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MEN WITH IDEAS: LEIBNIZ

GOTTFRIED WILHELM LEIBNIZ is guide, philosopher and friend to men who wish to live their lives in strict accord with principles. Of all modern thinkers—and he is certainly modern, although he belongs to the seventeenth century—Leibniz accepted the implications of pure metaphysics with the least reserve, thus giving his system a timeless character that has parallel achievements only in the metaphysical thought of antiquity. Further, the purity of his thought is such that if ever the West determines to evolve for itself a new spiritual foundation for its humanitarian and social ideals, Leibniz will probably be acknowledged as one of the principal inspirers of this great step.

Leibniz wooed the three Graces of Freedom, Order and Consistency. He failed in his suit, but the unfinished architecture of his thought stands as an extraordinary monument to the powers of the human mind. It is also a challenge to all subsequent thinkers. Simply to see what he gained for the culture of the West is to achieve the substance of philosophical maturity. To understand how or why he failed should be to define the portals to further philosophical discovery.

Philosophy is the endeavor to make sense out of human existence. What, the philosopher asks, is being fulfilled in my life generally? There are at least two—perhaps more—approaches to the answer to this question. One is to decide what the self—the being we call "I"—is, and then to define the world around us in terms which establish a rational relationship between ourselves and the outside environment. The other is to decide what the world is, first, and then to describe the self, the human individual, as some kind of part or unit in the world as already defined. Both revealed religion and experimental science fall in the second category, while metaphysical inquiry and mysticism belong to the first.

Most people try to use a little of both methods in working out a philosophy of life, reaching some sort of practical compromise in their minds about the meaning of the human situation. Even Leibniz, determined metaphysician that he was, borrowed considerably from theology for his first principles, and this, philosophically speaking, seems to have been the source of all his troubles. His logical difficulties, however, belong to criticism of Leibniz' ideas, and our primary concern is with his positive achievements.

First of all, Leibniz conceived and developed a philosophy of reality from first principles which were exactly opposite to the postulates and the body of beliefs about the nature of things associated with the physical theories of Galileo and Isaac Newton and the philosophy of Descartes. Both Descartes and Newton taught that the world is a great machine, and that the beings and objects in the world are moved from without by mechanical forces. Matter and force—these are the realities of the Newtonian cosmos. In contrast, the world of Leibniz is a world of *living intelligences.* All action in nature, Leibniz affirmed, proceeds from internal causes. There is no such thing as "dead matter." Leibniz refused to think of the external world as a kind of cosmic theater, with stage settings by God and the forces of physics, in which human beings work out the drama of their salvation and then leave the scene. He found this system far too irrational, too dependent upon the Christian revelation for the disclosure of moral values. Leibniz was as determined a rationalist as he was a moralist and he refused to admit the necessity of patching up the weak places in his system with the *Ipse Dixit* of the Creator. The use of the God-idea as a

panacea to make up for the shortcomings of rationalism, Leibniz foresaw, could only have the result, in time, of eliminating altogether the postulate of Deity or spiritual reality. Leibniz, it is true, obtained certain of his principles from the God-idea, but he never used the God-idea opportunistically, as a handy gadget for getting out of difficulties. He would not, as Hume did in his essay on Immortality, say that Christendom was fortunate in having the truths of Christianity set forth in such detail, because of the inability of reason to discover them without the help of miraculous revelation. Leibniz tried to use the God-idea as a philosophical first principle, from which followed certain necessary truths, while his opponents were in the habit of invoking the God-idea only when the first principles of materialism proved inadequate. Leibniz would never have been guilty of remarking that there are no atheists in foxholes. He would have said, rather, that a man who waits until he is caught in a foxhole to think about the existence of God has all the instincts of a natural atheist. The man who prays only when the world machine strips a gear has a spurious sort of piety.

It is an interesting experiment to remove God from the system of Descartes and Newton, and from Leibniz' system, to see what is left. Without God, the Newtonian universe is practically the same as the world of mechanical forces which most physicists, biologists and psychologists talk about today. It has no soul, no purpose, no guiding intelligence. Far more is left of the system of Leibniz, without God. Leibniz' system actually *gains* in reasonableness without God, although certain problems remain—problems which Leibniz tried to solve by reasoning from the premise of the God-idea.

The reality of the world, according to Leibniz, is in spiritual units, perceiving centers of consciousness which he called *monads.* Monads are not *in* the world; they *are* the world. Space and time are not metaphysical "fixtures" of the natural world. Space is one kind of psychological extension of what the monads perceive; and our sense of time is produced by the succession of the perceptions of the monads. Matter and form result from the ways in which the monads perceive; or, they represent the limitations upon monadic perception, determined by the internal developments of the monads.

