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IN THE NOVEMBER CRESSET - - -

IN LUCE TUA .................................................. The Editors ...................... 3
AD LIB.: WHY THEY DON'T LIKE US ...................................................... Alfred R. Looman 7
WITTENBERG, OCTOBER 31, 1517: IMAGE, LEGEND, FACT ......................... Gottfried G. Krodel 8
THE UNINTENDED REFORMATION .................................................. Norman E. Nagel 12
PHOTOGRAPHY: SNOW ON EVERGREENS .............................................. Harry Wilson 15
VERSE: BATTCHI PIAK (UNCLE DRUNKARD) ......................... Jack Tracy Ledbetter 16
THE THEATRE: THE CURTAIN GOES UP ........................................... Walter Sorell 18
FROM THE CHAPEL: ALL THINGS NEW ........................................ John Strietelmeier 19
ON SECOND THOUGHT .................................................. Robert J. Hoyer 20
MUSIC: THE RETURN OF MAX REGER ............................................. William F. Eifrig, Jr. 21
THE VISUAL ARTS: TWO PRINTS FROM BLAKE'S JOB ................................. Richard H. W. Brauer 22
BOOKS OF THE MONTH:
THE DEATH OF RACISM REQUIRES A NEW AMERICA ........................ Andrew Schulze 24
FORWARD TO THE BIBLE .......................... Richard P. Baepler 25
EDITOR-AT-LARGE: GROPP! AND COMPANY .................................... Victor F. Hoffmann 26
THE MASS MEDIA: WHY I HATE HUCKSTERS ................................ Don A. Affeldt 27
THE PILGRIM .................................................. O. P. Kretzmann 28
Veterans Day, 1967

Here dead lie we because we did not choose
To live and shame the land from which we sprung. Life, to be sure, is nothing much to lose;
But young men think it is, and we were young.
— A. E. Housman

Veterans Day has a special meaning and poignancy this year because, for the first time in our national history, significantly large numbers of our best young men are convinced in conscience that the best way they can serve the land from which they sprung is by refusing to answer its call to military service. Their refusal has called down upon them a great deal of abuse from those among us who find it possible to reduce patriotism to a simple matter of "My country, right or wrong." They are accused of cowardice, of contempt for authority, of a selfish insistence upon enjoying the fruits of other men's labors and hazards. And under such provocation, some of them have responded by abusively criticizing those upon whom we have laid the awesome burden of charting our national course in these years when the experience of the past throws little light on the problems and perils of the present. Some have even chosen to leave the country and dissociate themselves from its policies by going into self-imposed exile.

As one who served willingly and with a considerable amount of pride in the armed forces of the United States, we have a special respect for those gallant young men and women who, throughout our history, did not choose to live and shame the land from which they sprung. But one of the things for which they were willing to lay their lives on the line was the right of the individual to live by his own lights. Our generation sealed its victory in World War II with a trial at Nuremberg where the principle was laid down that men are individually responsible for violations of the moral law, even in time of war when they are acting under orders. What we said at Nuremberg we cannot unsay today. If we could tell Germans that it is possible, by fighting, to shame the land from which they sprung, we must allow young Americans to arrive at the conclusion that, in a particular war, their participation would subject them to the judgment of Nuremberg.

The greatest honor that we can do to our gallant dead is to make sure, as far as in us lies, that they did not die in vain, that those rights for which they laid their good lives down are cherished and respected by those of us who are still living to enjoy them. One of these rights is the right to refuse to bear arms in a war which one believes to be unjust.

They're Off!

Lo, the summer is past, daylight-saving time is over and gone, the snows appear upon the earth, the time of the singing of birds is no more, and the voice of the candidate is heard in the land. Can it really be four years already since last we heard these curious chants and declamations? And must we put up with them for another twelvemonth? Ah well, citizenship has its burdens as well as its glories.

In a desultory way, we have been looking over the entries in this year's Presidential Sweepstakes and we must say that we find them a remarkably unexciting lot. It's not that there is anything particularly wrong with them. It's just that they all seem so old and tired and confused. It is almost as though a dozen Warren G. Hardings had suddenly appeared from nowhere. In a country of almost two hundred million people there must be the makings of a better choice than we are presently being offered.

The man we are looking for is a man who knows, understands, and rejoices in the latter half of the twentieth century; a man who feels at home in urban America; a man who can capture the imagination of that half of our population which is under twenty-five; a man who is more interested in creating a decent future than in preserving a pleasant but dying past; a man who sees this country of ours within the context of a closely-knit world community; a man who has at least a measure of grace and style and wit; a man who understands the aspira-
tions and demands of the racially and economically disad

This is, admittedly, a large order. But the presidency
of the United States is a big job, probably the biggest
in the world. It is possible that it has become too big
for any one man. But since it can be filled only by one
man at a time, we ought to be very sure that it is filled
by the biggest man available. It is not enough any more
for the major parties to offer us candidates whose major
virtue is that they have fewer enemies than their rivals;
we need candidates who are big enough and strong
enough and plain-spoken enough that men can love them
or hate them but never merely go along with them.

We could get excited about the presidential race if
there were any prospect of some latter-day FDR bat
ning it out with some latter-day Robert A. Taft. What
a race that would be! And what a president we would
have, however it finally ended up! But at the moment
we appear to be in for a contest between Tweedledum
and some Republican Tweedledee. Wake us up when
it is over.

The New Politics

There is quite obviously a growing discontent with
the kind of political leadership which the two major
parties have offered us in recent years and, more signifi
cant, a growing disillusionment with the traditional
political process itself. At both ends of the political
spectrum movements are developing which reject the
idea of politics as "the art of the possible" and demand
a new kind of politics which might be defined as "the art
of the necessary."

At the one extreme, a retired Air Force general has
suggested that it may be necessary for the military to
intervene to restore civil peace and order. At the other
extreme, 2100 delegates to a recent National Confer
ence for New Politics allowed their "new left" movement
to be taken over by advocates of militant black power.
Between these extremes, traditional conservatives and
traditional liberals find themselves reluctant partners
in the same bed.

The bed imagery is, from the standpoint of both the
new right and the new left, an altogether appropriate
one. Both the conservative and the liberal, so the charge
reads, are content to sleep on in the comfortable bed of
the old politics while a revolutionary new situation de
mands radically new remedies. Compromise, accommo
dationism, the give-a-little-and-take-a-little kind of poli
tics are seen by the advocates of the new politics not as
instruments for effecting orderly reforms but as devices
for ensuring that the dispossessed do not threaten the
power and security of the Establishment.

One can dismiss the exponents of these extremist posi
tions as inconsequential because they are few in number
and far removed from the mainstream of our political
tradition. But there are at least three compelling rea
sons why they should not be dismissed too easily:

1. They are deeply and passionately concerned with
problems that really do demand immediate and radical
solutions — particularly the problems of our involve
ment in the Viet Nam War, of a more equitable distribu
tion of our national wealth, of finding some way for
white people and black people to live together in one so
ciety without either oppressing the other, of preventing
our cities from becoming battlegrounds in a civil war.

2. Numerically few though they may be, they have
the capacity, if their demands are not met, of keeping our
society in a state of turmoil which will make it impossible
for anyone to enjoy the freedoms and the opportunities
which are presently denied to our embittered minorities.

3. Their rejection of traditional ways of doing things
has a strong appeal for the new breed of young people
who, within the next decade, will constitute something
close to a majority of the voting population of our coun
try.

Revolutions happen because establishments do not take
seriously the explosive potential of desperate minorities
galvanized into action by leaders who have rejected
The System. The makings of revolution are at hand in
this country, and it could come either from the left or
from the right. Given the lethargy and inertia of the
Establishment, we are not at all confident that revolu
tion can be avoided.

Fanning the Fire

An example of the kind of myopia which blinds the
Establishment to its own self-interest is the way the Lake
County (Indiana) regular Democratic organization has
treated Richard Hatcher, the party's nominee for mayor
of Gary.

Mr. Hatcher is a Negro. This should not matter one
way or another. After all, more than half of the citizens
of Gary are Negroes. What should matter is that Mr.
Hatcher has an A.B. and an LL.B., that he is experienced
in municipal administration, and that he won his party's
nomination in an open primary in which he defeated the
incumbent mayor.

But to the men who control the Lake County Demo
cratic organization, it obviously does matter that Mr.
Hatcher is a Negro. They insist that it doesn't, but the
reasons which they have given for denying him their
support belie their insistence that race is not an issue.

They have demanded that he denounce by name Negro
leaders who, whether most of us admire them or not,
command enough support in the Negro community to
tip the balance in any election where the Negro vote is
a major factor. If this demand were made by political
innocents, one could understand it. But when it is made
by professional politicians, one does not have to be of an
unduly suspicious nature to suspect hanky-panky. We
do not, after all, recall that the organization ever asked
any candidates of Greek extraction to denounce George
Chacharis, a recent mayor of Gary who was forced to
close up shop early so as to do a stint in the federal peni
tentiary.
It is a fair question whether Mr. Hatcher is better qualified than his Republican opponent, Mr. Radigan, to be mayor of Gary. This is a question for the voters of Gary to decide. But how can one expect the Negro to be mayor of Gary? This is a question for the voters of Gary. No amount of pious doubletalk will persuade either the white or the black voter that the refusal of his party organization to support him was not influenced by the fact that he is a Negro.

The Achilles Heel

One does not have to be an advocate of the New Politics to doubt whether we can hope to solve the great problems that confront us as a people unless there is first of all a thorough-going reform of the structure and procedures of the Congress.

Senator Joseph S. Clark of Pennsylvania put his finger on the problem when he wrote recently: "We [the Congress] bounce from one crisis to another, postponing solutions whenever possible. Finally, when things get bad enough, Congress legislates, often too little and too late." This is precisely the trouble; instead of being on top of the situation, the Congress is forever behind the times, investigating this and debating that long after most informed opinion in the country has already identified the problem and arrived at reasonable unanimity in its judgment of what ought to be done to solve it.

There are basically two things wrong with the Congress as it is presently constituted:

1. It is unrepresentative of the American people. In profile, it is a body of elderly smalltown or rural lawyers who, understandably, dislike and distrust urban America as they encounter it in the one big city with which they are acquainted at first hand, that is, the one-industry city of Washington.

2. It operates under archaic rules and precedents which, in effect, guarantee that the greatest power and influence will reside in those of its members whose loyalties are to the past and who look with apprehension or positive dislike upon the present and the future. The Congress is run by old men who, whatever positive virtues and capabilities they may happen to possess, got to the top of the committee ladders merely by surviving. In the House, these are the only men who really count. In the Senate, the situation is not quite so bad because it is possible for a bright young first-termer to make himself heard on the floor or in the press, but even in the Senate the real power to get things done lies with the chairmen of the standing committees.

It is probably too much to expect that the Congress will reform itself. The men who are in a position to undertake the kinds of reforms that are needed are too well satisfied with things as they are. The avenue of reform by constitutional amendment is blocked by the necessity of getting any such amendment through the Congress. So if there is to be any substantial reform at all, it must come via a revolt of the electorate.

For practical reasons, such a revolt would have to take place in the primaries. It isn't going to happen next spring, of course, but that is when it would have to happen if it were going to affect the composition of the next Congress, for once the old boys have made it through the primaries (in which they are usually unopposed) they are odds-on favorites for re-election, thanks to our National propensity for voting for familiar names.

