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An Insight into the Reformation:

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reads Lewis's statement, he is inclined to chuckle; he could indeed have found out all that it contains, with no little bit of labor, but what gives the book its unique value, its organization of the facts, he could not have found out for himself; it is peculiarly C. S. Lewis's. In 223 pages and in a delightfully readable style Lewis enables the reader to see where his own knowledge of the Medieval mind actually fits into a larger organized picture. He enables the reader to understand how a Medieval man thought.

Lewis asserts that what characterized the Medieval mind is not represented by the Medieval Romance or the Ballad but by the *Summa Theologica* and the *Divine Comedy*—Medieval man at his most characteristic was not a dreamer or a wanderer. He was an organizer, a codifier, a builder of systems. His greatest work of art was the Medieval Model of the universe.

The book describes this model. From God down through nine choirs of angels, the model places the eternal and unchangeable beings in their spheres above the moon; it organizes the physical universe from the spherical earth to the final transparent sphere, the *Primum Mobile*; it explains the motion of this sphere (it originates in love for God) and the motions of all the other spheres.

The Model postulates four contraries out of which all things below the moon are made: cold, hot, moist and dry; the four elements: earth, water, air and fire are but combinations of these contraries. A fifth and unknown element, the quintessence, accounts for the unchangeable nature of the things above the moon. Even man's four different temperments: sanguine, choleric, phlegmatic and melancholy are combinations of these four contraries, and the planets determine which of these four will predominate in a man.

In addition to his explanations of the heavens and the earth and man, Lewis also shows what education was thought to be by the Medieval mind and why it was organized into the seven liberal arts.

In brief, the book gathers together a wealth of material, organizes it into a consistent and lucid whole, and leaves the reader with a background against which almost all his previous reading in Medieval and Renaissance authors becomes more intelligible.

JOSEPH P. DEL TUFO, S.J.

AN INSIGHT INTO THE REFORMATION

THE REFORMATION: A Problem for Today. By Joseph Lortz, translated by John C. Dwyer, S.J. Westminster, Md.: The Newman Press, 1964. 261 pp.

This Catholic study is an excellent complement to John M. Todd's *Martin Luther, A Biographical Study*, which received well deserved good reviews within recent weeks. The new avalanche of Catholic books treating of Protestantism and vice-versa is one of the most encouraging signs of the advance of the Ecumenical Movement. Author Lortz furnishes a much wider background than the Martin Luther study, in geographical and historical setting, as well as the climate of snowballing ideas that made the Reformation a tragic and inescapable climax to the Renaissance. William of Occam, Erasmus, and a frightening array of prelates and popes are given their share of blame along with Luther in this break between Christians. This book is aimed at literate non-theologian laymen, Catholic and Protestant, and is so conscientiously tactful that it makes the reader almost uneasy lest there be no crystalline conclusions at all. The emphasis is on the development of theological ideas, exciting though one-sided, that sprang in reaction to an eroded moral sense accompanied by an over-compensating Merit Concept.

Joseph Lortz brings up more questions than he can answer and not infrequently, he frustrates the reader by dismissing them with the remark that they are too specialized for a book of this type. He does, nevertheless, go on for a few more pages presenting his own answers—answers in the light of the former remark, which seem to be contrived and suggest even more searching questions. The possibility of a psychosis in Luther's case is an example. Then again, as the author suggests, was the Merit Concept against which Luther rebelled really of German origin? Isn't this decadent concept observable in almost every clime at one time or another? It is fascinating to note also, as the author suggests, that the sixteenth century artists did catch the prevailing mood as seen in the works of Riemenschneider, Dürer, and Grünwald. He says of Grünwald: "No other ever succeeded in translating the mystical experience to canvas as he did." Possibly Grünwald did catch a "Protestant" mysticism, but can it be compared to the depth reached by the Spanish Baroque artists at that same time, or even come close to the great moderns like Blake, Chagall, Van Gogh, or Rouault? This book is valuable for all of the avenues of thought it opens up and helps to see in a new light the "orthodox" Catholics and "rebellious" Protestants of those tragic times.

The author does formulate crystalline conclusions in the final and excellent chapter: *The Reformation and Catholicism Today*. The exhortation to see Church tradition in its true sense and the wholesale appeal to Holy Scripture are to be taken with humility by both sides of the Christian fence alike. He bases his arguments for authority on Luther's own works. There must indeed be give and take on both sides without further rending the seamless garment of

Christ. The last known written words of Luther, uniting himself with the Psalmist, were: "It is true that we are beggars...." So should be the sentiment of all Christians during these blessed days of restoration, scholarship, sympathy, and grace.

BROTHER D. GABRIEL, F.S.C.

THE WISDOM OF NUN-SENSE.

NUN-SENSE. By Sister Madeleine, C.S.J. Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1964. 147 pp.

A nucleus of fifteen articles written over a decade, a quarter of a century teaching experience. Out of these, almost naturally, as the author states, *Nun-Sense* "just growed" like Topsy. The topic range of the book is wide indeed, and as old as creation and as modern as a computer. Under seven sections with the not unfamiliar ring of "The Unknown God", "Life Can Be Beautiful", "A Little Learning Is Not A Dangerous Thing", "Imperatives", "Orchids to You", "Nuns Are People", TV, sedatives 4H clubs, sports, Pravda, and a host of twentieth century facts and fancies are discussed to provoke a supernatural line of thought. Thus, "children of the world" might chuckle and then ponder as Sister Madeleine provocatively bursts bubbles. The bill-board-blighted age draws the reflection, "If men loved their wives the way manufacturers loved their products, the divorce rate would plummet downward". In defense of wrinkles she exclaims, "Why should we be ashamed of having been born before someone else?" "Children of the light" will appreciate the author's perception, Christianize the constellations. Cassiopeia's W right side up may be an M—for Mary. Mercy is a moot question in the "Divine Debating Society". "...the Lord loves a good debater, but unlike most debaters, He loves to lose to His opponents." The book threads with the hint that almost all the paraphernalia and trivia of our highly scientific and too often materialist civilization can be used as launching pads to the "other world".

A sense of the supernatural in the current of a work-a-day world, a bit of originality, kindly wit, short chatty chapters—these go for the merits of *Nun-Sense*. However, the reader feels the pages overladen with references to this century's facts, fads, and fancies. True, the lamp of Christian truths and attitudes has been turned on many and varied aspects of our somewhat self-conscious, comfort-devoted age so that real values are discerned, but one wonders if depth was somewhat lost to range.