Monads are of various grades. Bare or "naked" monads make up matter; monads which have attained to the degree of "souls" form the animal kingdom, while the monads which are the ruling principles in human beings are "minds." Monads differ from one another in their capacity to reflect the universe around them. Each monad is a mirror of its surroundings, the most perfect monad being the one which reflects the most.

Monads are self-moving units. Unlike atoms, which are moved only from without, the monads are moved only from within. As Herbert Wildon Carr says in his commentary on Leibniz' *Monadology,* "the simplicity of the atom is directly opposite in character to the simplicity of the monad." He is speaking, of course, of the conception of the atom in traditional Newtonian physics:

> We cannot change the inner nature of the atom because by definition the atom has no within. We cannot alter or change the inner nature of the monad because by definition it has no without. Atoms are distinguished from one another by position and relative disposition alone, and all their relations are external. In atoms therefore there is nothing to alter. Anything which changes a monad must, on the other hand, be in it, for all its activities are within and self-originated.

Monads do not interact upon one another, physically as atoms are supposed to do. They have intercourse, but that intercourse is ideal, through their community of existence in consciousness—or, as Leibniz would say, in consequence of their pre-established harmony which was predestined at the time of their origin in God. Each monad has within itself the principle of dynamic change. As Carr puts it:

> There is neither birth nor death in the absolute meaning. There are only metamorphoses and transformations. Our souls are not created at the moment of conception nor are they destroyed at death. They were created with the world and they become rational when their bodies are developed sufficiently to transmit perceptions with a certain degree of clearness.

Leibniz, it seems clear, was a philosopher of spiritual evolution. He founded his idea of what is real in existence upon his own internal experience. What is most real for any man? His own sense of being, as a conscious intelligence. The first reality, then, is the center of consciousness which we perceive ourselves to be, and through which we perceive everything else. As centers of consciousness, we initiate causes. We make decisions and act upon them. Therefore, there is a principle of internal energy in centers of consciousness. The scope of our real being depends upon what we see and comprehend within ourselves. This is the power of reflective consciousness.

From these facts of experience, common to every man, Leibniz formulated the doctrine of the monads, the philosophy of spiritual individuality.

Suppose we had adopted this theory of reality: it would not have broken down, in consequence of the new physics, as atomic theory has broken down. Nobody knows much about the atom any more, since it has dissolved into intricate mathematical relationships of electromagnetic energy. The atom is partly a concept of limit in the philosophy of science, and partly a window into new relativist subtleties which may have more psychological than "material" substance. In fact, the new conceptions of physics might even be regarded as lending themselves to Leibnizian interpretation. Further, the doctrine of the monads would quite possibly be of great assistance in understanding the latest reaches of modern experimental psychology. Discussing the problem of interpreting the meaning of the new discoveries in the field of extra sensory perception, Prof. H. H. Price, professor of logic at Oxford University, wrote some years ago:

> . . . in the *Monadology* of Leibniz every monad has clairvoyant and telepathic powers, not occasionally and exceptionally, but always, as part of its essential nature. Every monad represents the entire Universe from its own point of view (Clairvoyance) and the perceptions of each are correlated with the perceptions of all the rest (Telepathy). In fact, what Leibniz calls "perception" is always both clairvoyant and telepathic. Moreover, he tells us that this perception is to a greater or a lesser degree unconscious. I do not say that the system of Leibniz is workable as it stands. But I do suggest that we may gather useful hints from it. . . . we could suppose with Leibniz that every mind clairvoyantly perceives or represents the world from its proper point of view, and that each is telepathically correlated with all other minds. We should then have to explain why there *seems* to be so little clairvoyance, and why the vast bulk of our perceptions or representations remain unconscious. (*Philosophy,* October, 1940.)

Of the numerous books which deal with the philosophy of Leibniz, we have three to recommend. The first is *Leibniz,* by John Theodore Merz, published by J. B. Lippincott in 1884. This still seems the best simple introduction to Leibniz as man and thinker. Merz has a sure grasp of the motives of Leibniz, who saw, some 250 years ago, that the mechanical interpretation of human life would eventually destroy all intellectual basis for moral purpose and understanding. Leibniz opposed alike the philosophical implications of the thought of Descartes, Francis Bacon and Isaac Newton, as leading to a harsh, external world of purely physical meanings. Merz discloses this essential purpose of Leibniz in each step of his philosophical development. Then, Herbert Wildon Carr's *The Monadology of Leibniz* (University of Southern California, 1930) offers Leibniz' own work together with several essays by a man who is a brilliant advocate of the Leibnizian philosophy. Finally, Arthur 0. Lovejoy's *The Great Chain of Being* (Harvard University Press, 1936) contains searching if merciless criticisms of the weaknesses in Leibniz' thinking.