It is probably a bit late to be mounting any revolt of the electorate for next spring. But this would be a good time to start laying the groundwork for a thorough housecleaning in 1970. The first step should be to spot capable men who are committed to updating the procedures of Congress and restructuring its committee system so as to reward competence rather than mere seniority. And the next step would be to support these men with money and with working organizations so that they have a reasonable chance of upsetting the incumbents in the 1970 primaries. Let's hope that we still have until 1970 to do the job.

Coffin Nails

This editorial has been a long time aborning. On and off, for almost thirty years, we have smoked cigarettes, most of the time with no great pleasure but never, until very recent years, with any notion that they might be hazardous to our health. Even when the first reports came out linking cigarette smoking to a wide range of illnesses, we did not panic. Probably chiefly because we did not want to believe these reports, we adopted a kind of wait-and-see attitude. We justified our continuing to smoke on the grounds that the statistical evidence was not compelling, that we had not yet heard the other side of the story, and that, in any case, medical men who presumably had access to more information than we had were still puffing away. As a last resort, we ran through the names of numerous friends and acquaintances of ours who have been heavy cigarette smokers for years and are still going strong at seventy or beyond.

But we have kidded ourselves now as long as we can. Granting that the statistical argument for a correlation between cigarette smoking and various illnesses is not impregnable, it is nevertheless so strong that we are willing to accept it as conclusive. And so, without attempting to make our judgment normative for other men, we have come to the conclusion that we can not, without incurring the guilt of willful sin, continue to smoke cigarettes. Life, as E. Housman says, may not be very much to lose, but it is a trust which no one has the right to cast aside in full knowledge that he is doing so.

We are not yet ready to say that the private conclusions at which we and others have arrived should be made the basis of public policy. There were those fifty years ago who imposed their views of the evils of alcohol on the nation in a Noble Experiment which created far
more evils than it could possibly have cured. We have no desire to repeat their mistake. But three things could be done to counteract the inaccurate, extravagant, and seductive claims of cigarette advertising:

1. The present equivocal “warning” that manufacturers are required by law to print on cigarette packs could be beefed up so as to make it clear that cigarette smoking not only “may be” but “is” hazardous to health.

2. This beefed-up warning could be required in all cigarette advertising.

3. The telecommunications media could be required, as a part of their public-service obligation, to allow such organizations as the American Cancer Society equal time with the cigarette advertisers to inform the public on the nature of the research which has been conducted and the conclusions to which this research points.

The net result of it all might be that the consumption of cigarettes would continue to increase, as it has done through all the years since the beginning of the “smoking scare.” But at least the smoker would know what risks he is running, and perhaps young people who have not yet begun to smoke would be dissuaded from starting.

The Boss is Retiring

It is by now probably generally known among our readers that our editor, Dr. Kretzmann, has informed the faculty and Board of Directors of Valparaiso University that he intends to retire from the presidency of the university. For many of us at the University and in the church even our awareness of the ultimate inevitability of this announcement could not quite offset a certain feeling of shock. In the first place, it is hard to realize that the Boss is approaching the age when most men do retire. And in the second place, the recognition of this fact forces those of us who have worked with him through the years to face up to the fact that we aren’t the youngsters we used to be, either.

No date has yet been set for the President’s retirement. In any case, his retirement from the presidency does not necessarily mean that he will be giving up the editorship of The Cresset. Speaking selfishly, we would welcome his retirement from the presidency if it should mean that he would have more time for writing and editing. His has been one of the few authentically prophetic voices in the church of the twentieth century and we have long considered it a tragedy that so little of his thought has been preserved in written form.
AD LIB.

Why They Don’t Like Us

By ALFRED R. LOOMAN

A common complaint voiced by Americans returning from a European tour is that it is so obvious that the Europeans do not love them. I notice this complaint comes most frequently from persons who have travelled as part of a group. While several reasons exist why the natives may not love us, a reason I had not thought of before occurred to me last week after an incident with a group of foreign tourists.

When I left the checkout area for my plane at the Minneapolis airport, I noticed that there were very few of us headed for Chicago. There were in fact only eight of us, four in first class and four in tourist. It was apparent that all eight of us were flying on business. As soon as we were seated, we shed our coats, fastened our seat belts, and pulled magazines, books, or office work out of our brief cases before settling down with almost audible sighs.

It was going to be a great flight. The weather was perfect and we were assured a great deal of solitude. Within a few minutes the plane had taken on the cozy atmosphere of a den.

Five minutes before we were due to take off, however, there emerged from the airport a figure who resembled a Pied Piper, and he was leading sixty-one people out to our plane. It was a deliriously gay crowd, about equally divided between men and women between the ages of forty-five and sixty, and all were French. For the most part they were well dressed, but a number were in garish outfits they would never have worn at home.

They piled aboard with a great deal of chatter and general noise. The clubroom atmosphere of the plane changed immediately to an atmosphere somewhat like that of a discotheque. Motion was constant and everyone talked at once, including persons in the front row who were exchanging gesture-filled remarks with persons in the back row. Pandemonium settled briefly when a lady, apparently their guide in Minneapolis, rushed aboard and gave an impassioned farewell speech, after which she was kissed by everyone who could reach her. By the time she was removed from the plane and we got underway, we were fifteen minutes late.

It turned out that the Pied Piper, who on closer inspection resembled an aging gigolo on his uppers, was the only one of the crowd who spoke English, and he was far from fluent. When the stewardess gave the standard pitch on the use of an oxygen mask and how to escape from the plane, her amplified voice was drowned out by the noise which filled the cabin. She pleaded with the Pied Piper, who then announced the whole thing in French. Just try to settle down and read in a noisy plane particularly when announcements are coming over the p.a. in French.

The stewardesses started down the aisle taking orders for soft drinks or liquor. They had difficulty making themselves understood and their gallant attempts to be understood were occasionally punctuated by shrieks as they received an affectionate pinch by one of the men in the aisle seats. As soon as the word whiskey was understood, everyone ordered it. The Pied Piper was summoned back to the mike to announce that liquor for tourist passengers sold for a dollar a bottle. This announcement was met by hisses, cat-calls, and various other noises.

At the take off (and later, at the landing) sixty-two of the passengers ignored the “No Smoking” and “Fasten Seat Belt” signs, but we gained altitude without mishap. The lady sitting behind me was highly gregarious and frequently left her seat to visit friends in other rows. On three of those trips, she hit the back of my head with her purse and all three times apologized, I think, to monsieur.

In an attempt to rise above the circumstances, I scooted down in my seat and concentrated on the reading material before me. In that one hour’s flight I managed to read the same paragraph over a hundred times without ever understanding its meaning. When I got off the plane, I am sure I looked as glassy-eyed and as dazed as the stewardesses and my opinion of the French had hit zero.

Later, when my ears stopped ringing and my blood pressure returned to something approaching normal, I could take a more objective view of the happening. In a new perspective our sixty-two fellow passengers became what they really were, a group of happy people on vacation. They did nothing that was wrong (considering that the French attitude toward pinching is different from ours) and the only thing they did to the eight of us Americans was upset our pleasant complacency.

I can see this in reverse, with sixty-two Americans coming aboard in France, or Germany, or Sweden and chattering away in a language foreign to the natives. It is no wonder that the natives do not overwhelm the Americans with love when, under similar circumstances, their own routine is so drastically overturned.
Wittenberg, October 31, 1517
Image, Legend, Fact

Significant Literature on a Significant Day in the History of the Church

By GOTTFRIED G. KRODEL
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It is a part of the basic training of every good Lutheran that on October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed his famous 95 Theses to the door of Wittenberg's Castle Church. Artists outdo each other in portraying this moment of world-historical importance, so that we have a rather fixed image of the events which ostensibly took place in Wittenberg on that eve of All Saints' Day, and the circumstances under which they took place. Luther is usually shown wearing a fantastic combination of monastic and academic garb (knowing Luther's poverty, we may be certain that he would have been very happy to have had an outfit only half as fancy), armed with hammer and nails fit for use on beams larger than two-by-fours, and holding a beautifully written or printed piece of paper of enormous size. In this year of the 450th anniversary of that memorable October 31, the ecclesiastically controlled presses have flooded the market with material, some done well, some done poorly, to help us commemorate this moment in the history of the church.

To create an image and fix an impression in the minds of people is one thing; historical facts are something else again. If the image and the facts disagree, then the image-creating process is at best a poor job of advertising, at worst dishonesty. If the image blocks access to the facts and their meaning in the historical setting, however, then there is the danger that the image takes precedence over the facts. The image which we hold concerning the events of October 31, 1517, is indeed in danger of doing precisely this, that is, of blocking our access to the facts and their meaning.

During approximately the last ten years a controversy concerning the events of October 31, 1517, has been boiling among some German scholars. This fact alone should make us perhaps think twice before we repeat the old cliches, yet in our country very little attention is paid to this controversy. And so the celebrations of this year are indeed in danger of drowning Luther in a sea of romanticism from which we cause him to reemerge as the hero of our faith, with a hammer in his hands capable of smashing any obstacles he encounters, or as a theologian fit for the ecumenical age, and fulfilling our dreams and desires. It is interesting to observe that among the material published in this anniversary year there is precious little that deals directly with the text of the 95 Theses. One must fear, therefore, that after all the Mighty Fortresses have been sung, and all the uplifting, or not so uplifting, speeches have been given, very little of the "real" Luther will have been fixed in our minds. I have no wish to sound pessimistic, but there seem to be few signs among us that this anniversary year will bring forth any vital attempts to penetrate the Luther of the myth and to rediscover the Luther of history: there seems to be little of that intellectual dynamics which was a part of the 200th anniversary of the Reformation in 1717, or of the 400th anniversary of Luther's birth in 1883, two dates which signified the beginning of an upswing in Luther studies in particular, and in Reformation studies in general.

Origins of the Legend

If we forget for a moment those impressive presentations of the events of October 31, 1517, found so often on bulletin-covers and in book illustrations, and turn to history itself, then we are forced to make two observations:

1. Luther himself never established in a historically reliable way the date on which he published the 95 Theses, nor did he tell us much about the circumstances accompanying this event. He only spoke in general terms of the year 1517 as the time the Theses were written. We do have a letter in his own handwriting, however, dated October 31, 1517, in which he mentioned the Theses; this letter was the cover-letter with which he forwarded the Theses to the archbishop of Mainz, Albrecht of Brandenburg, who was the instigator and one of the beneficiaries of the indulgence business. We hear very little about the events of October 31, 1517, from Luther directly, and certainly the information Luther did provide does not justify the fixed image we have.

2. It was not until almost three decades later that we hear anything of the "posting" of the Thesis on the Wittenberg Castle Church on October 31, 1517. At that time Philip Melanchthon wrote a brief biography of Martin Luther as a preface to the second volume of Luther's collected Latin writings (the so-called Wittenberg edition), which was published in June of 1546. In this preface Melanchthon mentioned some of the details from which our present image of the events is com-
posed. It is important to note that until approximately ten years ago Melanchthon's account was taken at face value, even though Heinrich Boehmer, as early as 1914, questioned the soundness of Melanchthon's "research" on Luther's life.  

