of mistakes. May he rest with all who, having forgiven, are forgiven.

Well Done, Vic!

The editors express their gratitude to Dr. Victor F. Hoffmann who served as interim managing editor during the past academic year. He did—as everyone expected he would—an excellent job and turned out a lively magazine.
If I complied with the desire of everyone who had sent me a picture postcard this summer wishing I were there, I would have had to be in a dozen places at one time. As more and more of our friends and acquaintances are travelling abroad these days, the picture postcard mail has increased rapidly, to the point where the mail delivery in our neighborhood has slowed down, since the postman has difficulty reading all the messages on the back before he gets to our house.

Most everyone who travels seems to have a compulsion to send a card to every friend and it is time something is done about it. Not for the sake of the receiver, or at least not for me, because I enjoy receiving the cards, but for the sender who has to cut his vacation time short in order to get through his mailing list.

There are some who say the cards are only sent to make their friends envious. I don't feel that way about it; in fact, quite the contrary, for when I receive a card from a person travelling, say, in Europe, I am delighted. I am delighted that I will be sleeping in my own bed tonight, delighted that I don't have to watch the drinking water, wash out a drip-dry shirt, or unpack and pack again within eight hours.

No, I think of the poor sender who is on a guided tour of Europe. First he must purchase the cards and, in so doing, may miss seeing one cathedral and one public fountain. Then he must address each card and, worse yet, try to think of something original and personal to say. It is remarkable how difficult it is to find something to say even though the day has been filled with a hundred new experiences. After the cards are ready, the sender has to find stamps of the country he is in and address the cards and think of something original to say. As soon as they set foot on foreign soil, our friends could stamp and mail the cards, and thus be free to enjoy the remainder of the trip without the daily burden of finding and writing cards at night.

For anyone who wants to try this suggestion, I saw some picture postcards on sale locally which would do very well for the purpose. One was a picture of a local hotel which looked almost new and was not quite so old twenty-five years ago when the picture was taken. The place doesn't look like that now, but at least I know what it looks like. Another card featured a view of one block in our business district. Few of the stores shown are there now, their owners having died or gone out of business years ago, but there is a striking close-up view of a 1928 Nash on the card and one doesn't see many of those around anymore.

(Events Comment: Our columnist—essentially a Christian gentleman with an optimistic view of man—mistakenly assumes that the "Wish you were here" is the expression of a desire to share the joys of the tour with a friend rather than what it actually is—a cry from the heart of a foot-sore, arm-weary traveller who has discovered, too late, that he needs one more arm to manage the luggage or of an overly-optimistic tourist who has just discovered that he has two days' supply of Travellers' Checks to last him the remaining four days of the trip.)
The American frontier has produced more exciting heroes, but none more beloved than Johnny Appleseed. Born John Chapman, his essential gentleness and vision enabled him like a modern colossus to walk unarmed and frequently unshod throughout the midwest wilderness, sewing the seeds of friendship and service as he disseminated his apples. As the common run of saints goes, the real man could not have been flawless. Eccentric, often inconconsiderate of social conventions, he lived singularly. The known facts of his life are few and the legends considerable, but always he is the symbol (as in Vachel Lindsay’s free verse poem) of the restless creative, ardent American spirit. Mystic — yes; I will even call him optimistic! My preference is for the mythical here: it is the spirit that produces the living Johnny.

Soon the U.S. government will philatelically salute this canny Yankee who reasoned that apples were the fruit if not the very spice of frontier life. It is indeed appropriate that he will be the first thus to be honored in the new American Folklife Series of five-cent postage stamps. The Johnny Appleseed commemorative will be issued in September to honor his birth and continuing influence.

In the best-organized, full-length biography, called Johnny Appleseed; Man and Myth by its author, Robert Price, this “Appleseed John” emerges from sentimentality — e.g., in such matters as strangeness of dress or humaneness to animals — to become a full-statured folk character supported with documentation. Our hero is a real embodiment of one part of the vast frontier as it was reflected in the loving ways and deeds of one who signed himself simply “John Chapman (by occupation a gatherer and planter of appleseeds).” Wisely, Professor Price’s book singles out reluctant fact from ready fancy; and it is for my paper the chief source of primary data.

Because this book is topographical as well as chronological in its quest, one can readily trace therein on several levels the progress of so unusual a life. The beginning is in Leominster, Massachusetts, in 1774; but the story leads rapidly to westering adventure through the open country of Pennsylvania and its environs. The successful nurseryman in Ohio and Indiana turns itinerant, always sharing his Bible and Swedish-born New Church tracts as freely as he distributed the salvagings collected at the apple cider mills. We who live near Fort Wayne, where he died in 1847, are proud that his traditional grave has an appropriate monument, the best of many such memorials in many places. (Can any mere place adequately memorialize John Chapman?) This is another step in the right direction as our native folklore comes of age and gains scholarly recognition.

The five main chapters in Price’s book are labeled into the Old Northwest; The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness; The Legend Takes Root; Farther West; and From Man to Myth. For me the portion most stirring is the discussion of the strategic role of apples in the economy of the frontiersman (a topic I shall explain later), something that we in the 20th Century do not adequately appreciate. If pomologists have their own calendar of saints, there is none to whom they may more suitably make their reverences than to Johnny Appleseed (so said a reviewer when Mr. Price’s book was published in 1954), who also suggests St. Francis in his compassion for the animal world plus John the Baptist as he preaches New Theology in our western wilderness. Incidentally, such unusual combinations as a result of the vital role of the apple in civilized society may be related to the artist’s choice of the symbolic apple in religious paintings of pre-lapsarian Eden.

Additional books or pamphlets or magazine articles or folklore reports, etc., give numerous reflections of the myth of Johnny Appleseed in various art forms. For example, in poetry Lydia Maria Child’s Appleseed John, or Frances Frost’s American Ghost, or Edgar Lee Masters’ Johnny Appleseed, or Nancy Byrd Turner’s Rhyme of Johnny Appleseed, or Carl Sandburg’s Johnny Appleseed; and especially Vachel Lindsay’s series of poems on the same theme. Here also we should include the book by Ernest C. Leverenz called Johnny Appleseed and Shorter Poems. Among novels which use the theme are Newell Dwight Hillis’ The Quest of John Chapman: The Story of a Forgotten Hero, and Elinor Atkinson’s Johnny Appleseed: The Romance of the Sower. He appears significantly in Louis Bromfield’s The Farm, in Mary Hartwell Catherwood’s Lazarre, in Howard Fast’s The Tall Hunter, in Harlan Hatcher’s The Buckeye Country: A Pageant of Ohio, and in Vachel Lindsay’s The Golden Book of Springfield. In children’s fiction, Ruth Langrad Holberg has given us Restless Johnny: The Story of Johnny Appleseed; another such is Meridel LeSueur’s Little Brother of the Wilderness: The Story of Johnny Appleseed; again Emily Taft Douglas’ Appleseed Farm; or one more, by Mabel Leigh Hunt, is called Better Known as Johnny Appleseed. I might add that Walt Disney’s motion picture version of the character (he dubbed the movie “Melody Time”) is now available as a Little Golden Book. Additionally, musical interpretation can be had in Harvey B. Gaul’s Old Johnny Appleseed, A Cantata for Treble Voices; or in Harvey Worthington Loomis and David Stevens’ Johnny Appleseed, An Operetta in One Act for Children. Two additional lyric treatments are respectively by Elie Siegmeister and Jacques Wolfe. Biography continues to germinate but not always flower, and folk theories will always abound! Not-
ably there is also an increase in the number of monuments (some of which have been dedicated with idealistic rhetoric), not only in the cities indicated earlier but, e.g., in Mansfield, Ohio; Springfield, Massachusetts; and Ashland, Ohio. Such references can be multiplied further as the living Legend continues its growth.

The Genuine Humanitarian

No wonder the benevolent fellow, this puzzling “character,” truly deserves a commemorative postage stamp, not as a representative merchant (a phase of his life I will omit) but rather as a genuine humanitarian. As civilization advanced, Johnny passed on to the westward, always true to his self-chosen mission of planting nurseries, medicinal herbs, and the like. Of his early life but little is known, inasmuch as he was reticent about himself; but his half-sister (who came west at a later period) stated that Johnny had, when a boy, shown great fondness for natural scenery and often had wandered from home in quest of plants and flowers, or that he liked to listen to the birds singing, but mostly he enjoyed gazing at the stars. Then, after some forty years of walking and working, Chapman’s altruistic life-mission had been realized. Walt Disney’s 1948 movie, “Melody Time,” used in one of its theme songs a couplet which rightly summarized the tremendous accomplishment of this mystic humanitarian: “Everywhere you’ll find he left his blessings three — Love and Faith and the Appletree.”

Now this is the story they tell about him in Ohio, where almost every house once had its orchard. Johnny was touched in the head, some said, by a kick from a horse when a boy, but his heart was unharmed. Like Elijah the Tishbite, he would appear out of nowhere in the deeps of the wilderness and tap on the window of a cabin while he spoke in the language of the prophets. Always he had his bags of appleseeds handy. Planting followed readily. But if his seedlings were nibbled by deer or budded by grouse or girdled by rabbit or neglected by God, Johnny was never vexed. For he loved all of God’s creatures, and would as willingly feed his wildlife brothers the deer and the bear or his sister the grouse as he would nourish his fellowmen. What a man! In truth, much of the St. Francis legend clings to Johnny Appleseed. Oh, he was not gifted with genius to preach a sermon to the birds or to write a poem, but Johnny was moderately educated, well read, and politely attentive in manner as well as chaste in conversation. By the grace of God, his nature was a deeply religious one; wherefore his life was seemingly blameless among his fellowmen. He regarded comfort more than style, and thought it wrong to spend money for clothes to make a fine appearance. He usually wore a simple, broad-brimmed hat; he went barefoot not only in the summer but often in cold weather; a coffee-bean sack with neck and armholes cut in it served him as a coat. He was about 5 feet 9 inches in height, rather spare in build, but was large-boned and sinewy. His eyes were blue, of a shade which darkened with animation.

Like Daniel Boone, when upon his journeys Johnny usually camped out. He never killed animals, not even for the purpose of obtaining food. He carried a kit of cooking utensils with him, among which was a mush-pan which sometimes he wore as a hat. When he stopped at a house, his custom was to lie upon the floor with his kit for a pillow; and in this manner, after conversing with the family for a short time, he would read aloud from a Swedenborgian book or tract, and proceed to explain and extol the religious views which he so zealously believed and whose teachings he so faithfully carried out in his own everyday life and conversation. Because his mission was one of peace and good will, he never carried a weapon — not even for self-defense. The Indians regarded him as a great Medicine Man, and his life then seemed to be a charmed one because neither savage men nor wild beasts would harm him.

Theoretically he was as methodical in matters of business as any merchant. In addition to their picturesqueness, the locations of his nurseries were all fixed with a view to a probable demand for the trees by the time they had attained sufficient growth for transplanting. He would give them away to those who could not pay for them. Generally, however, he sold them for old clothing or a supply of corn meal; but he preferred to receive a note payable at some indefinite period. When this was accomplished he seemed to think that the transaction was completed in a business-like way; but if the giver of the note did not attend to its payment, the holder of it never troubled himself about its collection.