The critics of Leibniz have been both numerous and capable. His greatest problem arises from his assumption of the goodness and omniscience of God, from whom all the monads and their future of "pre-established harmony" are derived. He also got into difficulties with the idea of God's omnipotence. In summary, then, these questions arose: If God is good, all-wise, and all-powerful, it follows that He would create the best possible world and destiny for the monads. But our world is far from being good. Thus, either God's idea of "good" is so different from ours that we cannot understand it, or God is *not* all-powerful and had to create an unpleasant world with misshapen destinies for the monads. Finally, if God is all-knowing, and at the moment of creation imprinted on the monads their future tendencies such that He could foresee exactly what they would choose to do, then what of man's free will?

Leibniz never solved any of these difficulties satisfactorily. He simply affirmed that this *has* to be the best of all possible worlds, because a God with the attributes commonly assigned to Him couldn't do anything else but create such a world. God, in other words, was constrained by the nature of his attributes. Some critics of Leibniz at once saw in this an interference with God's freedom. They wanted a God capable of doing anything he pleased—a God who could give a triangle four sides, if He felt like it. They wanted laws created at random by God's will, instead of a God whose will was capable of rational interpretation. Leibniz did the best he could with these problems, even to the point of admitting that God might, in a backhanded sort of way, be responsible for the existence of evil in the world.

But Leibniz did a better job of wrestling with the conventional idea of deity than most of his contemporaries. He refused to follow Spinoza into absolute pantheism, because, in Spinoza's system, the individual was lost sight of entirely, and Leibniz had built his whole system on the spiritual reality of the individual. Spinoza avoided the difficulties which Leibniz never solved, but only by withdrawing freedom from both God and man. If Leibniz had been content to let his monads remain unexplained as to origin—simply self-existent units of consciousness—spiritually creative, and spiritually free, his system would have been incomplete, but it would also have been far more successful as a rational synthesis of human experience. Fortunately, Leibniz' difficulties are the honest troubles of a metaphysician, and not the plausible deceptions of theological casuistry, so that the world may still learn from his attempt.

Letter from CENTRAL EUROPE

INNSBRUCK.—Before World War I, the Austrian universities were recognized throughout the world as leading scientific institutes. From 1918 to 1938, they lost some of their reputation in consequence of the fact that Prague, with one of the oldest and most tradition-laden universities of Europe, became the capital of the new State, Czecho-Slovakia, while the remaining ones in Vienna, Graz and Innsbruck made no gains during this period. From 1938 to 1945, the latter were numbered among the German academic institutes, and the end of the war saw them, at last, either destroyed or bare.

One must try to understand what the period from 1914 to 1945 really meant to these institutions. During World War I, both professors and students became soldiers, many of them never to return. Lectures and research practically ceased and it was years before the courses of instruction regained their former distinction. Then, inner political conflicts arose to disturb the course of learning. Between 1934 and 1938 the lecturers and students who were national socialists or Nazi sympathizers were forced out, while after 1938 those who were not were deprived of the right to teach or to study. Then, most of the survivors of these "purges" were drawn into the army to fight in World War II. Only the faculties of departments having "military importance" were allowed to continue teaching. In 1945, after the fall of Germany, the greater part of the small number who were left fled or—again, for political reasons—were either imprisoned or pensioned off.

Not only the Austrian patriot, but the neutral observer as well, can find reason to admire what the Austrian universities have achieved since, starting with next to nothing—without even the necessary housing. The damage done during the war years has not yet been repaired and there is still much physical reconstruction to be done, in addition to gathering an adequate body of scientists. There are disciplines, however, in which the leadership has already been restored, particularly in the development of medicine and philosophy.

But there is something else of interest in respect to these faculties: they seem slowly to be leaving the conservative path followed in past generations. The reasons which may be held responsible for this change probably include the fact that "material" science, in extending its frontiers, has had to correct many assertions made during the last century. At the same time, beliefs once regarded as superstitious have since found their scientific explanation. Modern scientists are obviously more careful than their predecessors in avoiding dogmatic opinions. Medicine is becoming increasingly interested in the interior and emotional side of human life, with concern for psychological processes; while philosophy is at least approaching the problem of the origin of mankind with a glimpse at metaphysics. In "The Evolution Controversy" (MANAS, March 30, 1949), the hope was expressed that contemporary science would continue to search in the direction of the origin of form and the nature of intelligence. Prof. Wilhelm Koppers, professor at the University of Vienna, has recently published *Der Urmensch und sein Weltbild* (*Prehistoric Man and his Outlook*), offering interesting speculations on the subject. Summarizing personal experiences among two old tribes—the Bhil of India and the Yamana of South America—this volume shows how paleo-anthropological and other ethnological findings lead Prof. Koppers to a rejection of Darwinism.