**Beginning of the Controversy**

In 1957 Hans Volz, one of the most important members of the staff which is producing the critical edition of Luther's works (the so-called Weimar edition), and certainly a man who knows what he is talking about, scrutinized Melanchthon's Luther biography, focusing especially on the account of the events of October 31, 1517. Pointing out unclear observations made by Melanchthon, Volz came to the conclusion that Luther posted the Theses on November 1. With this it seems Volz opened a Pandora's box. What seemed to be only a minor point developed at once into a major issue, and this for three reasons:

To begin with, as could be expected, Volz's arguments were not accepted. It was especially Kurt Aland and Heinrich Bornkamm who came to the defense of Melanchthon's account and of the traditional view of the situation.

Further, Volz presented his arguments in a newspaper-like journal directed to the clergy, and soon the German press, both secular and ecclesiastical, picked up the story. No more need be said about this.

And finally, the Roman Catholic church-historian and eminent Luther-scholar Erwin Iserloh radicalized some of Volz's arguments, and flatly denied that Luther ever had posted the 95 Theses. This in turn caused an uproar among German Protestants, who felt attacked at a particularly tender spot.

Once the first shock was sustained, Volz's and Iserloh's theses resulted in a scholarly controversy in the best German tradition, fought with all the skill and sharpness typical of scholars, and furnishing sufficient material to keep the daily press well occupied. The literary output became so overwhelming that today the controversy itself is already the subject of scholarly investigation. Franz Lau, the editor of the international *Lutherjahrbuch,* has presented the most recent analysis of the controversy, and for a detailed and critical evaluation of the arguments the reader is referred to this article.

**Stages in the Controversy**

As of now there seem to be three stages in the controversy. The first stage developed in 1957, when Volz presented his arguments and was at once criticized, especially by Aland and Bornkamm. At that point it was more or less an intramural affair. The second stage began in 1961, when Iserloh entered the arena and kept the presses rolling. A third stage seems to have developed in 1965, when another Roman Catholic church-historian, Klemens Honselmann, joined the fray on Iserloh's side. Even though Honselmann confirmed Iserloh, he produced enough new material and shifted the center of the controversy sufficiently so that his contributions have to be considered a new stage in the controversy. As may be self-evident, the contestants support two major positions: the traditional view of the events of October 31, 1517 (even though some concessions might be made here and there), and the rejection of the traditional view.

Iserloh denies the fact of and the circumstances surrounding the posting of the 95 Theses, and considers them to be legend. He does this not for polemical reasons, however; to the contrary, it seems as if he almost wishes to "rescue" Luther from the blame of having started the scandal of the indulgence controversy, of disobedience, and, to be somewhat blunt, of lying. The Roman Catholic contributions to the controversy concerning the events of October 31, 1517, are indeed grounded in the spirit of Vatican II.

As is commonly known, on October 31, 1517, Luther forwarded to Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz a set of theses dealing with the sale of indulgences; Luther also politely requested that the archbishop withdraw the instruction for the indulgence vendors and put an end to the indulgence business, which Roland Bainton has rightly called the "bingo" of the 16th century. In all his later statements concerning the Theses and the uproar they caused, Luther steadfastly maintained that with his Theses he wanted neither to act provocatively nor clamor for public support of his position against that of the ecclesiastical authorities; to the contrary, Luther affirmed, he wanted only to present his concerns to the authorities, in the hopes of finding an ear, and of having these problems resolved. Based on this material, and the observations made by Volz concerning the Melanchthon account of the posting of the Theses, Iserloh and Honselmann develop the following arguments:

Had Luther posted his Theses on Indulgence on the same day — that is, on October 31, as Melanchthon suggests, or on the following day, as Volz suggests — on which he forwarded them to the ecclesiastical authorities, asking that the instruction to the indulgence vendors be revoked, the selling of indulgences be stopped, and the indulgence practice be scrutinized from a theological point of view (a request supported by the Theses,) he would have acted unfairly, contrary to his vow of monastic obedience and submissiveness, and, even worse, contrary to the principles concerning the *censura fratrum* set forth by Christ in Matthew 18. He would not have given the authorities a chance to do anything about the matter, but would at once have dragged the matter before the public, which certainly would have had to be considered an act of provocation. Consequently in his later statements concerning the Theses Luther would at best have twisted the past in order to free himself from the responsibility of having started the scandalous controversy on indulgence; at worst he would have lied. No — Luther *did not post* the Theses on October 31, 1517, and thus turn the matter over to the public, Iserloh and
Honselmann affirm. Luther only mailed the Theses, privately, to the ecclesiastical authorities and also to some friends. “...After the collapse of the legend [concerning the events of October 31, 1517] he [Luther] is an even more fascinating figure: not the rebel who wants to call the Christian world before his tribunal with his posting of the 95 Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, but the monk, still extremely concerned about the church, who wanted to correct an evil condition in the church by privately forwarding his Theses [to the responsible authorities, and] who pulled the masses with himself without actually intending to do this.” What a great responsibility rested on the bishops!

But when and how did the Theses get out into the public, if Luther did not post them on October 31, 1517? While Iserloh is somewhat vague regarding this problem, Honselmann makes precise statements; and both men agree on the reasons which motivated Luther when he himself finally issued the Theses to the public. The lack of religious depth and pastoral responsibility on the part of the ecclesiastical authorities (who did nothing against the indulgence business) as well as Tetzel’s theses (published in December, 1517, against Luther’s Theses) on the one hand, and the distribution of the Theses by those well-meaning friends of Luther to whom, on October 31 or shortly thereafter, he had privately forwarded copies of the Theses on the other hand, finally forced Luther to publish his Theses during the last days of December, 1517, or the first weeks of January, 1518. Luther confronted the public with his Theses after the opposition had reacted differently than Luther had expected and hoped. Even though the statement is not delineated as sharply as this, nevertheless according to Iserloh and Honselmann Luther cannot be made responsible for the fact that the indulgence issue between Luther and the church blew up into a public scandal. According to Honselmann, Luther slightly revised the manuscript of the October 31 Theses, and added a preface in which he presented the Theses as a basis for an academic disputation, and invited anyone interested to this disputation. That is, Luther changed the character of the Theses; on October 31 they were statements substantiating a pastoral concern; when Luther finally published the Theses these statements were theses for an academic battle. Thus what had started in private ended, absolutely contrary to Luther’s intention, in public.

To summarize the results of Iserloh’s and Honselmann’s “demythologizing” of the legend that on October 31, 1517, (preferably in the fading of daylight, which should symbolize the end of an age), Martin Luther, with powerful blows of a hammer, nailed to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg 95 ‘Theses, with which he publicly invited all interested to an academic disputation, and by which he shattered the medieval universalism of the Roman Catholic hierarchically-structured understanding of the religious process:

1. The historical evidence (Melanchthon’s biography of Luther) is too weak to maintain October 31 as the date of the posting of the Theses.
2. Luther never posted the Theses, and never wanted an academic disputation on them, but only mailed them on October 31 to the ecclesiastical authorities, and also to some friends.
3. At a later date, and for reasons beyond his control, Luther was forced to publish the Theses so that finally the matter came into the open.
4. The original text of the Theses (that is, the form the Theses had on October 31, 1517) can be found not in the printed posters which were circulating in 1518, but in the Dialogue of Prierias (published in June, 1518, to which Luther replied in August, 1518).
5. At the end of December, 1517, after Luther had learned of Tetzel’s maneuvers, Luther slightly revised his Theses of October 31, giving them the form of theses for an academic disputation, and had them published as posters.

Rebuttal

It is here impossible to deal critically with Iserloh’s and Honselmann’s arguments; but it is also unnecessary, since others have done and are doing it — last but far from least Franz Lau in the aforementioned article in the Lutherjahrbuch. Reviewing once more the whole evidence available, and using especially material from the archives of the Theological Faculty of the University of Mainz, Lau challenges Iserloh’s and Honselmann’s arguments, and is able to demonstrate quite convincingly the following:

1. The question concerning the exact date of the posting of the 95 Theses (October 31, according to Melanchthon; November 1, according to Volz) has to remain open for the time being at least.
2. Even though the exact date is unknown, Luther did turn over to the public his 95 Theses. The date for this action was sometime between October 31 and November 5. Consequently Melanchthon’s date for the posting of the Theses cannot be totally disregarded.
3. From the very beginning Luther wanted the matter dealt with before the public (of course the academic public, since the common man could not read the Theses anyway, written in Latin as they were), notwithstanding the fact that Luther also wanted the ecclesiastical authorities to deal with the matter.

Considering the fact that in Luther’s days church doors were routinely used as bulletin boards, and that the Wittenberg Castle Church functioned as the University Chapel, it is, then, highly probable that Luther did post his 95 Theses to the door of the Castle Church, as Melanchthon reported, and thus invited the academic public to a disputation. Lau repeatedly points out that the whole controversy could be settled, had we evidence available which would be more reliable than Melanchthon’s account. Since this is not yet the case, the field is wide open to conjectures and arguments. Consequently the controversy concerning the events which took
place in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517, will go on; and perhaps one should hope that it will go on, if it continues to produce such startling results as Honselmann's observation on the text of the Theses.23 When all will have been said, perhaps some of the inaccurate impressions we have will have been corrected. But in evaluating the results of the controversy at this point it seems highly unlikely that there can be any denial of the fact that on October 31, 1517, Friar Martin Luther, Doctor of Theology and Professor of Bible, confronted the ecclesiastical authorities of his time, and also confronted the academic public (even though the exact date for this cannot be established) with a set of Theses which eventually altered the status quo. Quite another problem, however, is whether we are justified in celebrating October 31 as Reformation Day.

The Point of It All

If the present controversy forces us to concentrate on the text of the Theses, and on the man who issued them, then it may have started a process of "demythologizing" which could lead us to a truer meaning of the posting of the 95 Theses than all the bulletin-covers and book illustrations are able to express. A first step in this process has to be the publication of a technically sound text of the Theses. On the basis of this text a theology of the Theses will have to be worked out, whereby the Theses will have to be placed into the context of the events of 1517/18. While undertaking this, we will have to come to terms with the question whether in the Theses Luther was already the reformer (a fact which is automatically presupposed by our celebrating October 31 as Reformation Day), or whether he was still the medieval Christian (whatever this unclear term may mean), as one would have to assume on the basis of Honselmann's and Iserloh's arguments.24 We do have available some fine studies on Luther as theologian of the indulgence controversy. But in the light of the arguments set forth by Iserloh and Honselmann much work will have to be done. If both Roman Catholic scholars are correct, then one would have to ask with Franz Lau25 why the 95 Theses resulted eventually in Luther's trial for heresy and in his excommunication. Or perhaps we would have to search for another event in Luther's life which could be celebrated as Reformation Day, even if this might upset the liturgical calendar, or provide no special episode for bulletin-cover illustrations.

Luther himself made quite clear that he did not consider the posting of the 95 Theses the most decisive event in his life. On that October 31 Luther certainly did not feel like a spiritual giant, ready to smash with an oversized hammer what generations had built. It seems to me, then, high time that we revise the image which is so deeply etched in our minds26 and re dedicate ourselves in this anniversary year not to a romanticizing of the event or the man, but to a new and serious study of the text of the Theses in particular, the man and his message in general. Perhaps we Lutherans ought to learn anew what Martin Luther expressed 450 years ago when he wrote in Theses 1:

Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, in saying 'Repent ye, etc.,' meant the whole life of the faithful to be an act of repentance.