As the years passed, Johnny thought of his accomplishments less and less as a business, and more and more as a mission of service and love — as though he were a poor friar of the Middle Ages who took no thought of the morrow, and was fed at the Lord’s table. He gave his shirt to a poor beggar; this charitable act was repeated; consequently, he finally went barefoot altogether or made himself a crude pair of bark sandals when absolutely necessary for walking on the frozen ground. God protected his feet with firm, knotty pads that could endure the rough wilderness roads. And if his feet were bruised or in danger of infection, Johnny quietly took a poker from a hearth where he was sheltered, heated it in the fire, and cauterized the wounds. He gave no sign of pain, and customarily paid no further attention to the burns. Inconspicuously, because under vow of poverty and benevolence, Johnny Appleseed went his ways, welcomed by everyone and molested by none. When his self-made pasteboard hat with the broad sunbrim fell to pieces, he would cover his head with his mushpan. Add to this picture the burlap sack with holes cut into it for his arms and head, and behold the consistently favorite picture most often featured in this expanding legend.
Another detail has some significance. Chapman never married, and rumor reports that a love affair in the Old Bay State was the cause of his celibate life as a recluse who had turned from love of a woman to love of all mankind. Johnny himself never explained why he led such a singular life, except once to remark that he had a mission two-fold, namely, the planting of nurseries and the making of converts for Swedenborg.

Characteristic of this friendly fellow, the story is told that during the War of 1812 Chapman often warned the settlers of approaching danger. Here is an incident. When the news spread that Levi Jones had been killed by Indians, and that Wallace Reed and others probably had met the same fate, excitement ran high among the few families which composed the population of Mansfield, Ohio. Almost instantly they sought the protection of the block-house situated on the public square. But there were no troops at that time in the block-house. An attack was considered imminent, a consultation was held, and it was decided to send a messenger to Captain Douglas at Mount Vernon for assistance. Now, who would undertake so hazardous a journey? Even worse, it was evening, and already the rays of the sunset had faded away; the stars were beginning to shine in the darkening sky; and the trip of thirty miles length must be made in the night over a newly-cut road through a wilderness, indeed through a forest infested with wild beasts and hostile Indians. When a volunteer was asked for, a tall, lank man said demurely: "I'll go," and he did. Imagine him thus travelling, bareheaded, barefoot, unarmed. His manner was meek, and one had to look a second time into his clear, blue eyes to fathom completely the courage and determination shown in their depths. No expression on the walls of Jezreel, to guide and protect the pioneer settlers from their savage foes.

The journey to Mount Vernon was sort of a Paul Rever mission: but unlike Paul's, Johnny's was made on foot, barefoot — over a rough road. Johnny would rap on the doors of the few cabins along the route, warn the settlers of the impending danger, and advise them to flee to the block-house. And so Johnny himself arrived safely at Mt. Vernon, aroused the garrison, and related his message to the commander. So expeditiously had the trip been made that at sunrise the next morning, troops from Mt. Vernon arrived at the Mansfield block-house, accompanied by Johnny, who had made the round trip of sixty miles between a single sunset and sunrise.

The Disciple of Swedenborg

One other emphasis in the many legends of Johnny shows his strong devotion to Swedenborgianism, also called the New Church Gospel or the Church of the New Jerusalem. This kind of religion looks hopefully to the Book of Revelation for its motivation and to the writings of Emmanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) for its doctrinal illumination. Among its fundamental beliefs is its vision of a New Era in Christian thought and life. Members describe the New Church as a liberal Christian group with a new dimension of understanding in matters of faith. Swedenborg himself was a Swedish scientist, inventor, and theologian of towering intellect and energetic deductive powers, along with humanist traits reminiscent of the Renaissance man. When, at the age of fifty-five he abandoned science after leaving a voluminous legacy in a multitude of fields, he began his intensive study of philosophy and theology, at which he worked assiduously until his death. His major theological work is contained in some thirty volumes which range from cosmology to an exegesis on "God's Love and Wisdom."

Swedenborg did not organize a church, but remained a faithful Lutheran throughout his life. Essentially he believed that members of all churches could belong to this New Church without forming a separate organization, and thereby he pictured a new development in church living based on the Holy City as described in Revelation, chapter twenty-one. Mainly this was an humanitarian enterprise, for which Johnny Appleseed was a natural apostle. Because Johnny lived much alone in the wilderness while planting and tending his seedlings, he had extra time for meditation and deep reflection. The combination was ideal. For example, he would select for his nurseries a favored patch of ground, properly drained, loamy and well-ventilated by the down currents of air. Long before science explained the facts, Johnny knew that the basic vitality of the soil affects the quality of the fruit, and that a sloping, protected location decreased the danger of frost. Wouldn't the same principle apply to people and make them likewise productive of better fruit in their daily lives? At night Johnny would lie in a bed of leaves, enjoying the night calls of the wolves, the catamounts, and the bears, as he would simultaneously watch the angels worshipping God among the stars. If human visitors came, he would make them welcome, offer them mush from his pot or baked potatoes from the ashes of his fire, and give words to his beatific meditations. No visitor ever forgot such an experience. Later, when Johnny's orchard was planted and fenced in with logs and brush, he would wander on to a cabin or a settlement to sell trees and talk about God. He always refused to eat meat, but if friends offered him milk with honey he accepted happily because that was food blessed by God as recorded in the sacred Word. And when he approached a lonely cabin, even the fiercest dog somehow recognized the messenger of universal love, ceased to bark, and instead wagged his tail in welcome.

His religious tenets could be called unorthodox; yet they were the essence of primitive Christianity — Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself! Like Thoreau, he did not wish to acquire property, he had no use for worldly goods. He consistently gave away most of the possessions
he might acquire, his motive being the welfare of others. Herein, again, John Chapman was a marvelous although paradoxical mixture of novel and unconventional traits.

So he kept traveling, far and wide.
Till his old limbs failed him and he died.
He said, at last: "'Tis a comfort to feel
I've done some good in the world, though not a great deal."

Weary travelers, journeying West,
In the shade of his trees find pleasant rest.
And often they start with glad surprise
At the rosy fruit that around them lies.

And if they inquire whence came such trees,
Where not a bough once swayed in the breeze.
The reply still comes, as they travel on,
"Those trees were planted by Appleseed John."
(From the poem "Appleseed John," by Lydia Maria Child)

In his philosophy, Johnny was a stoic who could bear pain with stolid indifference. Remember how, as an intense lover of every variety of God's creatures, to kill even the most repulsive or useless form of animal life for any purpose was to him a sin? If he saw an animal maltreated, or heard of it, it was not unusual for him to buy it and give it to some more humble settler on the sole condition that it be kindly treated. He deserves to be considered allegorically in both the Bible and Swedenborg's writings.

About a week before Chapman's death, while at Fort Wayne, he heard that cattle had broken into his nursery in St. Joseph Township and were destroying his trees. Readily he started on foot to mend his property. The distance was about twenty miles, and the fatigue plus exposure of this journey were too much for his ailing physical condition, already enfeebled by age. So, at eventide he appeared for rest at the home of a Mr. Worth, principally for lodging overnight. Inside, Johnny declined going to the supper table, but did partake of a bowl of berries and milk. The day had been cold and raw with occasional flurries of snow, but in the evening the clouds cleared away and the sun shone warm and bright as it sank in the western sky. Johnny noticed this beautiful sunset, an augury of the spring and flowers soon to come; so he continued sitting on the doorstep as he gazed with wistful eyes toward the west. Perhaps this herald of the springtime, the season in which nature is resurrected from the death of winter, caused him to look to the future with a prophet's eyes and contemplate that glorious event of which Christ is the resurrection and the life. Anyway, upon re-entering the house, Johnny declined the bed offered him for the night, preferring a quilt and pillow on the floor. He asked permission to hold family worship, and read aloud: "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." Having finished the lesson, he said prayers — prayers long remembered by that family because he interceded for all sorts and conditions of men, that the way of righteousness might be made clear unto them, that saving grace might be freely given to all nations. Moreover, he asked that the Holy Spirit might guide and govern all who profess themselves Christians, and that all those who were afflicted in mind, body, or estate might be comforted and relieved; especially that all persons might at last come to the knowledge of the truth, and in the world to come have happiness and everlasting life. Not only the words of the prayer but the pathos of his voice with its sincere, personal tone made a deep impression upon those present.

Next morning, Johnny was found in a high state of fever, pneumonia having developed during the night; and the physician said he was beyond medical aid. When the doctor inquired particularly about his religious beliefs, he added that he had never seen a dying man so calm, for upon his wan face there was an expression of happiness as though he was communing with loved ones who had come to greet him, and his eyes shone remotely with an heavenly light. At seventy-two years of age, forty-six of which had been dedicated to his self-imposed mission, John Chapman ripened into death as naturally as did the appleseeds of his planting, having first grown into trees, then budded into blossoms, and finally ripened into fruit. For an instant, consider by contrast the defeitest attitude of Nihilism which Macbeth once voiced:
Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow, 
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day 
To the last syllable of recorded time, 
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools 
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle! 
Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player 
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage 
And then is heard no more: it is a tale 
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, 
Signifying nothing. (V, 8, 18-29)

Two ways of dying, indeed — yet only one heaven­
haven, and Johnny Appleseed had discovered it in all of 
its essential beauty. A new dimension, beyond even St. 
Augustine’s classic phrase that we are restless until we 
rest in Him: Restless Johnny at rest! What would Milton 
or Blake have done with this romantic ending? When 
news of his death reached the nation’s capital, General 
Sam Houston of Texas (one of Johnny’s adventurous 
acquaintances), got up on the floor of the Senate and 
proclaimed: “This old man was one of the most useful 
citizens of the world in his humble way. He has made a 
greater contribution to our civilization than we realize. 
... Farewell, dear old eccentric heart. Your labor has 
been a labor of love, and generations yet unborn will 
rise up and call you blessed.”

His Achievements

The importance thus voiced was no exaggeration. 
Reforestation programs for conservation of natural res­ 
ouces are today commonplace. The urgent need of the 
frontiersman for apples is something, however, which 
our 20th Century overlooks. In modern diets, apples 
have been relegated chiefly to side dishes or casual eat­
ing. We do have an abundance of everything except ap­ 
preciation! Even the family orchard, which only a few 
generations back was a requirement of every good farm, 
is rapidly disappearing. Yet in the pioneer history of 
most American communities, the first apple crop once 
marked the initial stage of permanency. Why? No other 
food could be started so easily. None could be put to so 
many essential uses! As Mr. Price affirms, to the first 
settlers apples meant not just fruit in season; they were 
one of the few crops that remained basic through the 
entire year. The choicest variety would produce some­ 
thing excellent for hand-eating and cooking, all the way 
from the first mellowing in the summertime until the 
last cold apple which had been buried late in the autumn 
had been finally dug up from the frosty earth in the early 
springtime. More significantly, bushels of them were 
cut and dried in the fall, to be strung or hung from the 
kitchen ceiling or attic rafters until needed for sauces in 
the winter. Moreover, throughout the pleasant Indian 
Summer days, and customarily in big brass kettles over 
outdoor fires, many more bushels were cooked down in­
to gallons of applebutter, which became one of the few 
preserves that the pioneer housewife’s limited equip­
ment enabled her to keep for the snowy months ahead.

