An uncomplicated sentence in koine Greek appeared on an oblong screen.

"Translate it, if you can," said the guide.

"The man is. . . throwing. . ." I couldn't complete the sentence.

The guide pushed a red button.

". . . a javelin," read the screen. Then the words vanished and new ones appeared, again in Greek. This time I could read the entire sentence. It said: "The javelin throws the man."

A machine with a sense of humor!

"Almost all our basic teaching," explained the guide, "is programmed for machine instruction: history, Bible, languages, even sociology, ethics, anthropology, psychomythology, and theology."

"But how?"

"How can theology be programmed? Of course it can't be completely. But the history of theology can be, and students can be required by the machines to respond creatively to certain theological puzzles which have perplexed men for ages, utilizing where possible the insights of Spinoza, Schleiermacher, Tillich, and other giants of theological discussion. When the student has been through a full regimen of tapes with one of our machines, he is a pretty competent theologian himself, at least as far as he can be equipped out of the theology of the past. Then he is ready for his real work."

The real work, as I was to learn, came in the small group sessions which were considered the heart of the new theological training. But that is getting ahead of my story. My guide had one other trick to show me at the console.

This time flipping a blue switch, he explained that I was now to witness something I was very likely unprepared for in my own theological training. Actually, as it turned out, it was not theological at all, but had to do with the improvement of creativity and originality in thinking.

"This is one of the newer concepts," he said, "and we have one the two systems now being pioneered in this country. The developers of the system believe that one of the greatest impediments to free and creative theological work is the tendency of the mind to idolize old conceptualizations and forget that they were once only tentative formulas. The system is therefore programmed to disrupt fixated thinking by various visual and linguistic playgrams. For example . . ."

As he talked, he pushed a combination of numbers, and the oblong screen lit up with these words: REDIMMED BY THE BLOAT OF THE LIMB. When I fitted the headphones to my ears, a taped voice said: "This is an exercise in word-play.