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The J.W. Miller Memorial Lectures of 1967

The Unintended Reformation

By NORMAN E. NAGEL
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(Each year in the week during which the Festival of the Reformation is celebrated a distinguished Lutheran scholar and churchman presents, by invitation, a series of lectures in the Memorial Chapel of Valparaiso University. These lectures memorialize the Reverend Dr. J.W. Miller, longtime pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne; vice-president of The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States; and one of the earliest champions of the cause of Lutheran higher education for the laity. This year's lectures, two of which it is our privilege to publish, take particular notice of the 450th anniversary of the posting of Luther's 95 Theses. — The Editor)

The Surprising Reformation

Some historians love to show how things simply had to happen the way they did. So, with the Reformation, the economic, political, and ecclesiastical situations were such that it is not the least surprising that the Reformation happened. Or, if this or that factor had not been the way it was, it could never have happened. Not only does this sometimes sound rather like "If it had not happened the way it did it could not have happened as it did," but, even worse, it tends to make any of the men involved into mere corks on the surface of a river. We know only too well what it feels like to be such a cork, but we ought not slip lightly into such corkhood.

Behind the mist of economic, political, and ecclesiastical factors are people — and they are funny phenomena. If we deepen our focus onto them, we shall find more than enough to surprise us. Flattening surprise out of history means flattening men out of history. Involved in the Reformation were some men difficult to flatten out: Charles V with his dyspeptic stomach and conservative mistakes; Suleiman the Magnificent, who cleverly used men and was cleverly used by women; Pope Leo, who loved hunting so much; and Frederick the Wise with his pious shrewdness. It would, of course, be as misleading to trace the course of events from Charles' stomach as from Luther's bowels, and yet we must see the peculiarities of particular men if we would see the Reformation in its full color and character — and that is to see it with surprise. This will lead then also to a further stretch of our perception, beyond the competence of an historian, to the recognition that we cannot get its size without God. Furnishing Luther with complexes and inflating his constipation do not account for the phenomenon of Luther. What he suffered from was God.

If we simply face the facts, as was Luther's fateful habit, and watch the Reformation happen, there will be surprise enough. An unknown young professor goes on lecturing from where he left off the day before at an infant university in the sticks remote from the Ivy League and the corridors of power. There was nothing in Wittenberg to draw the river of history, nor did the young professor have any notion of scratching a channel for it. Nothing could be more misleading than to picture Luther as crying out, "Come on, chaps, let's have a Reformation!"

He had begun with the I question. What do I ultimately add up to? How do I stand before God? A friend died, another was killed. He himself was nearly killed. The questions churning inside him burst out in the vow to become a monk. He kicked against the vow, but then bent to it. His questions were not such as might make an interesting topic to be tossed around with the boys. He saw that his life depended on the answer. He put his life into the question. He became a monk.

He took the answers given and rested his whole weight upon them. Some answers broke quickly, some helped him along, some served as an inoculation. It is possible to follow the curve of these answers. They are hopefully embraced, then they have to take the strain, then they snap. They helped him along, but often only in a negative way.

We know little of his first years in the most rigorous of the monasteries in Erfurt. If he was going to be a monk he was going to be a monk full blast. Feuerbach has called Luther "a whole man" and Hall calls him a "whole hogger." Taking things straight, however, is seldom the pathway to comfort. You are told what to do, you do it. Keep the rules and you qualify for the benefits.

Luther's trouble was that he was intent on nothing less than qualifying with God. This also he took straight and, consequently, no dodges would do. Do your best, he was counseled — facere quod in se est — and God's mercy will bend His justice in your favor. His mentors glimpsed the difficulty here, but showed no solid way out. Luther was left in the uncertainty of whether it was to be mercy or justice for him.

The I question is still there, but also the recognition of the sole source of the solid answer. The sole source was God, but theology was heavily Aristotelianized and even the Occamists who permitted God greater freedom were unthinkable without Aristotle. Aristotelian causality links the first cause with the caused causes in an in-
terdependence upon which the criterion of quantity can be applied. God is then the sum of attributes which can be read back from his caused causes and raised to the \( n \)th power — hence infinite attributes, than which there is nothing more meaningless. Luther was early unhappy with Aristotle, but he was stuck with God’s attributes and with the quantitative criterion.

He was plagued by God’s righteousness, \textit{iusstitia}, justice. If God’s infinite justice was \textit{God’s} infinite justice, then it was not a justice which could be bent. The requirements of that justice were only all too plain. Luther took it straight. He recognized the insult it would be to God to try to negotiate easier terms. You cannot hope to budge God. He knew that he did not gladly love God with his whole heart. All he could honestly expect was God’s condemning judgment and punishment for his failure, his sin. There was nothing for it but to agree with God and accept His verdict and punishment. If you are in agreement with God and identify with His just judgment, then you are also just with that judgment and with God. Thus are you justified. Justified not altogether, but to the extent that you identify with God’s just judgment, and to the extent that that just judgment’s punishments are embraced and made operative in your life. Any attempt to avoid that judgment and its punishments runs counter to your justification. To these there must be humble submission, the humility that says Yes to God and No to self and sin, and that takes the consequences, the punishment for sin. The more punishments for sin there are evident in you, the more sure you may be of your justification. This is the astonishing way God has of saving His saints.

In his lectures on Romans (1515-1516) Luther says, "God’s people bear the judgment of the cross upon them"; "God first destroys and annihilates whatever is in us"; "If with true heart we make away with ourselves, take vengeance upon ourselves, and give ourselves over to hell for the sake of God and His righteousness, we have already rendered satisfaction to His righteousness, and He will have mercy and free us. If we judge ourselves, we should not be judged of the Lord"; "It is impossible that God should leave in hell those who conform without reservation to His will"; "Christ teaches us by His example of going confidently to death and sufferings." God effects His retributive righteousness and thus surprisingly saves us.

This is the "theology of the cross" of the young Luther. More accurately it might be called the "theology of crosses." Cross here does not refer uniquely to the cross of Calvary. Christ’s cross is only quantitatively different from our crosses. Christ’s cross is a paradigm which shows God’s way of saving, a paradigm that we also must be put through as a process of becoming more and more righteous.

It is the righteous God who puts us through the paradigm. Luther acknowledges the monergism of God. It is He who effects His judgment in us. We may not choose our judgment or our punishments. These are God’s work. We can only take it from God, humbly submit. This, for young Luther and his theology of the cross, is faith. All this is God’s doing, God’s surprising way of saving us by way of what appears to be the opposite of salvation.

Luther began with an anthropocentric question. He got a theocentric answer. \textit{Soli Deo gloria} is not, however, yet enough. It is not yet the Gospel, which is the greatest surprise of all.

The 95 Theses

I suppose that we have no choice today but to deal with the 95 Theses, and yet if we want to wave them about as a Reformation banner it is better if we do not look at them too closely. There is no sound evidence in them for excommunicating the young professor. They express his early theology of the cross. Punishments are to be embraced, not avoided.

The 95 Theses went wrong from the start, and Luther was disappointed and shocked. There was nothing of heroic posture and hammer blows about them — more of thumb tacks and the faculty bulletin board. They were in Latin, and only the educated knew Latin. He was inviting the small circle of his colleagues to a discussion of a matter that troubled him. He sent copies to his superiors. He would have called it a study document, I suppose.

Nothing happened, nothing except the wrong thing. His bishop told him not to rock the boat. His archbishop did not reply; he forwarded a dossier to headquarters with the suggestion that something should be done to shut this meddling friar up. The official wheels began to turn. The discussion itself was a complete flop. Nobody came forward. You can get yourself into trouble by asking the wrong questions.

The immense tragedy is that the theological and pastoral questions raised by the 95 Theses received no serious theological and pastoral response. They were received by the authorities as a threat to their power and pockets. A bumptious monk needed squashing. It was only the attempt to squash him which rendered him unsquashable.

Luther was unhappy when the 95 Theses were seized upon by those eager to buck the pope’s power and pocket. If people wanted to get hold of something of his, then why could it not be something more satisfactory and useful than these 95 Theses? Those who growled and those who cheered were all getting the bull by the tail. He did not want to make a fuss. He sat tight with his theses at home. He did not publish them. Every printer and his devil was doing that. After seven months Luther finally published them, defensively and with a set of explanations. He had much rather that people would read something more suited to their needs. But the fat was in the fire, and there was nothing he could do about it.

Tetzel fired off 106 Theses got up for him by Wimpina, another Dominican. At the Vatican, Prierias, a Dominican inquisitor, produced a document \textit{Against the presumptuous Conclusions of Martin Luther Concerning...}
the Power of the Pope. “He is a heretic who says that the Roman church cannot do what in fact it does”—which is a claim far more sweeping than the infallibility decree of Vatican I. The charge that keeps running back and forth is that Luther was calling in question the authority of the pope. Luther protested that he was defending the pope against those who would bring him into disrepute. Yet this was Luther’s heresy. It could hardly be what he said about indulgences, for they had not yet received doctrinal definition. What Pope Sixtus IV had said about them Luther quoted to support his view. The formulation current to our day and Vatican II is that of Cardinal Cajetan, the General of the Dominicans, who was instructed to deal with the tiresome Augustinian monk while he was in Augsburg for the Diet. At the Diet, Cajetan urged a crusade against the Turks and only after he had made this appeal did he turn to deal with Luther. Their meeting in Augsburg in October, 1518, is actually more momentous than Worms. Osborne in his play, “Luther,” does this scene well. The German peasant’s earnest son finally got on the nerves of the sophisticated Italian prince of the church with his crude insistence on being shown where he had erred. “Recant!” was the blunt demand. Dealing with the issues was outside Cajetan’s instructions. He was indignant that the monk got him into debate. Judgment had already been given against Luther in Rome. Cajetan had the brief in his pocket.

Luther could not recant until he was shown what he must recant on the basis of Scripture and the doctrines of the church. He sensed a threat to the things that made him a Christian. He would not accept Cajetan’s “new doctrine” about the papal magisterium.

Luther had gone to Augsburg submissively. He left shaken. There followed hestitantly a great liberation which a year later released in an astonishing flood what had been dammed up by obedience to the pope whom he claimed to care for more profoundly than did his own representatives. Under the pressure of all that the 95 Theses brought down upon Luther the Gospel had finally come clear. The dawn came slow and struggling, but finally the clouds gave way and the light shone clear. If pope and Gospel clashed, then the pope must give way. Cajetan helped scales fall from Luther’s eyes. Staupitz had thought it best to leave early, but he left Luther with this farewell: “Remember that you have undertaken this matter in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Luther had felt sure that the authorities only needed to be informed of the evils and they would act to remove them. The evils were not, he was sure, the misbehavior of some clerics and prelates. He did not know that his archbishop was getting a 50-per cent rake-off. It was not that sort of thing that was really troubling him anyway; there are always some clerics like that in the church. He was prompted to the 95 Theses by concern for what was being done to people who were being encouraged by Tetzel’s sale of indulgences to avoid punishments whose embrace was necessary for their justification, according to his theology of the crosses. In Augsburg he learned that the pope’s plenipotentiary was not interested in his troubled questions but only demanded recantation.