Late every autumn all the remnants of the crop 
that were useless for storage or butters were hauled 
by the wagon load to the cider presses for the pre­
cious juice. It was the cider age in American history. 
No well-established home could exist long without it, 
and usually many barrels were essential. The sweet 
drink was luscious and healthful in early autumn, 
growing increasingly enticing as it began to take on 
the sparkle of effervescence. In the man’s world, at 
least, hard cider was a normal social drink as well as 
its even more efficacious distillations into apple 
brandy or applejack. In the woman’s domain, cider 
was a concern of fundamental practical importance, 
for boiled cider and vinegar were the two basic fla­
orings and preservatives without which her normal 
winter store of pickles, preserves, butters, and 
mincemeats would have merely dropped out of ex­
istence.

It was the age of barter, too. When hard cash was 
scarce, apples or vinegar toted to the nearest trading 
establishment could be exchanged for perhaps a doz­
en eggs, a fat hen, a deerskin, or a beaver pelt. In 
time, apples would even pioneer in a broader com­
merce, for apply brandy from the trees that spread 
over the Ohio Valley’s hillsides in the first wave of 
settlement would be one of the first important inland 
products to be shipped on down the Mississippi to the 
marts of New Orleans.

(Price, pp. 39 and 40)

Consequently, every settler hoped to have a plot of 
appletrees set out in order to bear fruit in the shortest 
stretch of time. Land was cheap enough. Besides, once 
started, such orchards actually required minimal care. 
Always the problem, then—to get the trees! Often, 
these trees were even a legal prerequisite to a claim, 
appleseeds or peachstones became a common guarantee 
to warrant the establishment of title. That’s why when 
orchards had been established, the land had been mas­
tered! And who else besides “Appleseed John” Chap­
man achieved so much, so generously, so inconspic­
ously?

For Johnny was a philanthropist in everything he did. 
He saved lonely farmhouses from Indian ravages and en­
tire communities from massacre by slipping quietly 
through the woods to inform the pioneering settlers of 
impending disaster. He was trusted by the Indians be­
because of his healing methods, and they talked openly 
of their plans before him, revering him as a simple-minded 
Medicine Man. We particularly remember his universa­
listic faith and optimistic vision, just as much as we 
gratefully respect his foresight in planting the apple 
seedlings. Thus America continues to take the continuing 
legend to its heart — folklore, fake-lore, or truth. Wit­
ness today’s commemorative, testimonial postage stamp 
which depicts and characterizes anew the living spirit of 
a genuine American benefactor.
John Milton, Education, And The Modern Church College

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It must be a remarkably isolated church college in America whose placid waters have not been stirred up to some extent by the currently popular curricular reform movement. The movement has, rather unfortunately, gained much of its impetus from the desire for economical education, and, as a consequence of recommendations by such as Ruml and Morrison in their Memo to a College Trustee, poses the threat of a trend toward mass education with larger classes and restrictions in favor of “popular,” which in these days means “vocational,” programs in those very schools where the individual spirit is supposedly most carefully nurtured. Parallel with the economic reform program has been the sometimes interesting, but rarely rational or passionate, argument over the degree of necessary emphasis on the sciences or on the humanities. One can think of C. P. Snow and F. R. Leavis as particularly unconvincing spokesmen for the two sides of this controversy. It is easy to be dissatisfied with some features of the reform movement. On the other hand, there have been noteworthy gains. Numerous experimental programs deserve appreciative study, though integrated “core” courses and “communications” programs probably do not. The overlapping and duplication of course material have been reduced in many places. And new, more up-to-date courses have been added. But the most important consequence of all of this, as I see it, has been the development of an increasingly sophisticated concern about the need for defining educational objectives.

All of us are limited in our various ways of observing and evaluating these changes, experiments, and philosophical discussions in church college education, depending upon which “Idols of the Cave,” in Francis Bacon’s terms, we worship. In his Novum Organum, Bacon pointed out that men become attached to particular sciences or intellectual disciplines, frequently at the expense of others, because they have exerted themselves more strenuously to learn some things than others. In other words, each of us peers out at the world with a limited range of focus, as out of a cave or den, without our fully realizing our limits. For example, I suppose that, as a college English teacher, I could be accused of worshipping the “Idol of Literature.” At any rate, it has seemed entirely appropriate to me that in the recent discussions of educational theory the names of people noted for literary achievement who have also spoken out on education — such figures as Plato, Bacon, Rousseau, Mill, and Newman — should frequently be heard. But, even to one with some advanced training in seventeenth-century English literature, it must seem strange to hear recommended as a significant contributor to modern educational thinking the name of John Milton.

In Everything a Teacher

In one sense, we could quite naturally think of Milton as the supreme product of English humanistic education, as poet, controversialist, and scholar. Douglas Bush seems to think of him in that light in his book, The Renaissance and English Humanism. And, in everything Milton has written, he is very much a teacher. In another sense, we must admit to surprise whenever we hear his name among a list of contributors to educational theory. One can browse a good deal among the library shelves devoted to the history of education and find slight mention of him, at least by American educators. Perhaps this slight should be shrugged off as merely further evidence of the limitations of our modern educationists. Whatever the reason for neglect in the past, going back only a few years, one can find M. G. Mason’s very sympathetic defense of Milton’s views and their practicality in Education (1953); he can read William Riley Parker, former secretary of the Modern Language Association, recommending Milton’s ideas on education in College English (1962); and, most recently, he can witness D. Elton Trueblood advocating a return to “unapologetic Puritanism,” of all things, especially a return to that kind of Puritanism represented by John Milton; this last in an address before the Council of Protestant Colleges and Universities (January, 1964).

One naturally thinks primarily of his tractate “Of Education” (1644) for Milton’s basic theories, though it should be reemphasized that all of his works have some bearing on education. For example, in another, better-known prose essay, “Areopagitica,” written later on in the same year, Milton expresses various additional ideas relevant to education, of which most important is his championing the cause of free and open inquiry and discussion. He reveals his confidence in the ultimate victory of truth over falsehood, while conceding that ever since the fall of man truth has been difficult to find in pure form. Besides arguing that it is impossible to effect a true system of censorship, he points out that anyone who limits the dissemination of falsehoods is, at the same time, almost certain to limit the dissemination of truths.

In an earlier dramatic poem, “Comus,” Milton’s characters — Comus himself, the Lady, First Brother, Second Brother — engage in a series of ethical discussions on the likelihood or appropriateness of virtue or chastity...
triumphing over sensuality or guile. In “Lycidas,” we have a superb expression of the need to set high goals for ourselves — not for the sake of worldly applause, for indeed we may be cut off prematurely before having proved ourselves, as was “Lycidas” or Edward King — but in order to achieve that true fame which is judged ultimately only in heaven.

In the history of the sonnet, Milton has often been given credit for influencing the general change in thematic purpose, from the limitations of celebrating or lamenting the fortunes of human love, to the broader expression of personal aspirations and problems, recognition of topical events, and communication of philosophical and moral propositions. As is commonly known, Milton’s greatest work, Paradise Lost, is an extended argument justifying “the ways of God to men.”

Even in his last poems, Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes, we have dramatic object lessons in Christ’s discrediting the false rhetoric in Satan’s proffered temptations, and in Samson’s blind, but ultimately successful, grooping for the wisdom which gives meaning to his otherwise useless brute strength. In summary, one can say with complete confidence that Milton is in every sense of the term a “didactic” poet.

**Milton’s Ideal Curriculum**

The central work for our purposes, however, the tractate “Of Education,” was written, as Milton says, in response to the request of Samuel Hartlib, an active writer and translator of works on education. Such a request in itself would assume that Milton was conversant with the educational discussion of his time. After some disparaging allusions to contemporary publications on education, Milton offers as one of his major definitions:

The end then of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith makes up the highest perfection.

He goes on to say that we must seek such understanding of God and things invisible by studying “sensible things,” i.e., things perceptible through the senses. We should concentrate particularly on studies in the languages of those people who have traditionally “been most industrious after wisdom.” Languages, incidentally, are not to be studied for their own sake, but for “the solid things in them, as well as the words and lexicons.” He condemns the practice in teaching languages in his time of “forcing the empty wits of children to compose themes, verses, and orations, which are the acts of ripest judgment and the final work of a head filled by long reading and observing with elegant maxims and copious invention.” Such forced composition also leads into “wretched barbarizing against the Latin and Greek idiom.”

He recommends that subjects be taught in a more reasonable sequence, “beginning with arts most easy,” instead of starting out with the “most intellectual abstractions of logic and metaphysics.” The terrible consequence of the wrong order of subjects, of being “tossed and turmoil with their unballasted wits in fathomless and unquiet deeps of controversy,” is that the students are led into “hatred and contempt of learning.”

Then, after promising a more orderly, stimulating, and pleasing program of instruction, Milton offers a second definition:

I call therefore a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skillfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war. This is to be done between the ages of “twelve and one twenty,” in a spacious house, large enough to lodge a hundred and fifty people, of whom twenty or so are to assist in the teaching, all under the direction of one especially capable overseer.

He advocates that planning for the day’s work be considered in three parts: studies, exercise, and diet. More space in his essay, naturally, is devoted to studies, which include a more refined manner of pronunciation patterned after the Italians, “the usefullest points of grammar,” readings in agriculture and numerous sciences, with special emphasis on mathematics, some instruction in medicine, as well as actual informative contact with such practical people as hunters, fishermen, architects, engineers, and mariners. After three or four years in such practical studies, the students should be ready for intensive, more theoretical, training in ethics, politics, and theology. Only after all the previously listed courses of study have been completed should the students undertake the “organic arts,” or oratorical and poetic composition; following which, of course, the students should be ready to take their places of prominence in any part of society, in parliament, council, or the pulpit.

When discussing exercise, Milton emphasizes particularly military training, especially skillfulness in the use of the sword. Following exercise each day, there should be moments of rest before eating, at which times the students will listen to and study music, a discipline which contributes to the harmony of man’s nature. He recommends travel abroad during the vernal seasons, when the program of studies has been completed. As to the diet of the students, he actually has little to say other than that it be in the same house in which they are taught, and that it be “plain, healthful, and moderate.”

**Criticisms of the Curriculum**

To the modern reader there are difficulties, to be sure, implicit even in this summary. For one thing, his program has no precise contemporary equivalent. He has the students from the age of twelve to twenty-one, which means a period combining, and including a little more than, our modern high school and college years. Milton
does not recommend, as a matter of fact, that they attend the universities; indeed, he clearly has contempt for Oxford and Cambridge (his alma mater) as they existed in his day.

Over forty years ago, Professor Murray W. Bundy pointed out that Milton’s two statements of the end of learning — to fit “a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war,” and “to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright” — are never satisfactorily reconciled in “Of Education.” They are reconciled later on, however, Bundy argues, with the publication of the great epic poem, *Paradise Lost,* in 1667. For dramatic illustration of this, one can think of Raphael instructing Adam in the garden, preparing Adam for all good offices, as exemplifying the notion that man is essentially good and infinitely capable of development. Michael, the sterner angel, sent down after the fall, represents the kind of teaching designed “to repair the ruins” (*Journal of English and Germanic Philology,* 1922, pp. 127-130). Whether Milton continued to think of sinful man as responsive to these dual educational approaches is entirely a matter of speculation.