Luther confessed to Cajetan that he did not wish to defend everything in the 95 Theses. They were formulations to spark off a debate. If he could have foreseen how some unguarded words about the power of the pope would be fastened on he would never have written them. A little later he spoke about the storm that breaks upon a man who inadvertently touches the power of the pope. This was not his intention. His theology of crosses provided the opposite of any foundation for attacking the pope. What concerned him was the damage that the reckless sale of indulgences could do to people whose pastoral care was part of his calling.

When the 95 Theses had got out of hand and into the hands of the public for whom they were not intended, Luther felt compelled to write something designed for this larger audience. This is his first intentional stepping before the public, his first published sermon in German: the Sermon on Indulgences and Grace (Lent, 1518). In this sermon he states only what he is prepared to defend. There are no inadvertent words about the power of the pope. He points to those things which are sure because of their ample Scriptural foundation. There is a new firmness here. Between the posting of the 95 Theses and the meeting with Cajetan things grew clear for Luther. As he later said when reviewing his career, Scripture took on a new face for him. He came out from the Law with its retributive righteousness into the Gospel with its complete righteousness given not in quantitative process but complete because of what Christ did and alone could do for us. The Gospel rings clear in his sermon for Palm Sunday, 1518, On the Two Righteousnesses. But we are getting ahead of today’s 95 Theses, in which the Gospel does not ring clear. That we had better leave for All Saints Day, even though Volz asserts that it was on that day that the 95 Theses were posted. (Roman Catholic scholars Iserloh and Honzelmann have upset a lot of people with their contention that Luther never did hammer up the Theses on October 31 or any other day. Melanchthon is the principle witness for the October 31 date, and we know to our sorrow that he is not always a reliable guide.)

You see what a weasel I have been talking about Luther posting the 95 Theses. Even if he did not put them up on the door of the Castle Church there is no doubt that he posted them to his bishop and archbishop. You can imagine the amount of acute ink and learning that have been expended in this debate about the date. What does it matter if Luther put up the 95 Theses or just sent them to those concerned? As I suggested at the beginning, we would be well off without the heroic hammer blows. The fact remains, however, that within a few weeks the Theses were in wide circulation. The men at the University of Mainz, whom Archbishop Albrecht consulted, thought a disputation had actually taken place on the Theses, the normal preliminary to which would
have been the putting up of the Theses. So those who have grown fond of the hammer may reasonably refuse to surrender it.

The matter of importance underlying the debate whether Luther put up the Theses on the university bulletin board or not is the question of his breakthrough, the point when things fitted into place for him and the Gospel came clear. This is usually called the Tower Experience and it has its own mythology, odorously augmented of late by John Osborne. Here also the importance is not in fixing a date, but in the theology.

When did Luther become the real Luther? The answer depends on what you regard as the real Luther. Since Karl Holl, the young Luther has been presented as being the real Luther from early in his theological career. This makes the old Luther, who did not himself think much of the young Luther, something of an embarrassment. The dating of the Tower Experience divides Luther scholars into early daters and late daters. The early daters are still the Establishment, but the efforts of Saarnivaara, Bizer, and Aland for late dating are being undergirded by Roman Catholic scholars who are finding Luther theologically approvable later and later. They find the Theses still quite Catholic — and they ought to know. While their studies are not altogether unencumbered, they are not so encumbered as are those of the Existentialists who rejoice in the young Luther. The debate continues.

This finding that the older Luther got the more Catholic he got is a happy index of the growing understanding between Roman Catholics and Lutherans. Peter Brunner cherishes the hope that agreement between our two great traditions may be reached regarding most things, including justification. The only thing that he cannot rouse any optimism about is the question of the power of the pope Cajetan, despite the surprising concessions he was willing to make in 1532, would agree.
The slicked aisle narrowed
with the pounding of the dance.
The troupe banged through the screen door
and hit the bar with flat, red palms.
Uncles, friends, some cryers, some laughing
slappers boomed down the dancing aisled floor like a tide.
The couple watched in wonder, then smiled
as the bride appeared in the doorway. An accordion
punched out some chords then squeaked through a hot Polish dance.

Mr. and Mrs. behind the bar grinned
in mute appreciation and sent foaming glasses
spinning and swirling, twirling down the polished bar.
Like a great shy queen the bride, against
the corner of the room, clapped and smiled
at the swaying and stomping;
then grimaced as the slight blond girl screamed and threw her arms
tightly around the groom who swung her
in a wide arc off the ground and half dragged
her down the thin corridor of dusty tavern floor
to the arched hands that clapped them through
the sweating tunnel.

And springing outward from the dark,
the Uncle landed knees bent, arms akimbo.
Time in the room —
Then slowly from the corner comes
the accordion punching minor chords
in a heart-beat cry —
that dancers, drinkers took up with hot hands
as Uncle straightened grinning:

Right foot, left foot;
Right foot, left foot;
comes the stamp, stamp of his feet
while keeping his legs very straight and close together.

The quiet couple sit with gripped hands
on the table top, holding breaths.
Sudden then the dance:
Uncle spins and flails his arms;
his striped, double breasted suit
flaring from his thin sides fanning
the dust from his stamping scuffed
shoes that kick upwards front and backwards.
Whirling faster, stomping harder, Uncle cries through clenched teeth a terrible whine that sets the watchers worrying, moving to and fro with the steady rhythm from the accordion. Dark lines with sweat stand out on Uncle’s head; eyes, tired and red, are closed in some great oblation to the spirit of the dance that robs the wedding feast of its frolic —

the bridegroom moves from the thin blond and watches his bride sway against the wall. Uncle bends deeply, bending his knees with hands on hips swaying straight again, his feet banging the floor in golden mists of tangled fire and down the expectant night crashed the thunder:

Then the Uncle stops in step.
Eyes open wide, red faces stare from seething coasts, and black collieries of memory.

In contrast to its respect for All Saints, the Reformation sharply condemned All Souls — for a variety of reasons. In medieval Christianity All Souls did for the ordinary Christian what All Saints did for the saint — it annually commemorated all those who had died, especially during the previous year, or in a broader sense, all one’s friends and relatives who now lay in churchyards. In some ways it resembled the American Memorial Day, though without the patriotic overtones. The Latin masses said on this day were known as requiem masses, from the word for “rest” (requiem) in the introductory words, “Grant unto them eternal rest.” The reformers were anxious to restore the New Testament meaning of “saints” as all believers. Thus they would include all Christians in celebrating All Saints.

Though it was quite true that the ancient church had prayed both publicly and privately for the souls of the dead, especially in the East, the reformers felt that there was no Scriptural foundation for such prayers and that the custom had been wantonly abused as a source of income.

The monastic orders had pushed the votive masses to a point of scandal, and in many villages All Saints was not so much a day when the grieving family could think good thoughts about their beloved dead as a day when they feared the knock of the monk demanding more money to pray the soul out of purgatory. Despite such excesses, however, the day did serve a useful purpose.

In southern Europe All Souls is often known as Black Vespers. Not only the paraments of the church but also the clothing of the worshippers is black. At home blessed candles send up their flames as a symbol of prayer. In the cemeteries the candles flicker all through the night — a rather touching sight when one sees it for the first time.

The Curtain Goes Up

By WALTER SORELL

At this writing the very first week of the new season has passed. If it were indicative of what we will have to expect the result would be disastrous. But, fortunately, the first arrivals have always been notoriously weak, and no one, I suppose, has ever found the reason for it. I cannot imagine that certain producers would sit gloomily in their offices and, one hopeful day in spring, declare that they have the weakest properties at hand and this is why they have to come out early. But what must be going on in those offices remains very mysterious since in viewing some of the offered plays one cannot help asking oneself what prompted them in the first place to invest money, time, and hope in concoctions which seem to be doomed from the very beginning.

"Dr. Cook’s Garden" is a melodrama by Ira Levin. It poses the question of euthanasia, but never comes to grips with it, on whatever emotional or intellectual plane. Like all melodramas it wants to thrill, but there is little in it to be thrilled about. In a fictional Vermont village a benevolent physician plays the part of God by deciding which of his patients is to live or die. At first sight, the people dwelling in that spot — as close as one can come in this world to the garden of Eden — are all lovely, wonderful, and wholesome. How does one achieve such results? Dr. Cook sees to it that only those who are evil must die. But by Dr. Cook’s grace also some people who rub him the wrong way are slated to die an early death — which is understandable, since Dr. Cook, however godlike he may feel, cannot be expected to be perfect. One day, a serious-minded young physician crosses his path and decides to do something about the psychopathic problem of Dr. Cook. The almighty doctor does not like the young physician’s decision to change the pattern of life and death in this idyllic village — and what he decides to do with his antagonist seems to be quite obvious by then. Since the play is written as a melodrama, it is also obvious that some superficial excitement is whipped up in the last minute of a battle to the death before Dr. Cook succumbs to the mutual trickery going on in the last act and dies.

Neither the author nor his producer has been aware that certain theatrical forms are as good as dead. The drawing-room comedy and the melodrama have become obsolete in a time of the brutally grotesque comedy. Many, many years back Joseph Kesselring wrote a melodrama, “Arsenic and Old Lace,” with many people dying an unnatural death. His producer had the great idea of having the play rewritten as a farce, an idea which might have prevented “Dr. Cook’s Garden” from failing as it did and dying an early death.

Hugh Leonard adapted James Joyce’s “A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man” and “Stephen Hero” as a biographical play. Stephen Dedalus, Joyce’s alter ego, is the central character. Although the play is based on autobiographical material it does not have the innocent power of the novel. Stephen’s speeches, such as the one on hell, and the many vignette-like scenes breathe differently on paper than from onstage, if for no other reason than that it is difficult to make a vital and sparkling man like Joyce come to life. Little scenes move very fast in the theater and the drama of the book becomes in a way untheatrical.

But in spite of all this there is the undeniably striking power of the language borrowed from this master of the word, and our own imagination also helps recreate a personality with which we are familiar. The question remains whether it is wise to write an autobiographical play for Joyce. With the exception of Nighttown, a brilliant dramatic section in his “Ulysses,” he showed little theatrical talent when he wrote his only extant play, “Exiles.”

Two other plays that have come to Broadway make you think of what can happen to plays when they come across the ocean rather than of the plays themselves. I previously saw two plays by Bill Naughton, “All in Good Time” and “Alfie,” and their forte is their dramatist’s gift to catch the atmosphere of British working-class people — particularly through their speech. “Keep It in the Family” is a tiresome domestic scene with a tyrannical father who makes life miserable for everyone concerned and, as in a TV soap opera, finally reforms miraculously. I suspect that, if not tampered with, there may be, not a good but an acceptable, domestic comedy hidden in it. But the play was translated into American vernacular and transplanted from the North of England to Massachusetts. The time is twenty years ago. But to let it take place in the past does not make it any better.

Probably a great deal more tampering was perpetrated in the case of Alfonso Paso’s “Song of the Grasshopper” which was “adapted” by a couple famous for the writing of a TV program. These two must have given the play too much of their way of thinking and seeing things. Without knowing how good or bad the original version is, it can hardly be as bad as its adaptation.

Broadway seems to live in constant fear of not living up — or actually down — to a standard of taste which has not yet been and never will be defined. But there is a myth that certain things cannot be done in their original form. Sometimes the watered-down versions are even successful. Duerrenmatt’s “The Visit” and Marc Blitzstein’s version of Brecht’s “The Threepenny Opera” come to mind. Did not once Hollywood think in terms of an immature audience with an I.Q. of a twelve-year-old? And it did change its mind about it.
Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.—Genesis 3:23-24.

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there by any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.—Revelation 21:3-5.

It is hard, in the light of the available evidence, to take seriously any notion of the nature of man which rejects or ignores that most persistently obvious fact of all, that man is a displaced person, an exile from his true home whose memory, even after all these years, still retains some dim recollection of a time and a place that were better and happier than any he has known since. Nor has man ever been content to dismiss these recollections as mere fantasy, as the mere projection of impossible hopes and longings into some time or some place which never did actually exist. With some logic, he has insisted that man cannot imagine the unreal; that is to say, he has been conscious enough of his creatureliness to recognize that his mind would be incapable of creating, even as a dream or an ideal, that which could never have existed within the structure of the real world. And the minute his mind tells him that Eden could have been, the floodgates of his heart break open and every longing inside him cries out that Eden must have been.

Even among men who have never heard of the Genesis account of man's creation and fall, the memory of Eden has persisted—relocated geographically and altered historically, but Eden nevertheless, whatever the name a particular people may have given it. For some peoples, Eden lay in the remote past, in a Golden Age which preceded the present aeon. For other peoples, Eden lay in the remote future. Among some people, remoteness in time was displaced by the idea of remoteness in space. Thus men have gone questing for Ultima Thule and the Isles of the Blessed.

The point that I am trying to make is that, stubbornly and insistently, man has held onto the vision of a better world which not only could have been but must have been, which perhaps actually does exist even now beyond mountains too high for climbing or seas too stormy for sailing. And it seems to me that man has held onto this conviction not so much because he sought to escape reality as because he senses the unreality of the world with which he has daily contact and longs to get beyond or outside this web of unreality to the real world. For man knows that only the reality of perfection makes it possible for him to recognize unreality, that only the reality of life makes it possible for him after all these years to consider death still an unreal and monstrous thing.

And that is one reason why the Christian Gospel has such a universal appeal. If it were true, if it could possibly be true, then life and time and the universe would have a vastly different meaning for all of us than most of us think they have. If God actually did care enough about these lost and confused creatures of His to come down and become one of us, then it might actually be possible for men to find their way once more past the Cherubim and into the Garden, for God as man could command even the Cherubim to lay down their swords. But could such a thing ever really happen? Could God, the holy and the righteous and the ineffable, ever so humble Himself as to take upon Himself the limitations and the weaknesses of human flesh?

The Gospel says not merely that God could have done it, but that He did it. The Christian religion makes bold to say that the universe, despite its every appearance of redness in tooth and claw, was in its original condition good, and that the evil which presently afflicts it will ultimately be healed and the universe will once more be good. It speaks of new heavens and a new earth. It promises an end to death and sorrow and pain and crying. And it extends to all men, whatever they now are or whatever they may have been, an invitation to live and rejoice in this new order of things.

Nor does it hold up this hope as something to be realized only in some far-distant future. The kingdoms of this world already are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ. And if we will but listen carefully we can hear, even now, above the confused alarms of our world of time and space the sounds of a mighty army marshalling its forces for the great thrust which will complete the reconquest of our world.

For a little while we must wait for the consummation of this hope and for the fulfillment of our Lord's promise to return and receive us unto Himself. But even the wait-
On Second Thought

Are there men in our church who are trying to change all we believe? By my faith in a living God, I hope so. I cannot learn anything without changing — at least potentially — the whole structure of all that I know. The content of my faith cannot remain unchanged unless I already know all, or unless I am not interested in knowing anything.

If I say that I already know, then my god is an idol as fixed as anything hewn from wood or molded in silver. If I stand before the children of the church and pretend that what I know and teach is true as God alone is true, then I am leading them away to strange gods of my own making. By the harsh demand of Deuteronomic law I deserve to die, and my whole city with me.

Nor is my faith like a church constitution, with unalterable articles and easily changed bylaws. There is no area which I may reserve in advance from change, else I have reserved that area from the teaching Word of a living God.

On the other side, no man can tell you what you must believe. You will not change your faith because some teacher tells you that you must change. Your faith is yours, and it rests in Jesus Christ. You know whom you have believed. You will change only when the man to whom you listen changes your conviction of the truth, when you learn. In the Spirit of God you move from grace to grace, growing in the knowledge of Him who makes you and redeems you.

Then why are we so frightened? Is our god an idol after all, that He must be defended from men by administrative action and church councils? Do we think Him so weak that a mere man can countermand His Spirit? If ever we effectively silence those among us who listen to the Word and witness to their growing faith in a living God, we are dead. If we are afraid, let it be a fear of that death, the pall of a futile faith in an unmoving idol, forever fixed in the forms of an ancient symbol.

Are there men in our church who are trying to change what we believe? Yes, thank God. For we do not know as we hope to know, and what we know is colored by our finite flesh and blood. God has promised us and He has given us prophets to lead us deeper into grace. And they are proof that we need never be afraid.
The Return of Max Reger

By WILLIAM F. EIFRIG, JR.

With the passing of J.S. Bach the musical world of Europe put aside the organ. No longer, it seems, was the instrument deemed worthy of great musical efforts. The new sound ideals of a style galant and an empfindsamer Stil made the infant pianoforte preferable to the aged, tradition-bound organ. The orchestra in and out of the opera house was the vehicle for important musical expression. A secularized society identified the organ with organist but as a pianist whose monuments in music are tradition-bound organ. The orchestra in and out of the theater was, of course, the solution for those caught in the dilemma of being too wealthy for a mere piano but not rich enough to support orchestral musicians. The new breed of virtuoso musician, the Paganinis and the Liszts, exploited not only the keyboard of the piano but the several keyboards of the organ also. Any connection with the instrument of Bach was lost in the flash of pedal solos, the glitter of octave passages, and the thrill of sudden pianissimos and fortissimos.

For all of this, though, the organ was dismissed by knowing musicians. For tastes running to the archaic or for the concert-hall opportunist the instrument may have been suitable, but great music was made for other media. The few works of Mendelssohn and Brahms are isolated exceptions.

It is the greatness of Max Reger that he was able to bring together these separate tendencies, to reinstate the organ among important musical media, and thereby to lay the foundation for the twentieth century's developing concern for the instrument and its literature.

Max Reger's crucial position is usually obscured by vitriolic criticism of his harmonic technique or disgust at his crude personal manner. Few critics credit Reger with the awareness of his harmonic games or see that his peasant origins are an antidote to the artificiality of much fin de siecle art. In the expansive chorale fantasies are to be found the fruit of tradition as well as the seeds of prophecy. The choice of contrapuntal techniques and the use of time-honored hymn melodies are a heritage from the academic organist. The fugue-finale was for Reger the symbol of a kinship with the contrapuntists of old. The generous application of crescendo, sforzando, and stringendo to his scores as well as the complete suggestions for registration indicate Reger's orchestral mode of thought, while for challenge the most ambitious of virtuoso organists can turn to any Reger piece.

Only in recent years have American audiences become aware of the integrity of past, present, and future in the music of Max Reger. Serkin plays the Piano Concerto. Some orchestras perform the Variations on a Mozart Theme. Beyond the superficial tone of a dusty late-Romanticism the listener finds a musician of uncommon honesty. The composer who contributed to a style as current as Prokofiev's can no longer be dismissed as a German pre-World War musical cul de sac.

But organists remain most indebted to Max Reger for their reinstatement as musical artists.

The number of books on theology must be reduced and only the best ones published. It is not many books that make men learned, nor even reading. But it is a good book frequently read, no matter how small it is, that makes a man learned in the Scriptures and godly.

Today's sculptures that make sounds and today's paintings that use words tend to fuse the arts and to enlarge the beholder's sensuous imagination. Such enlargements, it seems to me, would have greatly pleased the English artist-mystic, William Blake (1757-1827). In a time when theological orthodoxy and rationalism seemed to base faith primarily on intellectual "proofs," Blake's illuminated writings fused words and pictures to foster a more intuitive, inspired belief.

This desire to combine the visual and the literary arts, along with the desire to express a sense of mystery and sublime Christian vision, led Blake, towards the end of his life, to create a series of twenty-one black and white copper engravings illustrating the Book of Job.

The subject of the Book of Job is the problem of human suffering. Blake felt that Job's suffering was not a test of Job's faithfulness but a means to educate him to a better understanding of the nature of God and godliness. For Blake, Job's sin was that he used the Law of Moses as the rule to live life in legally correct behavior. True feeling was irrelevant. He refrained from doing evil rather than extend his whole personality for good. To Blake's Job, God was a legalistic tyrant demanding retribution for lack of perfection. Blake called his god Urizen (your reason), a god of "cruel holiness" and conventional restraints.

In the sixth plate, here reproduced, Blake depicts Job's second trial in which God lets Satan attack Job's physical being. S. Foster Damon, in a recent book, Blake's Job, calls this the closing of Job's senses and emotions. Job's head is thrown back helplessly. The scaly Satan stands on Job's prostrate, senseless body pouring a flaming potion of "sore boils" over Job's skin destroying Job's sense of touch. Also, from Satan's right hand dart four arrows apparently meant to symbolize an attack on Job's senses of sight, smell, hearing, and taste. The dark clouds swirl around the outstretched hands of the devil spreading out over the barren land at sunset and into the border above where one of Job's patient replies is written.

Job no longer seems able to experience a creative, meaningful, or fulfilling encounter with the physical world. This is suggested in the border below, where a broken shepherd's crook and water pitcher lie useless next to a crop-consuming grasshopper. Further to the right a frog, thistles, rubbish, and weeds clog a well.

For each scene showing Job's trials or errors, Blake created a scene of its reversal occurring during and after the true God reveals himself to Job in the mystical ecstasy of the whirlwind. In opposition to the closing of his senses Blake's illustration, "When the Morning Stars Sang Together, and All the Sons of God Shouted for Joy," shows how Job's senses are opened up to God's creation and to the life of imagination and creativity he should have under God.

According to Damon, the central portion represents the seventh and last day of creation, showing the soul of man in spiritual rebirth. The soul is divided into four parts with the lowest the world of the flesh in which Job, his wife, and his friends sit. They are covered by a thick cloud barrier that continues into the border below as the Leviathan of nature in the sea of space and time. Above and to the left is the Greek Sun God Apollo, representing the intellect being pulled by the horses of instruction and pushing back the clouds surrounding his world. On the right is a section representing the emotions in which the moon Goddess Diana, representing purity of heart, guides the dragons of passion in marriage. Above, the angels making unending rows of Gothic arches streaming upward, create a definite feeling of release. This is the realm of the imagination, which seems to have no side or top boundaries. It is through the figure of Christ in the cruciform position that man can break into the realm of the imagination. It is this realm that Blake felt should be the rule of life.
PLATE 14, ILLUSTRATIONS TO THE BOOK OF JOB, 1821-25, William Blake, copperplate engraving, 7 1/2" x 5 7/8" Collection Lessing J. Rosenwald, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
The Death of Racism Requires a New America

Two publications of recent vintage, their authors' backgrounds and disciplines at all but opposite poles, the perspective of both nevertheless converging at the center of much of modern thought, contribute each in its own way to a responsible understanding of one of the most critical issues of our times.