Some of the judgments currently passed around concerning “Of Education” need reexamination. It has been condemned, unfairly as M.G. Mason has argued, because of the strenuous program of reading in it. A little later we must return to this matter of strenuousness in church college education. It has been over-praised by E.N.S. Thompson (*Studies in Philology,* 1918) and William Riley Parker for the suggestion that the national government assume complete responsibility for universal education. And it has been derided for the now outmoded emphasis on classical learning. “This last point, more than the others, deserves further explanation. One can concede, for example, that the three Roman treatises on agriculture of Cato, Varro, and Columella, in Latin, are probably not the best introductory texts for our contemporary students in agriculture, if there are any in Christian higher education. Throughout his essay, Milton lists many Greek and Latin authors, some of them of lesser reputation, recommending Hesiod, Theocritus, medicine, fishing, geography, and other subjects. Both his choice of authors and his choice of subjects for study reflect to some extent the technical limitations of his age. But the principle behind his practical recommendations is not difficult to translate to include our more recent scientific and cultural advances. His urging the study in Greek and Latin in his time was easy to justify as they still represented “the languages of those people who have at any time been most industrious after wisdom.” And only a fool would argue that we have nothing to learn from them now. In a number of areas of modern inquiry, however, we can now urge the mastery of German and Russian as well.

Throughout his essay, Milton alludes to authors and books which he thought represented the best scholarship of his day. Even the most fervent admirer of Milton should concede that the practical details of course content, of books to be read, should be worked out independent of Milton’s suggestions, in terms of the knowledge of our day. Such a concession is in no way in conflict with the spirit of Milton’s recommendations.

The Relevance of It All

In the reading of Milton’s essay, as in the reading of any historical document, one must develop facility in interpreting the spirit of his recommendations. The strict literalist in reading his essay, like the strict literalist in reading Milton’s poetry, will encounter material necessitating serious reservations. For example, I do not think we really need pronounce our English vowels in the manner of the Italians. Some major principles, however, in his program are readily transferrable into our contemporary situation. Even in American higher education, there must be basic courses in the different disciplines which ought to be fitted into a sequence: To use Milton’s own example, it seems a loss, either to overwhelm them with it, or to water down an introductory philosophy course so that freshmen can understand it. Moreover, why cannot we prevent students from taking freshman English until they demonstrate adequate sophistication in language and in working with ideas? To take up another easier point, we hardly need remind readers that the liberal arts colleges in America have always been in harmony with Milton’s objective in recommending that their ideal product be a well-rounded gentleman ready to assume a position of leadership.

In addition to numerous virtues, practical and idealistic, in Milton’s formal program, one should recognize as most important the spirit of learning which Milton hoped to promulgate through his specific recommendations. His suggestions for the study of languages — for the “solid things in them” — and his recommendations that formal written compositions be postponed at least until children have something to say, from reading, observation, or experience, are practical, to be sure; but they also help point out what Milton refers to as “the right path of a virtuous and noble education; laborious indeed at the first ascent, but else so smooth, so green, so full of goodly prospect and melodious sounds on every side, that the harp of Orpheus was not more charming.”

Really at the heart of Milton’s set of proposals is the idea that students should love learning, and, through learning, know and love God. His practical recommendations are designed to clear away unnecessary obstacles to such a love. His idealistic philosophical statements about education are explicit on this point. In effect, then, he wants students to love what is taught. But, at the same time, one can return momentarily to his specifically enumerated books and authors to see that Milton also believes that what they are taught to love really should be learning.
Standing between the past season and the one which will soon be upon us, one must pacify one's irate mood and trepidation about things to come with the thought that the theater has been in a state of transition for quite some time now and will probably remain in a chronic condition of trying to find the meaning of its existence in a world that tries to establish its own raison d'être.

While the theater is going through paroxysms of negation and through aberrations of content and form, enough signs point to a new kind of awareness which has many ramifications and which may not only lead to another emergency exit (a trademark of modern man in the twentieth century) but into a fully realized artistic world, new in its fulfillment, surprising in its scope.

Playwriting in the late sixties and in the seventies will be strongly determined by the physical stage innovations in the many new theaters springing up all over the country and by their astounding new technical facilities. In the beginning — as the many-levelled as well as the thrust stages prove — the temptation to write in the style of the epic theater will be strong. This does not necessarily mean the Brechtian kind which, in its narrative-didactic manner (and mannerism), is too simple to satisfy an audience growing in sophistication and veering toward an unrealistic symbolism. It is always difficult to play the fortune teller, but some of the more exciting film experiments may have a certain influence on the writing and staging of the future play.

As far as content and message are concerned, where do we stand today? The cult of the anticliche has become the cliche of our time. To express on the stage non-communicativeness has become the ne plus ultra of theatricality. Ibsen, in his ire against all tepid, mediocre, middle-class conventionalisms, had his iconoclast Brand shout: "We go back to go on!" A sophisticated mind, Jean Cocteau, found solace in the dictum: "My discipline consists of not letting myself be enslaved by obsolete formulae." Between these two notions, every serious artist struggles to find a way to himself and from himself to his time. But our time has made a cult of it.

The Theater of the Absurd was one of the consequences. But looked at under a magnifying glass it is little more than a dash of dadaism mixed with a spoonful of surrealism, liberally seasoned with the explosive power of expressionism, thoroughly mixed, and then filtered through with double the amount of existentialism. So much that has been done in the theater during the Fifties and Sixties is only a more resigned expression of the more frantic desperation of man who is about to demolish his past while fearing the future. That, under these circumstances, the result is, more often than not, a non-statement or the creative attempt at a non-creative expression, is understandable.

The next unavoidable step was the one into the vacuum, into a theater free of all traditional obligations and responsibilities, a theater of chance and mechanism that triumphs over any human involvement and intentional- ity. It resists all analysis and meaning by proclaiming that it is the theater of the inanimate human being, moving without motivation, taking place in a loft, a railway station, and even on a stage; a soulless theater that is more interested in the doing than in its (artistic-non-artistic) result; a theater indulging in the grammar of inarticulateness, in the perpetuation of repetition and variation of an act that neither is nor leads to any action. Undoubtedly, this theater is a ritual of eventless events, of unrelated relationships, of unemotional feelings, of statements reduced to meaninglessness.

It certainly expresses that phenomenon of our time which vexes and mystifies us, which makes our artists flee into all variations of pop art in order to deny themselves and by doing so to deny the life of our time as being condemned to absurdity. It finally becomes the expression of man's helplessness towards the forces he released.

But the pendulum having gone all the way to an extreme from where it is difficult to go any further cannot help but swing back. As we have succeeded in reducing our artistic expression to a provocative nothingness, I see the potential of an almost classic cleanliness and a form-fulfilled, architectural lightness in our future attempts at recreating the image of our age characterized by cosmic penetration. And since there is an inherent romantic touch to our scientific flight into the unknown, to modern man's almost dream-fulfilled existence in which everything he can think of will be at his command, I would not be surprised to see the twentieth-century classicism followed or rather paralleled and fought by — knowing the artists as I do — a very scientifically indoctrinated neo-romaticism. And then later history books may note briefly the long period of confusing isms and chaotic issues (1917-1967) through which modern man staggered, stunned by his own powerlessness and greatness, and after which he slowly found himself again in humble realization of his own beauty-embracing, poetic potentialities and of the many truths in the final truth of his lasting limitations as man and artist.
The Gift of Worth

By CHRISTA RESSMEYER
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Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
— Saint Matthew 5:5

Jesus addresses the disciples in the terse pronouncements of the beatitudes. The promises He gives to these men, who have accepted His call, are promises of the experience of God's reign among them. One such promise is to the meek: blessed are they, "for they shall inherit the earth." That promise would appear almost bizarre when viewed in terms of the call that had been issued to each. These men were confronted with the demand to abandon any former claims they had to their own lives and take up a ministry that was largely devoted to the derelicts and the decrepit. The nature of this ministry provoked a certain uneasiness even among those who wanted to believe that Jesus was the Christ, and yet wondered if they were to wait for another.

It is known that the composite of Jesus' sayings called the Sermon on the Mount was most probably used by the early church to outfit its members for the rigors of a living faith. The beatitudes served as the foundation of promises to be realized in the lives of those who were called to abandon their own claims and to be claimed as Christ's own. The prescriptions that follow in the sermon rest on the acknowledgment that God's reign is both present and coming, and that the tension of belonging to an old age, while at the same time the new breaks in, is to characterize men's lives. The "human point of view," as St. Paul phrased the vantage point of the old age, is no longer the last word; rather, the experience of God's reign is the ultimate criterion of man's worth.

When we who presently would assert our participation in the new age consider these sayings, we may wonder at the content of a promise that appears almost antithetical to the predominant American way of life. From all appearances, the majority of Americans already "delight themselves in abundant prosperity." And aside from the significance this passage could have in a ministry to the impoverished, we may question its applicability to one particular community that bears the trademarks of affluence, the academic community.

If the beatitudes are promises based on a call, the behavior patterns they describe are not called to attention for their own sake. Rather, it would appear that these patterns exemplify behavior that is insignificant beside God's own actions of redemption and blessing. Meekness, for example, describes a posture before God and among men which is in no way self-assertive. It is God's giving of the earth which is the aggressive measure highlighted. In the academic community which is based on various processes of self-assertion, one wonders at the applicability of such a message.

Perhaps intellectual self-assertion belongs to a wholly different sphere than that dealt with in the beatitudes. Supposedly intellectual self-assertion is of the objective sort. It has to do with concepts, not the persons expressing them. Or does some of the more current conflict among members of academic communities call into question the alleged objectivity? It may even be that a place such as the campus community is more prone to an aggressive posture "before God and among men" when a most evident concern of higher learning is the filling of requirements for the acquisition of credentials. If we are attempting to lift ourselves by our own bootstraps on campus, it is very likely that we are using our boots for other less noble efforts also. (And there is a lot of boot-work being done on campuses: students pursue majors and degrees; professors engage in research and pursue higher degrees; and administrators are busy putting their school on the map.) The intellectually-free atmosphere is a fertile place indeed for bumptious self-assertion, since for every claim made there may be a counter-claim.

The irony in these results is evident: in many major respects, no place is more ideal for the Christian's exploration of his inheritance, the earth, than the academic community; nonetheless, no place is better equipped to reduce that heritage for the sake of advancing its own members. For instance, when persons incarnate themselves in their own values and estimate their worth by the success of their evaluations, intellectual encounters become matters of life and death rather than of give and take. And no one wants to die. The ease with which a professor may dismiss certain ideas as irrelevant or insignificant may cause one to wonder whether a process of self-salvation is not in operation. When academic counseling takes the form of "selling" a field to a student, rather than helping him to find out the spectrum of possibilities suggested by his aptitudes, departmental self-interests are receiving priority over student needs. Even the hesitancy with which department curriculum committees explore inter-departmental studies could suggest a kind of self-protection among specialists which is masked by concerns for consistency and purity of method. In all these situations the limitations set up could reflect not only an identification of personal worth with academic claims, but also a constriction of the Christian's heritage of the earth. "No trespass" signs are barring investigation.
Students have their own varieties of personal self-assertion. "Shooting the bull" is a commonplace method of "saving face" rather than admitting to either lack of preparation or uncertainty. Or one may save face by never getting involved academically and dismiss uneasiness about this choice by claiming not to be "the intellectual type." In both cases, education has become a matter of protecting oneself, rather than investigating one's heritage. Either claiming or denying to be a certain type becomes a substitute for making claims and testing them in terms of one's heritage.