Charles E. Fager is the author of White Reflections on Black Power (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967, cloth, $3.50; paper, $1.65). Soon after Fager finished his undergraduate studies, he joined the corps of SNCC (Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee) workers in their drive in the South to help implement Negro registration and voting. He worked with SNCC until Black Power became its slogan and potential. At that time, because of his own racial identification, he was phased out of SNCC activities.

White Reflections on Black Power is a reasoned defense of Black Power ideology, written before some Black Power leaders began to move into trouble-spots in Atlanta, Newark, and other places, encouraging riotous outbreaks that resulted in the destruction of lives and property.

Black Power advocates, according to the author, see cooperative effort in what Fager calls coalition between Negros and whites as all but useless at this stage of historical development. Liberals cooperating with such organizations as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the National Urban League were successful in causing some helpful civil rights legislation to be enacted into law. Two things resulted. Negros were encouraged to believe that a better day was dawning; but opposition in the power structure has increased, stymieing the implementation of the newly enacted laws, so that the great majority of Negros, the uneducated and the poor in rural areas and urban ghettos, are in a worse condition now than before the civil rights legislation was enacted.

Black Power advocates, according to Fager, believe that the present impasse cannot be overcome until the ghetto dwellers lift themselves by their own bootstraps. To do this, the dignity of their humanity must be restored. They must recognize and accept themselves for what they are as a result of their genes, racial traits, skin color, hair texture, etc. They must discover, appreciate, and accept their peculiar culture which made it possible for them to survive the dehumanizing slavery of their forebears and the equally destructive forces of racial segregation. And having a potential psychological base once again established, two other bases must be built before they can throw off the shackles that hold them in the helpless condition in which they find themselves: they must build within their own communities an economic base by "buying black," and, with the independence that such economic stability brings, establish a political power structure that will demand and bring about a participation in the political decisions affecting their own well-being. The author quotes Stokely Carmichael to this effect:

When the black community is able to . . . negotiate with other groups from a position of organized strength, the possibilities of meaningful political alliances on specific issues will be increased. That is a rule of politics; and there is no reason why it should not operate here. (p. 83)

What about their former friends, the racial liberals? Black Power, according to the author, would direct white liberals in labor, government, industry, and the church to work as best they can in their own community to set their own house in order. The booklet claims, though, that liberals will be unable to make a dent where it counts in the power structure until they too have been freed from economic dependence on "the system," the corporations which control the ethics as well as the economy of the community. The author thinks that the development of the cooperative enterprise such as the Black Power advocates would have developed in Negro ghettos and as have been promoted by liberals in certain urban areas "seems . . . to be the first priority for a serious liberal strategy." "For though I have differed with Bayard Rustin profoundly," Fager says, "I think he was right when he said that even an organized Negro (or in this case, liberal) community alone could not muster the force necessary for all the change it desired. An independent liberal power base would, however, make feasible Carmichael's 'meaningful political alliances on specific issues,' and would have much more power for both sides than what now passes as a grand liberal coalition." (p. 96)

According to White Reflections on Black Power, the ghetto community and white liberals can work together in a fruitful coalition only from positions of mutual economic strength.

The Shortchanged Children of Suburbia by Alice Miel and Edwin Diester, Jr. (New York: The American Jewish Committee, Institute of Human Relations Press, Pamphlet Series, Number 8, 75 cents), uncovers a fundamental cause of the dilemma in which Negroes and whites find themselves. This casual factor of the race problem is found in the suburban community its environment, its citizens — adults and children — and its schools.

The study, which is the basis of the material presented in the booklet, was made by educators, sociologists, and researchers from Teachers College, Columbia University. In the introduction, Alice Miel sets forth the purpose of the study as intended to find some answers to the following questions:

How well is suburbia — the home of vast numbers of Americans, and increasingly the trend-setter for the entire population — preparing the young people of today for such a future? Lacking firsthand contact, how do suburban children learn about human difference, and what do they think about it? How can they acquire respect for persons whom their middle-class society brands less acceptable than themselves? And what can adults — parents, school administrators, classroom teachers, community organizations — do to groom the coming generation for a proper role in a multicultural society? (p. 11)

A suburban community on a social and economic plane just a bit higher than what might be considered average was selected for the study. The authors call it New Village. By means of hundreds of interviews involving in turn teachers and parents, and children ages one to six, and through peer group meetings, the researchers assembled their data.

The study reveals an almost shocking sameness in attitudes and aspirations of suburban parents reflected in their children. Although lip-service is given to the value of religious (church or synagogue) training and the moral and ethical principles that such training may entail, the guiding preoccupation of suburban homes, which has become all but an obsession, is with material things and the prestige symbols of their peers. These are the criteria by which the children come to judge, to accept or not to accept a person.

These communities are almost exclusively Caucasian; and the child is largely insulated from any chance introduction, through personal experience, to a life different from his own. It is not "nice" to express race prejudice and therefore it is quite possible, according to the study, for a child of suburbia to use "dirt" and "noise" as cover-ups for his real feeling toward members of other racial groups. Hence, according to the study, the child is likely to be, in addition to a materialist, somewhat of a hypocrite as well. "What is more, he is often suspiciously self-centered."

If this study is factual — and it is in conformity with the experience of many who know well both suburbia and our racial ghettos — a drastic change must take place in the thinking of those who will be the members of or beholden to the power structure of tomorrow. Can the schools be helpful in effecting the change that is necessary? This study gives little hope that the suburban schools as now
constituted can contribute very much toward a change for the better. The teachers themselves are, as a rule, unconscious of a need for a changed social climate, or they are fearful of implementing change, or they do not have the skills or the tools for such a purpose.

If all this is true about our present social system, and with a Negro revolution at the point of a nationwide explosion, is the author of White Reflections on Black Power wrong when he says, “Suppose that it is true, as Carmichael has asserted, that for ‘racism to die, a totally new America must be born.’ How many of white radicals, raised in comfort on the fruits of this racism, can really believe that the death of racism requires a new America? And how many of us who believe it can actually forsake our color-guaranteed access to these fruits and begin to act meaningfully on such a belief? Or in our own context: How many of us are prepared to pursue our analysis of the system we have criticized wherever it may lead? And to act on what we find? And how many of us are prepared to confront the reactions of people and institutions whose very reason for existence we may be led to challenge?” (p. 108)

Does the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which becomes the death and resurrection of those who are imbued by the life of Christ, have anything relevant to say to our times? This is how St. Paul would probably respond: “You are given, in this battle, the privilege not merely of believing in Christ but also of suffering for his sake.”

ANDREW SCHULZE

Forward to the Bible

“The wierdest corruption of contemporary Protestantism is its virtual abandonment of the Word of God in the Bible.” In Count It All Joy (Eerdmans, 1967, $3.00) William Stringfellow, always fond of straightforward statements which shock, continues his relentless criticism of contemporary Protestantism.

The abandonment of the Bible, he argues, has led to impoverished preaching, liturgy, and education. It has embarrassed Protestantism, now forced back to its own authentic resources by virtue of Rome’s own internal renewal.

Is Stringfellow engaged in another of those unqualified generalities which express only part of the truth? I think not, for sometimes a simple truth needs to be stated, unmindful of the complexities. For many years Protestant preaching has left much to be desired. But even in traditions which make much of the Bible, such as my own Missouri Synod Lutheranism, it is not difficult to find evidence supporting his thesis. Sermons are preached on biblical texts, but this does not mean that the Bible has been heard as the Word of God or that the Word has been preached. Indeed I am increasingly impressed by how easy it is for preachers to "apply" the text in such a way that he in fact becomes dispenser of a kind of Readers Digest Weisheit rather than one who assists people in the very difficult task of hearing the Word of God in the Bible.

When Stringfellow laments the abandonment of the Word of God in the Bible, he is not asking for a return to fundamentalism. Indeed, the irony is that denominations which make the most noise about the Bible frequently dishonor it by not listening to the Word. In my tradition again, there are still fairly strong groups which confuse the literary form of the Word of God in Genesis 1-3 with a kind of newspaper account, and end, ironically, with a form of doubt and unbelief in the Word of God itself.

Stringfellow wants the Protestant churches to regain their vitality by living out of the Word of God in the Bible again. He does not want to turn the Protestant over into the hands of the theological professor of Scriptures. It is the besetting sin of theologians, he argues, to reduce the Gospel to a form of pedantry, to an ideology, and subtly to rob the church of the Word of God. For when the Gospel is reduced to a set of ideas which can be handed on to the "little people," what is the vital need for steady contact with the Word of God in its existential creativity?

So this gadfly wants simple old Bible reading put back into the churches in such a way that the Word of God can revivify and become the source of the church’s life. The simple reader can naively approach the book and hear the Word of God. This is not an easy statement to take. We do not trust "objectivity," and our confidence in science is such that we want to rely on the experts to guide us. We have all seen the "simple layman" twist the Bible to support his own ideas. But then we have also seen pastors, learned people, and ordained chemists do the same thing. Stringfellow has confidence that the Bible can be studied, aided by discussion, and that the meaning of the text can be discerned by simply persisting in asking what the author says, by listening to the Book on its own terms, by stopping attempts to make pious applications or defending traditional opinions. Not that Stringfellow renounces the aid of new erudition, now forced back to its own authentic traditions, Bible dictionaries, biblical experts; on the contrary, their very presence in such abundance and quality is a special gift to the church. But they should aid and not stand in the way of hearing the Word of God.

Stringfellow, in this highly anecdotal book, gives an account of how he himself led a Sunday school class in Bible reading. Throwing away curricular materials, he chose to work through Pauline epistles, line by line, word by word. It worked, though with all the pain of a group therapy session. But it worked!

For Stringfellow the theme of the Bible is the struggle between Life and death, not good and evil, for the soul and allegiance and being of man. Hearing the Word of God draws one into a drama in which the Word becomes an independent, royal, provocative, confessing, irritating, judging, lively personality. It draws the listener into the drama, provided he is free to be so drawn. If free to hear the Word, the listener will notice that the same Word in the Bible is present and active in all of life, for we and all things have been created and sustained by the Word, and the Word continues to prevail through reconciliation in its struggle with the power of death which, in many forms, surrounds and threatens man. With this hermeneutical insight, Stringfellow draws into the drama the serious writers such as Camus, the tyrannies of corporations and unions, so that the Word speaks to the present condition of man, allowing him to count for joy all trials and temptations in the struggle of Life over death.

Count It All Joy touches the fundamentals of Protestantism— and hurts. He is not always right, this lawyer who stands in the front ranks of those who would sell nearly all the church has, save Word and Sacraments, and give the money to the poor. He is not an ordinary “death of God” iconoclast, but the sort of man who seriously urges the clergy to knock on peoples’ doors to tell them about the love of God. He does not win many friends among the prelates and priests. He is much reminiscent of St. Francis before Innocent the Third, reminding him of the utter poverty of our Lord and the benefits of poverty for the church. He is not guided by theological fashions, but the church has much more to lose than her remaining privileges if she refuses to hear his prophetic voice.

RICHARD BAEPLER

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Editor-At-Large

Groppi and Company

By VICTOR F. HOFFMANN

Father James Groppi and the NAACP Youth Council are marked men these days.

They have been keeping the movement for fair housing alive in the Beer City. They have been marching for fair housing for over a month. Walking and talking, they have been chanting their requests to buy and rent houses and other living units wherever and whenever. Even Milwaukee's beer grows stale at the end of three weeks. But not Groppi and Company.

Many people come in to help Groppi and the Youth Council. In addition to the supporters that have come in from all corners of metropolitan Milwaukee, a national call to clergymen and churchmen brought in more marchers and supporters. For weeks now, thanks to Groppi and his boys, I have been able to meet new friends from all over the United States and from all the major denominations.

What is it that Father Groppi and the Youth Council want? They want a free and open society. This means, of course, mobility for every member of society, the right to move around and to live wherever his resources and desires permit him to live, certainly without any restrictions because of religion, creed, ancestry, and national origin.

In Father Groppi's mind, there can be no dignity without putting these basic ideas into operation. The Negro, to his way of thinking, has had very little dignity because restrictions based on race discrimination have been imposed on his mobility. In essence, then, Milwaukee has not been running an open society.

A lot of people are tuned in to Groppi's wave length. These people are now working hard for fair housing legislation.

I feel that these people are now acting because Groppi and his Youth Council have activated them. At least, I must say that they would have been slow to act without these activating agents.

I look upon Groppi and Company as catalytic agents. They are the matches that lit the fires for fair housing in Milwaukee. They are the needles that injected adrenalin into the social body.

Every time I meet Father Groppi and the members of the Youth Council I am inspired beyond measure. And ashamed that I have done so little.

Father Groppi, who has now become the focus of antize far right religious and the anti-fair housing contingents, has been called every name under the sun. For many he seems to be some kind of devil. Actually he appears, to me at least, to be rather quiet, even shy, and certainly not very talkative. However, when his mission is on the line, he talks, clearly and courageously. He takes his religion and his love for the Black Man very seriously and, consequently, is in a peck of trouble, all of which he takes in stride. Perhaps we should thank God for such troublemakers: Jeremiah, John the Baptist, Amos, Christ, Paul, Peter, Savonarola, Luther, Calvin, and Bonhoeffer. In their own ways, these people turned the world upside down.

People, many people, especially prominent people in high places in Milwaukee, have been insisting that Groppi is a subversive, that he is disturbing people unnecessarily, and that he is giving Milwaukee a bad image. This bothers Milwaukee citizens inasmuch as they have been staging a civic morality play for years and years based on the theme of law and order. Sometimes they call it progress. Milwaukee people have been projecting these broad themes into a national picture of themselves as honest, clean, and fair people. The citizens of Milwaukee have taken great pride in their reputations. Often this pride has subtly been turned into a form of idolatry.

The truth is, however, that in the area of fair housing some actors have come front-stage to mar the play. Wisconsin (really and truly a progressive state) gets much credit for having a fair housing law; yet the law at most covers only twenty-five to thirty-three per cent of the housing units and housing transactions in Milwaukee.

Because of these circumstances a lot of us are now shouting for fair housing in Milwaukee. But Father Groppi and the Youth Council, I repeat, were among the first to raise their voices.

I am personally thankful to Father Groppi because he forces us to look at some important theological questions: 1. what kind of theology must we construct in 1967 to shape the world in which we live? 2. does the priest minister only to his parish or does he minister to the total community? 3. what kind of power may a minister or a religious person employ to give himself an effective voice in the community? 4. is our mission directed only to the soul of man and not to his body?

I am an enthusiastic advocate of Father Groppi and please have no doubts about that, nor of him.
I hate hucksters chiefly because they see through me. I'm sure that one good look at me informs them that my mother was not a failure (though, of course, she thinks she was). She managed to teach me that one should be nice to other people, especially on the face of things. Perhaps she overdid it; I not only apologize to shoe salesmen when they don't have my size, I feel guilty that I entered their store and didn't buy anything. It's amazing how hucksters know this about me. I almost think my mother must have told them.

But I'm not a pushover, no sir. My father taught me to use my head, and there are times when his influence, too, can be felt. This is what the huckster has to watch out for, because when I use my head — boy, look out!

Now the real problem comes when these two traits in me are brought together, and no one brings them together quicker than the huckster. He presents himself as a nice guy who just wants to chat a bit, but I know full well that if I buy his product, I lose. Shall reason rule and get me to stop the show before it begins? Or shall politeness let him in with the whisper that "You're strong enough to resist temptation"? Of course politeness wins, and two hours later reason's work is all the tougher to do. That's when I get angry at the huckster — because I'm angry at myself for getting into this jam.

Perhaps it will help to state the problem more generally. St. Paul, and especially David Hume, informed us that desire ("the flesh") is the springboard for action. People simply do not do what they don't want to do. Since, therefore, we have complete control over ourselves, one might argue that anything goes when it comes to the arts of persuasion. "I never force anyone to buy" could be the truthful slogan of the most outrageously unethical businessman, and a con-man who said that would speak the truth. The whole truth. But there is more to the story than this.

Our desires are usually structured in some way, such that some of them may be said to be overriding or guiding passions while others are mere fancies or likes. When a man's chief passions are for things which are good, the man is moral; when a man mainly seeks that which is bad, he's immoral. If there is no order whatever to the passions the man is amoral — but not irrational, for as Hume reminds us, one can reasonably prefer the destruction of everyone else to the scratching of his little finger. The place of reason lies not in the establishment, but rather in the realization, of desires.

Assuming that I am a moral man, it is true of me that my chief desires are for good things such as the greatest possible happiness for my household and for others. And I know that given my particular household the greatest happiness will be promoted by (among other things) the wise use of financial resources. Now I also have the desire to be decent to other people, as I said before; but politeness is not a value which takes precedence over seeking happiness for myself and for others. When the salesman comes to the door, I let him in out of politeness, and he knows that; once in the door his job is to get me to believe that buying his product will conduce to my more pervasive desires — and a huckster is one who will try to trick you into believing that his product satisfies those main desires (whatever they are) or, failing that, will capitalize on a lesser desire while trying to distract you from contravening passions. Have you never paid off a panhandler just because you felt (at the moment) that getting him off your back was more important than promoting the satisfaction of your desire that people not freeload for a living?

When the huckster preys on me in this way he is encouraging me to depart from the morality I have established for myself. Does that make him immoral? It does on my moral view for I take it to be immoral to entice others to violate their principles. (I do not, however, believe it to be immoral to try to get others to alter their desire priorities by plain reason.)

It appears that we have hit upon the moral crux of the advertising business. When advertising has as its aim the dissemination of knowledge about a product or service it is not immoral; one could in fact argue that the spread of knowledge is positively moral. But most commercials seek instead to arouse or create desires. When the desires appealed to or fostered in this way are passions which conflict with one's main desires, questions of morality arise. As a matter of fact very many of the ads one sees and hears seek just this end. Sometimes one can properly expect the consumer to resist the lure (of a picture of a sparkling new car, say); if he does not, we call him weak or stupid. But very often the odds are on the side of the agency and its depth researchers. These people aim for the gut. And (some) door-to-door salesmen are kings of this sick breed. They zero in on a desire and inflame it regardless of where that desire lies in one's scale of priorities and no matter what the consequences of acting on that desire may be for the consumer.

So that's why I hate hucksters. They play my desires off against each other. They limit my freedom by distorting my perception of the world and how it relates to my passions. But I think I hate them most because they know how very tenuous my morality really is.
1527 + 450

I have been reading about, and participating in, some of the observances of the 450th year since an Augustinian monk walked down the narrow streets of Wittenberg through the fallen leaves to the Schlosskirche in order to nail a document on the heavy oak door. He knew that on the next day — the day of the Feast of All Saints — the farmers from the surrounding villages would head for Wittenberg for a beer, a mass, and the latest news. These holiday crowds would surely see the unusually large sheet of paper on the door and wonder what it was all about. Someone would be around to translate the scholarly Latin into German — probably not all ninety-five statements which he had written in an agony of rebellion and love for the truth, but enough of them to get his protest across to these people who were members of the flock which he had been called to shepherd. Actually, if they grasped the meaning of only the first five of his statements they would know what the shooting was all about. So the monk nailed his scrawled notice on the door, whispered a prayer, and turned to the setting sun.

Now, after 450 years (four and a half centuries), many millions of us on a much later pilgrimage are trying to remember what the monk had on his mind. At this time and distance from the little German town and its fledgling university trying so hard to compete with prestigious Erfurt this will be an enormous task. Now in 1967 many of the hundreds of millions of words that will be said and written will be irrelevant, blind and hurt by the slow dark stain of the centuries. We shall attempt to see Martin Luther through twentieth century eyes, and we shall surely fail to understand him. He can be seen clearly only through the timeless eyes of God.

Perhaps it is this which has worried me about the preparations for the 450th anniversary of the lonely walk of the hesitant monk. Our plans for remembering have been so complete, so brilliantly organized, so thoroughly worked out that we could not possibly have failed. We have garnered a gratifying number of headlines. We have gotten some prime radio time. Even the great god Television has taken notice of the lowly monk and his spiritual descendants.

One should be grateful, of course, for whatever opportunity such "exposure" gives us to remind ourselves and the world around us of the Gospel which Luther was concerned to defend against the abuses of the indulgence racket. Nevertheless, I feel somewhat uneasy about it all. Are these momentary things a modern echo of the kingdoms of this world which our Lord saw, and rejected, during His forty days in the desert? I really do not know, but I cannot quite escape the suspicion that the Evil One, when he has no other recourse, persuade the children of Light to organize these things. Once they have been organized, certain results seem to follow almost inevitably. The Committee on Arrangements will quarrel with the Program Committee; the Committee on Music will get into a hassle with the choir director; and the clergy will become embroiled in a heated dispute on the choice of a speaker. He must, many will insist, be "safe," a follower of Erasmus rather than a disciple of the belligerent and uncouth monk.

By the way, a few months ago I got stuck on a paragraph in a Roman Catholic journal which has some striking relevance to our time and to all that I have been trying to say in these lines. The author describes the beginnings of the Reformation. He is, of course, especially interested in the approach of Roman Catholic theologians to the controversy with the young Augustinian. The following paragraph is, I think, not only relevant but a very accurate reflection of what was going on:

Men made ready for debate with lists of errors. John Eck, a theologian (by no means a negligible one) and a champion of Catholicism at the beginning of the Reformation, came in 1530 to the Diet of Augsburg at which the Emperor was hoping to unite the two contending parties. Master Eck brought a list of 404 errors which he had found in Luther's teachings. But men did even better later on. The lists grew longer. There was that good Franciscan of the sixteenth century who called himself "Ardent Flame" who had discovered not merely 400 errors in Martin Luther but 1400! On the opposite side, of course, similar lists were compiled; indeed, there were whole books of lists. Nobody wondered about what Luther was really trying to say or what had inspired the Reformation, the internal coherence of the spiritual import of the movement; no, they simply made lists of all the errors — partial, real, and supposed.

Inevitably the results were fatal: both sides could only harden their opposition. Argument with anyone simply to win finally culminates in upholding indefensible positions, if the matter is closely examined. The positions are defended because one has begun to argue, and that is all there is to it. Contemporary journals, please copy.