Administrators too may have their own methods of hiding from the encounters common to campus life. When their prescriptions for causes of action become more associated with their office and persons than with their concern to promote responsible and flexible living and study on campus, they are restricting the heritage of the community members. In fact, when dialogue between deans and students, for example, breaks down because either party is incapable of transcending its own self-interest in the interests of a better community, both are guilty of identifying their personal fate with the fate of their claims.

The implications for the Christian belonging to the college campus are tremendous. He need not be presumptuous about his worth, because it is a gift. Hence, the claims he will make will be for the sake of the earth he has inherited and not for himself. He can lay his claims on the line, subjecting them to the community's examination and verdicts, for his self-esteem cannot be threatened by his colleagues. His self-esteem is based on a call to discipleship, not his academic rank. Thus, he is free to pursue the mandate that is his heritage from creation; that is, to "fill the earth and subdue it" (Genesis 1:27). Spoken in our age, this mandate implies drastic change and experimentation to keep abreast of forces at work in modern society. When sacredness rests with the call he has received and not with boundaries of his work, he is free to push beyond these boundaries when they are called into question and to encourage others to do the same. Subduing the earth is a communal effort. Further, his academic life dare not be a haven for its own sake from the pressures beyond the campus. Learning and living on campus should be viewed in relation to the predicaments of mankind in general, for the inheritance of the earth is no isolated matter.

The posture of meekness for the Christian on campus takes the form of servanthood. The perspective of such a ministry is not one that is likely to be distorted with the licking of one's own wounds. In fact, he has been freed to delight in his heritage, in the life he has been given more abundantly. The call that is issued to the campus is a call to participate in the blessedness of the new age of God's reign where there is no longer the "human point of view." The call is to sonship and the heritage is the earth.

**On Second Thought**

In the great state churches of Europe, every citizen was counted a member. He could get out of that membership only by the red tape of law, declaring himself a non-member. It seems a poor pattern to us, in our church democracies. Yet in a sense that is exactly the pattern by which God deals with the world.

God in Christ has redeemed the world. All sins have been forgiven. God does not count any of them against us. He has reconciled the world to Himself, all things whether on earth or in heaven. If you want to get out of this redemption, you have to do something to declare yourself a non-member.

It won't do you any good to sin. That in itself will not exclude you. Everybody sins, and it doesn't count. There are some who sin worse than others, of course. But we're not dealing in degrees when we talk about redemption. You are either in or you're out, and there's no significant statistical difference between the sins on the two sides of the line.

How do you get out of redemption? Stand on your rights! Assert yourself! Point out that you have a right to sin. It's easy. Your wife hates you. The owner will never miss it, he just left it lying around for you to take, and he has too much anyway. There are thousands of people worse than you, if they do it so can you. Every word of the stories you tell is absolutely true. The other fellow started it and you are just defending yourself.

Stand on your rights! Show that you have a right to special consideration. You have faithfully gone to church (the right church, the pure church). You read the Bible, you give a tithe, and you may even be called and ordained! Justify everything you do. Justify yourself, and you'll be counted out.

If you just give in and stop fighting, you'll be saved. If you lose your nerve and admit that what you did was selfish and hateful — that it actually was lying and stealing — you'll be taken in. If you bow your head as though you are no better than anyone else, and meekly say, "God be merciful," there you are. You're redeemed.

You have to do something to get yourself out of heaven. But anything you do will get you out if you are doing it in order to get yourself in. If you want to stay redeemed, you must do nothing. But nothing is very hard to do. According to St. Paul, you have to die in order to do it.

By ROBERT J. HOYER

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The Cresset
Sad to say, it sometimes happens that when men of genuine distinction in the world of music pass away, they are either snubbed with polite and oily words or deluged with faint praise.

I am thinking of Joseph Deems Taylor, who was born in 1885 and died a few weeks ago. In my opinion, Deems Taylor, as he is usually called, was an important figure in the musical life of our nation. Many have high praise for his mother wit and his uncommon skill in the field of journalism, but they boggle at speaking of him as a composer with the ability to make contributions of real value.

Unfortunately, the avant-gardists and the prophets and apostles of dodecaphonic garbage have been hogging the limelight in our country and in other lands. Their cacophonous excretions are regarded as sacrosanct and are said to represent progress of the finest vintage. Those who venture to decry their tonal concoctions as exceedingly poor substitutes for genuine originality are often laughed to scorn as fuddy-duddies altogether beyond redemption.

I for my part am happy to be beyond the redemption of those who walk blindly and slavishly in the footsteps of Arnold Schoenberg and his all too numerous disciples. These men have been cumbering the musical earth for a long, long time. Will their works be remembered and cherished in the hearts of the rank and file? I do not think so. To be sure, their compositions will be listed and discussed in the history books as attention-arresting excrescences; but I am sure that what they have been concocting out of the bottomless depths of completely unimaginative futility has made no important furrows in the tonal art.

I would not exchange Taylor's orchestral suite titled Through the Looking Glass for all the dodecaphonic bilge water in the whole world. You can have Igor Stravinsky as he lives, moves, and has his being in many of his recent excretions. You can have the constipated compositions of many others who are often lauded as masters. Yes, you can have hundreds of works from the pens of so-called composers who lack the ability that comes to the fore in Taylor's ingeniously constructed and delightfully entertaining Through the Looking Glass.

Are you calling me an enemy of progress? Go ahead! Why do you not conduct an experiment? Select two or three thousand devotees of music at random. Then assemble a competent orchestra and have it play some of the avant-garde compositions of our time. But be sure to add Taylor's Through the Looking Glass to this program. Then ask the listeners to indicate their preference. What music will come out on top? I venture to predict that it will not be the avant-garde rubbish of recent years.

I do not mean to say that Through the Looking Glass is one of the great classics in music. But what I do mean to state is obvious. The dodecaphonic drivel that is being purveyed and praised ad nauseam in our days does not win its way into the hearts of men, women, and children who listen to music for pleasure.

I wonder how many symphony orchestras will revive Through the Looking Glass as a tribute to Taylor's memory. Not many, I fear. Some conductors seem to prefer to drive listeners away by dishing up out-and-out driveling. Believe me, they are standing in their own light.

It seems to me that the 12-tone row has had its little day. In my judgment, it has been weighed in the balance and found wanting.

I often wonder why Taylor's two fine operas — The King's Henchman and Peter Ibbetson — have fallen into desuetude. If interest in good American music is a great thing, is it said to be, why have these two works been shelved? Stravinsky, who used to be an exceptionally able composer, is lauded to the skies in spite of his chameleonic ventures into creativity of various types. But do Stravinsky's recent lucubrations really edify or entertain the rank and file? They bore me. I confess this in all candor and with the certain knowledge that some will excoriate me for what I am saying.

Do you recall the little group of French composers who were known as Les Six ("The Six")? They used to be acclaimed far and wide as creators endowed with a special charisma. Now one sees that they were little more than flashes in the pan.

Must one say that Taylor was nothing more than a flash in the pan? At all events, I cannot make a statement of this kind. Even though I do not number Taylor among the great masters, I do say that some of his music deserves a far better fate than it has today. You have the right to call me a reactionary if you choose to do so. Yet reactionaries are needed at this time to do what they can to pull modern music out of the avant-garde swamp in which much of it is bogged down. Yes, the art of composition is now in what addicts of baseball would call a "slump." Even though Taylor's works are by no means great masterpieces, I prefer them to the "slumpy" ditch-water that assails our long-suffering ears today.
The World of Cubism

By RICHARD H. BRAUER

"The world is a structure of variable relationships and multiple appearances." Wylie Sypher

"To be is to be related." Gassius J. Keyser

In the minds of many Christians there is still a vague uneasiness, at the very least, about the general abandonment of the realistic techniques of a Michelangelo or a Rembrandt for the effects of such cubist drawings as MAN WITH A HAT. For them this abandonment represents nothing less than a baffling change of worlds. And that is right. Cubism has been the most decisive, far reaching revolution in painting since the Renaissance. Unquestionably, Renaissance perspective illusions, matching the visible world, were magnificent achievements making possible new awarenesses of appearances, new understandings of the human spirit in terms of these appearances. Yet by 1900 the most talented artists felt imprisoned by these 500-year-old techniques. Perspective images representing the world from one point of view, frozen at one moment in time, no longer seemed to match modern experience, nor develop new, needed insights into the modern world.

Around the turn of the century, imaginative activity in philosophy and science was creating a "new landscape." In Picasso's Paris the philosopher Bergson asserted that nature itself was best characterized as a ceaseless flow of changing forms and relationships rather than a series of static, isolated appearances.

Similarly, dramatic new scientific ideas about the structure of nature also turned man's attention away from static surface appearances. In 1895 Roentgen discovered X-rays, showing that matter was penetrable. The Quantum theory (1900) demonstrated that the elemental small particles of matter moved not in a mechanically predictable way but indeterminately. In 1905 Einstein announced his Special Theory of Relativity which stated that measurements of space, time, mass, and energy were relative to the specific reference body of which they were a part. In short, the material world was dissolving into a mathematically abstract structure of changing relationships.

In the field of art, about 1905 Picasso and Braque, the two artists who did most to develop cubism in 1907, became very much influenced by the almost geometric directness of Negro primitive masks. Here were conceptual forms rather than forms that imitated appearance. Of equal influence were Cezanne's structured paintings which represented the surfaces of objects as a system of small flat planes. These arts pointed the way for a consistent approach to constructing a picture based on form rather than on matching the objective visible world. By 1912, drawings or paintings such as MAN WITH A HAT were often started without reference to objective models, but by pasting down bits of newspaper. The resulting image was matched against the artist's interior world of aesthetic, intellectual, and emotional sensibility.

The cubist image consists of parts having distinctly multiple identities. In MAN WITH A HAT the uncamouflaged scissor-cut, word-imprinted newspaper clipping asserts its own being, yet at the same time this part also represents the light side of the man's face, but simultaneously, and more importantly than all, it emphatically takes its place as a textured rectangle within a coolly calculated aesthetic construction of geometrically precise yet softly irregular charcoal lines. Each part, as each twentieth century man, must play many roles.

In the cubist image not one point of view is frozen in time but many points of view are held together by an over-riding aesthetic order. The top and the side view, and even the inside view of the transparent hat are combined. On the right of the face, the eye, eyebrow, and nose give a front view effect, while almost identical marks on the left side of the face give a side view effect. The close-up of the large ear on the left must be combined, like a movie montage, with the long-view of the small ear on the right. One must shift up to see the hat brim on the left and down to see the rest of the brim on the right, and at an angle to see the underside of a section of the brim on the left. The lines that end loosely suggest that the object keeps going into the surrounding space and that the space in turn interpenetrates the loosely connected fragments of the head. To orient himself to each emerging fragment of appearances the beholder finds himself being shifted up, down, in, out, and around in a non-linear sequence. In terms of the non-objective aesthetic construction on the picture plane, however, the beholder can view all these movements at once as a related whole.

The cubist image, therefore, like music, is a constructed aesthetic object. Under this rule of non-objective harmonies and rhythms, representational fragments from the human scale of experience interlock with the mathematical relational fields of the scientific scales of the extremely small and the extremely large. Such images seem to establish a new correlation between artistic and scientific imaginations, and they require the active integrating participation of the beholder. But in so doing the beholder orients himself to deal relationally with the simultaneous, shifting, fragmented pace and rhythm of twentieth century life.

September 1966
Social Studies: Problems and Solutions

Education has been a prime topic of discussion for many years in the United States but never with more intensity than in recent years. The range of the discussion has extended from "Are we keeping our educational system up with the Russians?" to the whys and wherefores of the new mathematics; from "Can John read?" to "Oh my, what trash John reads."

Critics of education hurl their bombs of criticism with impartiality at all levels of education. Students on our college campuses claim they are getting an inadequate education, that professors are not interested in teaching, and that education has been lost in the mounting bureaucracy of it all. Parents often maintain that the elementary and secondary schools are not doing a good job, that their kids are not really being prepared for graduate school or the professional school, and most certainly that their kids are not being prepared for life. Citizens in general are increasingly restive under the heavier tax loads. They feel caught in the trap of handing over more tax money for the construction and improvement of a school system that never seems quite to catch up to its building and curriculum needs, to the hiring of enough teachers, and to the meeting of high standards. There never seems to be enough money to go around. Parents are wondering whether they personally are able to handle the increased costs involved in sending their teenagers to college. How can parents afford sending two or three or four youngsters to college at two thousand or three thousand dollars per youngster?

And so, on and on the arguments and the discussions go. At least the arguments and the discussions demonstrate that Americans are serious about education.

But in no case are they more serious than in the case of the American high school. And no topic in education is discussed more than the plight of social studies on the secondary level.

Even more devastating, however, is the nature of the discussion or the words used in criticism of the high school social studies programs. Remarks registered in our memory over a period of years go something like the following examples: "Social studies are a bore in high school. Just a story, that's all, just a lot of story telling." "History is O.K. but that's no sign it ought to be taught." "Social studies are for plumbers, coaches, and morons." "Social studies? For heaven's sake! Now take math or physics, that's something you can get your teeth into."

In a double-barreled analysis, some recent surveys have suggested that the lowest caliber students on the university level are found in education and in the social studies. Supposedly, then, these low-caliber students become our social studies teachers in high schools across the land. If this is true (and I am not really in a position to know), then the teaching of social studies on the high school level is for certain a dead duck.

By the same token, high school social studies teachers insist that the body is not dead. Moreover (in company with most high school teachers) they are registering complaints of their own, far and wide to anyone who will listen; and in some school systems they are beginning to strike and walk off the job — and with a feeling that the company of listeners is not very large. "How can we teach?" they ask. Franklin K. Patterson (Director of the Lincoln Filene Center for Citizenship and Public Affairs, Tufts University) describes the plight of the high school teacher in Man and Politics: "These teachers are hard-pressed by their own treadmill of hourly classes, facing as many as 180 or more children a day, five days a week. They are burdened by non-teaching monitordial and clerical duties. They lead hectic, harried work-lives." Caught in such circumstances, teachers very often simply give up and merely go through the routines, or become cynical and hateful about the world in which they live and work. They have been caught in the traps of their own fatigue and resentment.

One is constantly amazed, however, at how many secondary teachers stay on the job. But Patterson, along with many other people in the know, wants to help social studies teachers as much as he can. The least we can do, he says, is "to help teachers by producing the kind of materials they might like to prepare themselves had they world enough and time."

In the last ten years or so, leaders in the social studies have emerged, people who like Patterson are beyond the talk stage and who want to do something about the predicaments in the current social studies situation. A notable effort in this direction has been made by Educational Services Incorporated (44-A Brattle Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138). Its Social Studies Curriculum Program is directed and executed by well-known names in the field: Jerome S. Bruner, Harvard University; Elting E. Morison, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Franklin K. Patterson, Tufts University; George C. Homans, Harvard University; Jerrold R. Zacharias, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; and Edmund S. Morgan, a well-known historian. ESI has recently (1965-1966) published six occasional papers: 1. Report on the "Caesar Unit" by Richard S. Emmett, Jr.; 2. The Emergence of The American by Edmund S. Morgan. These materials include units for both elementary and secondary grades, but are of general value for anyone interested in the teaching of the social sciences.

According to Patterson in Man and Politics, "Each working party is composed of teachers, university scholars, and research assistants... The differences in experience and kinds of competence represented in the working parties have given them a unique kind of strength for the task of curriculum-building. There is, in my estimation, something heart-warming in the willingness of competent and well-known scholars from different levels and different specializations to come together and to reason together about the plight of the social studies, and to do something about them. One word in at least two of these titles—the obvious word, Man—puts the work of ESI in proper focus. It seems almost too obvious to insist that the social studies are primarily about man. But social studies enthusiasts, the sensitive ones at least, are always being surprised by people who forget the obvious.

It is argued by some that the day-to-day operations of our social studies classrooms manage somehow to forget the Human Condition. There are the authoritarian teachers who teach by enforced memorization and by hardly anything else, toasting significant relationships to the winds as if man did not really live in significant relationships. There are the ideological parents who insist (and successfully more often than not) that teachers promulgate parental points of view in the classroom on Vietnam, on birth control, on capital punishment, on FDR as if there were only one possible point of view. The teachers often give in and do the same thing, as if the teacher's view were the correct one. There are the superintendents and principals, who want to avoid constituent trouble so badly that they work at sterilizing the school system to build up an immunity to ideas as if the school were not the place where people, albeit young people, from different walks of life are to discuss the obvious idea they could lay their young and effervescent minds to. To any attempts at the dehumanization of the social studies, Jerome S. Bruner says very emphatically in Man: The Course of Study, "The content of the course is man: his nature as a species, the forces that shaped and continue to shape his humanity. Three questions recur throughout:
What is human about human beings? How did they get that way? How can they be made more so?" Patterson also emphasized the human potential in the work cited above: "The utility of materials in the social studies should lie in their relevance to the human condition... we have hazarded to design curriculum models for junior high school studies around a central organizing theme..." And Patterson's organizing theme generates some significant questions about the human situation. 1. "What is power in human society?" 2. "Why is power a part of human society?" 3. "What does power rely upon?" 4. "What are the values of power?" 5. "What are the evils of power?" 6. "How do people protect themselves against the evils of power?" 7. "How does power operate to survive?" 8. "What are the conditions under which power operates and dies?"

As these last questions indicate, the people of ESI are not satisfied with casual narration. They are not satisfied with a lot of chaotic judgments about a series of unique events. Concepts, like the power concept, are the meaningful frameworks within which the materials of the social studies ("the facts, ma'am, the facts") can be handled with understanding and common sense. These concepts appear throughout the occasional papers: the Caesar unit, power, civic culture, causality, and the like. One of the authors quotes Robert G. Hanvey ("On Raising The Standards of Learning In The Social Studies" — an unpublished paper): "Backwardness of the social studies... lies in failure to employ modern conceptual and theoretical tools of the social sciences... A genuine renaissance will occur in the social studies when modern conceptualizations come into use... an enriched perception is inherent in the use of new concepts and, if they are wisely chosen, new vistas will open up."

In summary, these occasional papers are valuable because, among many other features, they represent the thinking of acknowledged scholars, even though directed to the early stages of education; they emphasize the human condition; and they see the need of conceptualization to open up and give meaning to the new day of the social studies.

In addition to Educational Services Incorporated, a notable piece of social studies work is also being done at the Social Studies Curriculum Center at the Maxwell Graduate School of Citizenship and Public Affairs in cooperation with the School of Education at Syracuse University. This program is also being handled by some well-known scholars and teachers such as Roy A. Price, Preston James, Paul Meadows, Donald Meiklejohn, Frank Munger, Linton Freeman, and Alan Campbell.

By their own admissions, the Syracuse people are emphasizing what they consider to be their unique contributions: (from a monograph cited below) 1. "Identification of major concepts from the social sciences and allied disciplines that appear to be appropriate for elementary and secondary programs in social studies." 2. "Examination of the major workings of these disciplines, such as organizing principles, readiness to pursue empirical data, willingness to discard unwarranted assumptions, awareness of the differences between solid evidence and simply informed opinion, and subordination of subjective preferences to objective evidence." 3. "Development and evaluation, at three or more grade levels, of illustrative materials for use by teachers and students that effectively translate the concepts and workways into classroom practice."


Both Educational Services Incorporated and the Syracuse Center provide helpful outlines and suggestions which are, as the Syracuse people say, "spring-boards from which teaching units will be selected and launched."

Fortunately we can look forward to more helpful social studies investigations and publications from both operations.

VICTOR F. HOFFMANN

New and Good Books from Eerdman's

Not many years ago the books from Eerdman's Publishing Company were predictably dull and fundamentalistic works, distinguished only by good printing and binding, certainly among the best-smelling books on the market because of a particularly fragrant glue used in the binding process.

Today, the glue and excellent printing remain but the contents have changed. The dubious fundamentalism is gone, replaced by books which are soundly conservative and evangelical in orientation; traces of the Reformed tradition are properly in evidence, but the diet is rich and rewarding.

One of the services rendered by this revived house is to bring reprints of British works or translations of continental writings to American readers. They have undertaken the publication of Kittel's massive dictionary of biblical terms in English. They have brought out Charles Williams, both his novels and theological writings, in an inexpensive format, an event noted by The New Republic a few months ago. The best modern series in church history, the Pelican History of the Church, is now appearing in good hardback editions through this company. Although these historical studies occasionally reflect a British point of view, most notably evident in Alec Vidler's treatment of the recent period, the names of the authors (the Chadwick brothers, Neill, Southern, Vidler) suggest the professional quality of the series. They are written by specialists for a generalist readership.

Eerdman's has also responded to the current movements in theology by publishing new works directly related to the issues being discussed today. For example Kenneth Hamilton, professor of theology at Winnipeg's United College, an intelligent evangelical voice, has authored a modest work, God is Dead: The Anatomy of a Slogan (1966, 86 pp., $1.25). Macmillan had published Hamilton's analysis of Tillich a few years ago, and Eerdman's last year produced his Revolt Against Heaven, a study of anti-supernaturalism. His new work extends the themes he developed in Revolt. In the earlier work he quoted Bonhoeffer on the title page: "From God to reality, not from reality to God, goes the path of theology." This quotation accurately locates Hamilton's general theological position; he is heavily in debt to Karl Barth and recognizes the importance of Bonhoeffer's worldly orientation.

Thus he proceeds to analyze the death-of-God movement. He credits this theology with the good intention of engaging the Christian life to the fullest extent with the enveloping secular world. He recognizes the setting of the church today: an age marked by the decay of the religious spirit and the loss of habits and attitudes of piety. He places the death-of-God theologians at the end of the Barth and Tillich period of theology. Barth and Tillich in their own way had to deal with the idea of the death of God — or at least the death of the concept of God — in continental culture. Both of these leading theologies were in many ways oriented to the climate of the continent, shaped not by science so much as by the humanist god-killers (Comte, Nietzsche) of the...
nineteenth century. Whereas Tillich found space to speak of God by analyzing the "boundary situation" perceived particularly by European minds caught in the European crises of this century, Barth repudiated "religion" in the name of revelation. Both were able to speak of God, though both dissociated themselves from conventional theism. In Hamilton's view Tillich is now out because his approach to the boundary situation is another way of propping up Christianity and does not correspond to the American cultural situation, a point made by Harvey Cox, among others. Oddly Barth's effective repudiation of conventional theism and his concentration on Christology have supplied the theological impetus for the death-of-God movement, though Bonhoeffer is clearly the mediator of this thought to the American scene. Hamilton pieces together the Bonhoeffer fragments which have inspired so much of the radical theology to show the extent to which Bonhoeffer is misinterpreted by people who do not understand the biblical and dogmatic tradition from which he comes, who regard his earlier writings as a metaphysicist phase of his development.

Hamilton analyzes the leading representatives of the radical theology, noting some internal contradictions together with an innocence of the Christian tradition, all of which has been pointed out by other authors. As far as Hamilton's own constructive alternative to the theology he criticizes is concerned, reference to Buber's The eclipse of God plus his strong sympathy for Bonhoeffer is at least suggestive of where he would go.

These analyses are excellent guides to current discussion. Above all I am intrigued by his suggestion that in the (W.) Hamilton — van Buren — Altvater group, together with Harvey Cox (who does not really belong to the death-of-God folks at all), we are witnessing an American effort to be independent of European theology, as well as a response to the highly successful technological achievement of American secularized life. When last attempted this produced the liberal social gospel. Hamilton sees the ingredients of that past experience emerging once again in a recognizable pattern: Jesus is leader, dogma is a burden, the social needs of man become normative for the church's work. I find this suggestion quite provocative and see a hot assignment for a theologian trained in American church history to test this thesis. If true, a great deal of sense can be made out of the present situation, and perhaps some guidance for the future will appear as well.

With the theological giants of the first part of our century gone, and none yet to take their place, we are in a period of new starts and new affirmations. Theology in Reconstruction (1966, 288 pp., $5.00, Eerdmann's) by T.P. Torrance is part of this literature. Torrance is a Scots theologian who studied under Karl Barth. developed deep interests in the liturgical movement together with traditional dogmatics. In this collection of articles and essays from various journals we have an example of the sort of thing American Lutheranism should be contributing to the American scene but has failed to do. Here is dogmatics in the grand manner, albeit in the form of essays, done by one who is committed to the catholic tradition, regards Hebrew and Greek as indispensable tools for theological work, considers the patristic mind to be pertinent to our century, is attuned to ecumenical theology, and is alert to the contemporary philosophical discussion. Familiar Barthian accents can be heard in these pages, modulated by Scottish empiricism and some unBarthian apologetic and liturgical concerns.

This fecund book has few pretensions to originality and does not play to the grandstands. It is a professional work for theologians who find the classical tradition full of originality, who are willing (for example) to explore the nuances of a phrase such as "the mind of the church," and who can be drawn to an examination of the logic of an Athanasius as well as an Altvater. Two notes may suggest something of the range of Torrance's interests. He urges close contact between theology and pure science. Both disciplines share a common discipline very much threatened by certain current vogues: a healthy regard for objective reality and an appropriate attitude of awe and patient inquiry into that reality, listening to it on its own terms. Secondly, of all the ferment in Rome the most significant event was Pope John's allowance of a distinction between the substance of a dogmatic statement and its conditioned formulation. This opens the way in principle to a profound reinterpretation of the past.

Recent conversations between Presbyterian and Lutheran theologians in this country produced the statement that no insuperable barriers exist today between these two bodies of theology. Torrance's brand of neo-Calvinism certainly points in this direction.

RICHARD BAEPLER

WORTH NOTING

THE MAN FOR OTHERS

By Erik Routley. (Oxford University Press, paperback, $1.50)

Mr. Routley is an English Congregational minister and author, formerly lecturer in church history in Oxford University, who takes Bishop John (Honest to God) Robinson seriously but does not swallow him whole. This, in itself, makes him a fairly exceptional man, for few have done Bishop Robinson the courtesy of assuming that he is a Christian clergyman who, having spoken freely what was on his heart and mind, is now willing to be confirmed, enlightened, or corrected by Christians of equal concern, competence, and candor. But those who are acquainted with Mr. Routley's previous work will already have recognized him as an exceptional interpreter of the Christian Gospel and will not, therefore, be surprised that in this little paperback he succeeds, as one must say Bishop Robinson did not, in stripping the barnacles off the Gospel without cutting away large chunks of the Gospel itself.

This is essentially an attempt to state the historic Christian teachings of the person and work of Jesus Christ in the language of our own times. His basic thesis is that "Jesus Christ did not come to stand for us over against God: to vindicate mankind against a God who disbelieved in man's worthiness to be saved. It was precisely toward the eradicating of this persistent illusion — an illusion which continued through the days of His incarnation and has ever since been the chief source of the church's errors — that His teaching was directed." This is his way of saying that Jesus Christ came to save sinners, sin being "a settled state of unreconciledness, a preference for that state, an insistence on that state." To accomplish this salvatory task, God disclosed Himself to man in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, who was in all respects truly man, though without sin. But from the very beginning of the Church, Christians have affirmed that the man Jesus was, although truly man, not merely man. It took the Church five centuries to get down in words what Jesus was beyond merely man, and what it said about Him at the Council of Chalcedon is all too easily misunderstood by us who repeat its words today, but it comes down to an assertion that He was, and is, "God's authentic truth bodily forth in humanity."

The offense of Jesus' life and ministry was that He told and showed men, not what they wanted to hear and see, but what was true about God, the world, and themselves. He angered people (and the more religious they were the more He angered them) by insisting that they couldn't blame God for the feud which has so long existed between Heaven and earth, "for God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." His task was not to reconcile an angry God to a world which He could hardly wait to clobber, but to reconcile the world to a God Who, in the parable of the Prodigal, is portrayed as the Waiting Father. What He had to overcome was man's insistence that the universe (i.e., God) was "agin him," not the wrath of a tyrannical and vengeful God.

To do this, He had to suffer. It was by taking upon Himself the form of a servant and suffering and dying a death of dereliction that He showed forth His glory and the Father's love. To be a Christian is to choose for oneself that death to self which Jesus chose and which pointed beyond Himself to God. It is to choose crucifixion in the assurance that one will ultimately be vindicated by God Himself. In Jesus' case, that vindication was God's raising Him from the dead on the third day. For us the "reasonable hope" is that, having shared in His death, we shall also have a part in His resurrection.

This is all pretty orthodox stuff, but Routley has the gift of making the ancient testi
monies of the Scriptures and the Fathers sound new and fresh and so much more hopeful than anything we hear from those who see their task as one of making the Gospel less offensive to modern man. In fact, it is so orthodox that it will singe the back hairs of fundamentalists, "hot gospellers," justification-by-sound-doctrinners, moral rigorists, and others within the Church but for whom many might have gone away and believed on Jesus.

JOHN STRIETELMEIER

THE TRUE WILDERNESS

By H. A. Williams, (Lippincott, $2.95)

My credentials for reviewing a collection of sermons are, if I do say so myself, impressive. For more than eighteen years, in line of duty, I have read or listened to more sermons per year than most Christians are exposed to in a lifetime. As a consequence, I believe that my critical standards are realistic: I do not expect to be surprised, pleasantly or unpleasantly, by anything that I hear or read in a sermon. I am prepared to receive the Good Samaritan. For more than eighteen years, in line of duty, I have read or listened to more sermons per year than most Christians are exposed to in a lifetime. As a consequence, I believe that my critical standards are realistic: I do not expect to be surprised, pleasantly or unpleasantly, by anything that I hear or read in a sermon. I am prepared to receive the Good Samaritan. I expect to be surprised, pleasantly or unpleasantly, by anything that I hear or read in a sermon. I am prepared to receive the Good Samaritan. I am prepared to receive the Good Samaritan. I can name off-hand a dozen Christians whose theology is, even to a spiritual descendant of Martin Luther, pretty far out. One might expect from a man who had heard the words, "Well, that's jolly good news! Never would have suspected it, y'know," now, having said all of this, I must enter a caveat. God moves in a mysterious way. His wonders to perform, not only in history but in the lives of individuals. And the very personal love which He bears toward each of His redeemed forbids Him to speak the same language to all of them. I shall re-read this book many times, for it has much to say to me. I can name off-hand a dozen Christians whose lives show more abundant fruits of the faith than mine who would find these sermons not only deeply disturbing but fundamentally at odds with what they have been taught to hold as of the essence of the Christian faith. To put it as clearly as possible, it is, in a number of its presuppositions and even more of its implications, heretical by the standards of the public doxology of the Lutheran Church and, probably, of most other American Protestant denominations. I shall not attempt to explain why I am lauding a preacher whom so many would avoid after the first and second admonition. I am merely reporting that from these sermons I learned something that I had not known before of the dimensions of that "Love that will not let me go."

JOHN STRIETELMEIER

THE THEORY OF COMMUNISM

By George H. Hampson, (Philosophical Library, $3.75)

This book is an objective study of the theory, not so much of Communism, but of Marxism. However, it hardly touches Soviet reality. It is intended to be an introduction to "readers of college caliber who have only a popular notion of the theoretical tenets of Communism." Nonetheless, it might very well scandalize even some of them. Were it not for the fact that it carries the imprint of an institutionalized Catholic framework, the author could expose himself to misunderstandings. As it is, he might easily become the target of unjustified attacks by extremists of the right.

There are better introductions to this subject, more comprehensive, more attractively written, and more enjoyable to even the layman reader who does not necessarily appreciate simplicity of style, even-tempered flow of expression, and complete avoidance of embellishments for artistic effects. What is interesting is not only that this book is completely objective, which is the result of the impressive scholarship that went into its writing and of the honest sincerity of its author, but also that Professor Hampson of John Carroll University shows definite good will, we might even say sympathetic understanding, in analysing the tenets of Com-munism. He joins a growing number of Western scholars who emphasize the humanistic side of Marxist philosophy, and recognize the promise it implicitly contains for the future spiritual refinement of the human race, as against that part of Marx's teaching which stresses the material side of man's life, and which is so heavily overworked by both Marxists and non-Marxist writers.

This is not to deny that Marxism's greatest victories and its truly tremendous influence on history are mainly due to Marx's teaching of Historic and Dialectical Materialism and his transference of his political ideas, based on them, into revolutionary action. It is rather to recognize that intangibles such as spiritual refinement, and concepts which are meant to contribute to their attainment, are generally ignored, because they are hardly measurable on the scale of time, and their fruition has far less chance to be recorded in terms of history. Nonetheless, in the all-over process of history, they play an important role, and therefore due consideration should be given to them also.

Hampson's main contribution to the study of Marxism is his search for the spiritual effect of Marx's teaching on human development. To quote him: "Nevertheless, it is clear that the goal of Marxist ideology, whatever the roads it might travel, is to be found in a classless society characterized by a scientific altruism based on a comradeship and an all-embracing justice among its component human parts."

However, in this reviewer's view, the predictions of Marx relating to a classless and stateless future society, a truly magnificent ideal, can come about only after a historically indefinite long period of spiritual refinement of the human race. (Soviet writers recognize this problem, but are far more optimistic, and impatient, by campaigning now for the imminent rise of the altruistically minded "new Communist man.") Therefore, it sounds a little bit optimistic — or shall we say unrealistic — but pleasant indeed to read: "Proportionately, classless society — even if considered utopian by non-Marxist — does not thereby become a wholly impractical or illicit goal for man." And a little later: "Through the endeavor to attain the goals of classless society, provided the means used are in accordance with the moral and legal customs of all mankind, regardless of class interest — and on this point the world might justly take issue with the Marxist, and especially the Bolshevik — mankind can actually attain, in some measure, these very goals."

Most indicative and most surprising is the last paragraph of this Catholic writer: "It is the revitalization of these goals through practical activity that has made the Communist Movement the tremendous social force in the modern world that it is. It is, perhaps, in the reiteration of these same age-old social needs of man that Marxism has rendered its service to mankind."

ZOLTAN SZTANKAY
Editor-At-Large

The National Student Association

By VICTOR F. HOFFMANN

In all the talk about recent campus revolutions at places like Yale, Berkeley, and Princeton, the United States National Student Association, without question a growing rational force in student affairs, was almost lost in all the hysteria.

But form will tell: the USNSA is now being heard from. Headquartered in Washington, D.C. (2115 S Street N.W. 20008), this confederation of college and university student governments has now established itself on at least 350 campuses in the United States. Founded in 1947 to focus attention on the needs and dilemmas of the student communities in our land, the Association is run by leaders who are really the cream of the crop — not morons, not riffraff, not "kooks," but student leaders elected and appointed to responsible positions in their student governments.

And for the middle class enthusiasts among our readers, it might be well to mention that these student leaders wear ties, shoes, and pants, speak and write a better English than some of their instructors, and often outstrip their parents in taking a rational approach to life.

According to the preamble of the NSA constitution, the Association was established "to maintain academic freedom and student rights; to stimulate and improve democratic student government; to develop better educational standards, facilities and teaching methods; to promote international understanding and fellowship; to guarantee to all people, because of their inherent dignity as individuals, equal rights, and possibilities for primary, secondary and higher education regardless of sex, race, religion, political belief, or economic circumstance; to foster the recognition of the rights and responsibilities of the student to the school, community, humanity, and God; and to preserve the interests and integrity of the government and Constitution of the United States of America."

Just recently I read a pamphlet of the NSA that moved their activities from the glittering generalities of preambles to the specifics of conduct. It is a readable document titled "Students, Stress, and The College Experience." It is worth the trouble to write to the Washington headquarters of NSA for a copy.

Written by Edward Joseph Shoben, Jr. (Director, Center for Study and Training in Higher Education, University of Cincinnati), this pamphlet is really a report on a National Conference of Student Stress sponsored by the USNSA at Warrenton, Virginia, under grants from the National Institute of Mental Health and the Danforth Foundation (November, 1965). This conference, as is the custom generally with the NSA, brought together students, professors, consultants, and observers.

In informal and highly spontaneous sessions, the participants dealt mainly with two crucial questions as Shoben's report goes: 1. "How do the various problems, demands, and 'stresses' that students experience affect their emotional growth and academic performance?" 2. "What is the cumulative impact of the many practices and prescriptions for dealing with students that have developed over the years?"

Discussions of these questions really became a discussion of "What's buggin' ya?"

The NSA participants were "bugged" by the problem of student access to the faculty," "the nature of a good education for today's college students," and the need of more emphasis on "making the structures compatible with people."

Shoben claims vigorously that "the lack of 'a really good education' is the central source of student stress."

But just what is it that these students want from an educational system?

Mainly they want a relevant education — relevant "to the world of modern politics and social ferment...to the human condition in mass society...to the doubts, fears, and hopes of thoughtful youth." What else can one really expect from an educational system? One undergraduate at a large midwestern university said it quite clearly to a college professor at this conference: "Why do you guys keep badgering us about what we do in the South or on picket lines? It's a little more exciting, but it's not very different from what we're doing when we work in mental hospitals or tutor Negro kids. That's where we really learn what kind of a world we're living in and how to get along in it. We don't in your goddam classrooms."

As for me, at fifty I am still a man of hope and I hope in the younger generation. As a father I hope in them because I hope in my three children, the legacy of the Hoffmann family to the future. As a college professor I think they deserve the best there is in life, a good education to make them intelligent humans, rational and committed to the best that is in them.
Especially Noteworthy Films

By ANNE HANSEN

To paraphrase a popular song, “It’s been a long, long time from April to September.” A publication gap of several months is a crippling handicap for any column that deals with current events. Since I cannot comment on all the films released in the late spring, I shall choose those that are of special interest or have unusual merit.

The Gospel According to St. Matthew defies rigid classification. This low-budget picture — dedicated to the memory of Pope John XXIII — deals with the life of Jesus of Nazareth as recorded by St. Matthew. Pier Paolo Pasolini, the director, is an avowed Marxist and a self-confessed atheist. The players are not only rank amateurs, but with few exceptions they are Communists. Pasolini chose the bleak and barren region of Calabria in southern Italy as a setting for the film. He adheres strictly to the words of St. Matthew, and the musical score ranges from Bach to Bartok. Obviously the noted Italian writer and director decided to avoid the pomp, the pretentiousness, the distortions, the trite cliches, the sentimentalism, and the ostentatious piety characteristic of Hollywood’s Biblical spectacles. Instead, he has produced an arresting, starkly black-and-white film fashioned with the utmost simplicity and with exemplary dignity.

In spite of its many admirable qualities I would not call The Gospel According to St. Matthew a masterpiece. For me at least the film lacks emotional impact and fails to capture the Savior’s all-encompassing love and compassion for mankind. The divinity of the Godman is not emphasized, some of the most significant words spoken from the cross have been omitted, and the great drama of the resurrection comes almost as a hurried anticlimax.

A few years ago Boris Pasternak’s novel Dr. Zhivago created a great stir in the literary world. The book topped best-seller lists all over the country for many months. There is reason to doubt that it was actually read by all who bought it. Not because it was not worth reading. It surely was. But the reading of any Russian novel requires time, concentration, and patience. The film Dr. Zhivago (M-G-M, David Lean) poses no problems for the movie-goer. Pasternak’s penetrating and deeply sensitive study of the gradual erosion of the moral fiber of his countrymen has been bypassed for a colorful love story.

Pictorially the film is magnificent — as beautiful as any I have seen. The artistry is excellent, and the picture generates a fair amount of suspense. But anyone who has read the book knows that this just isn’t Pasternak’s Dr. Zhivago. Had he written anything as temperate and as conciliatory as this mild apologia for the excesses of the Red Revolution, he would not have incurred the displeasure of the Soviet government. Instead, he would surely have been decorated.

The Spy Who Came in from the Cold (Paramount, Martin Ritt) has been written off as one of the biggest box-office flops of the year. This in spite of the fact that it is an exceptionally fine spy thriller. Richard Burton is superb in the title role, and his performance is matched by that of Oskar Werner. Claire Bloom heads an outstanding supporting cast. The Spy is a somber expose of the dark and devious road which undercover agents must travel. It is a lonely road, dangerous, sordid, and ugly. Audiences demand sex, gadgets, beautiful girls popping out of the woodwork, and hare brained escapades that are as preposterous as they are sensational. The James Bond image has left its imprint.

The story of the persecution of the Jews under Nazism has been told many times on the screen. I doubt that any of these “epics” have captured the full import of life under Nazi tyranny in a more telling or appealing manner than The Shop on Main Street, the Czechoslovakian film that won the 1965 Academy Award for the best foreign film entered into competition. Much of the credit for this remarkable account of life in a small village must go to Jan Kadar and Elmar Klos, the directors, and to the brilliantly gifted stars Josep Kroner and Ida Kaminska.

A Patch of Blue (M-G-M, Guy Green) makes a timely and eloquent plea for tolerance and understanding among races — an issue which once again threatens to divide the citizens of our nation. The performances of Sidney Poitier and Elizabeth Hartmann are characterized by artistry of the highest order. Guy Green merits unstinted praise for his skillful and sensitive treatment of a delicate and provocative theme.

Unfortunately, I can do nothing more than call attention to Frederic Rossif’s powerful and unforgettable documentary To Die in Spain, which depicts the bloody prelude to World War II.

To end on a happier note, there is The Russians Are Coming, The Russians Are Coming (UA, Carl Reiner), a delightful comedy which also points an accusing finger at human foibles and frailties. Good fun!
An Open Letter

Messrs. Chet Huntley and David Brinkley
C/o National Broadcasting Company
New York, New York

Gentlemen:

I was one of the millions who were watching you on the long night of March 16, 1966, as you were trying gallantly to bring us the latest news of the astronauts who were coming to reluctant fame by being the first men in history to ditch a space craft in the wrong place... I happened to be listening and watching from a small room in a motel on the west coast of Florida. Before I turned the black button inviting you to join me, I had been sitting outside my hut watching the new moon and a few shy stars from a respectful distance... I must report that they were very quiet and did not seem to be disturbed by the fact that down here, so far away, some of us were making new progress toward invading their ancient privacy... You can readily imagine that the contrast between the outside and the inside of my room was startling... Outside everything was as it always had been since the dawn of Creation... Inside there was the thunder of a new dawn when man would ride the moon in its course and reach for the stars that had seemed for a few thousand years disguised as the moon, or as the distant stars seen in the West during the twilight. And then I was listening to your brave efforts between 9:00 and 10:00 p.m., E.S.T., to bring us news of the astronauts when there was none... Apparently they were busy trying to hit Re-entry Point No. 3 in the Western Pacific accurately and had no time for us groundlings... They were only doing what so many of us have not yet learned — to succeed or fail with the same calm assurance of ultimate victory...

It seems to me, therefore, that your silence, even though enforced by circumstances, was curiously appropriate — a tribute to the men who were heading down into the sullen waters of the Pacific...

Perhaps this is the real purpose of this letter — to comment on those areas of strange silence in your work and to make a few recommendations for its future use... because they will inerexorably come again and again as man reaches higher and higher and the stars come closer and closer... What will you say and do when the latest news has been relayed over and over, all the carefully assembled background material has been exhausted, and all of us are face to face with the personal task, now also so inexorable, of finding meaning in silence?... One course is obvious... You might make an effort to set the whole business in its proper perspective. For example, I found myself applauding when in the depths of all this waiting silence David read a statement by a prominent scientist asserting that the whole business of reaching the moon is really for the birds... He was implying that one billion dollars could more properly be spent to feed the hungry in Viet Nam and India, to give the new African purpose and dignity, and to comfort the lonely and beaten in Harlem...

Perhaps that technique could be expanded... At the moment when the chattering radio is totally quiet one of you might begin to read from an ancient book: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare if thou hast understanding? Who hath laid the measures thereof if thou knowest, or who hast stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened, or who laid the cornerstone thereof? When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy, and God said, Hitherto shalt thou come but no further: And here shall thy proud ways be stayed. Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days and caused the dayspring to know his place?... Or you might wish to turn to selections from Greek tragedy (the Hybris)... Hamlet, Faust, Blake, or Alice in Wonderland might also be appropriate... Almost single-handed you can make the space age a lesson for all of us in humility, wisdom, and adoration... While the astronauts are exploring the heavens, you would add the dimension of eternity to the jig-saw of space; and do not forget, please, that you would be addressing the largest audience in the unsilent history of man...

Or if this would eventually become monotonous the silence might be filled with the sound of music... Parenthetically: At one point on the night of March 16 I expected David to pull out a phonograph and present a brief human echo of the Music of the Spheres... He and Frank McGee were desperately tossing the ball back and forth (Frank was visibly tiring of his painted ships and planes on a painted ocean) and the silence from space was broken only by the pounding of our hearts and becoming unbearable both for you and for us... So — it would appear that the addition of music to our space program would be strangely desirable — and, of course, philosophically and theologically fitting.