Other recently published books cross the boundary between fiction and science. *Das Du im Stein* (*You in the Minerals,* Zsolney, Wien), broaches the theory that stones are alive, or, as he says, "speak the language of the organics." While this little volume doubtless could be attacked from various different standpoints, it has the undeniable merit of contributing to a wider discussion of the subject. A printed lecture by Nicolai Berdiaev, *Der Menschen der Technischen Zivilisation* (Amandus, Wien), defines the present human situation, embedded in the technical civilization, while a book by Max Prantl, *Der Mensch ohne Angst* (*Man without Fear,* Wagner, Innsbruck), has evoked unusual controversy.

CENTRAL EUROPEAN CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
OLD ARGUMENT, NEW CHAPTER

THOSE who, being disturbed by the economic pincer movement of rising taxes, expanding government authority, and large-scale preparation for war, are looking for scapegoats to blame for these developments, will find John T. Flynn's latest book, *The Road Ahead* (Devin-Adair, $2.50), a vastly satisfying volume. When it comes to finding fault and fixing blame, Mr. Flynn has no equal among modern economists and political moralists. People with more indignation than targets to aim it at will be obliged to Mr. Flynn.

The thesis of this book, subtitled *America's Creeping Revolution,* is that the United States is being beguiled into socialism, much as England, the author claims, was drawn into its present experiment of moderate collectivism by the siren appeals of the Fabian socialists. The policy of the Fabians, Mr. Flynn tells us, was to work for socialist measures while calling them everything else *but* socialistic. While not ignoring the boring-from-within tactics of the Communists in the labor unions and communist front organizations, he finds the most serious threat to capitalist institutions in "social planners" and "liberals" who avoid the socialist label. And, by way of contrast to these men of hidden purposes, Mr. Flynn has only praise for Norman Thomas, whom he identifies as the leader of "an honest movement run by honest men who offered socialism to the people and called it by its true name."

It must be admitted that there is much truth in Mr. Flynn's contentions. Whether or not one "likes" the tendencies he describes, and whether or not he assigns responsibility and estimates "guilt" with accuracy and wisdom, it is a fact that the movement toward socialization has been gathering strength in the Western world for at least a century. Many of the processes of socialism, if not its ideology, are already a part of our socio-economic system. The real question, however, has to do with the long-term meaning of this development, and it is fair to ask if a sudden and largely emotional rejection of what is taking place can do any more than add to the already ample confusion.

Certain aspects of this broad social change may be characterized without entering the area of controversy. It is true, for example, that the socialist movement gained its impetus more from the human victims of the impersonal forces of the Industrial Revolution than from the arguments of impassioned agitators. Political revolutionaries only shaped the form of the revolt and gave intellectual coherence and moral justification to the resentments of the underprivileged masses. No one of intelligence has ever questioned the brilliance of the socialist criticism of our acquisitive society, nor has denied that extreme moral provocation lay behind the periodic revolutionary surges of recent history.

What has been questioned, and rightly, is the practicability of the socialist solution. But until the general outcome of communism in Russia, whether socialism would "work" or not remained an academic question. It may be still an academic question for those who claim there is no "true" communism in Russia, today, but for the great majority of observers the Soviet experience has sufficed as proof that the centralized socialist state grows into a bureaucratic tyranny which has little in common with the glowing anticipations of the reformers of the early years of this century. And now, besides the Communist State of Russia, England is regarded as another testing-ground of socialist theory. Mr. Flynn has a chapter on English socialism which seems to be devastating—we will not say is devastating because it is difficult to see how Mr. Flynn or anyone else can separate the multiple disasters of war, which are certainly not a result of socialism, but which have been inherited by Britain's socialist government, from the difficulties of the latter's own making. After describing British socialism as his "horrible example," he moves on to document his case

against those whom he regards as socialistically-minded in the United States.

Mr. Flynn convicts a number of people of something or other, and he is quite certain that what he convicts them of is very, very bad. But the trial he conducts seems excessively rhetorical, with witnesses for the prosecution not half so well supplied with facts as in the case of his earlier volumes—in *As We Go Marching,* for example.

Mr. Flynn is much better when he is tilting against the war spirit and militarist economics than he is in this foray against liberals and socialist fellow-travelers.

Instead of a book like *The Road Ahead,* what is needed is a temperate analysis of the predicament of the modern liberal who has suddenly been confronted with what seem to be the terrifying consequences of the principles he has tried to believe in for most of his life. Sometime between 1945 and 1950, a good many erstwhile liberals suddenly shifted gears and forswore the credo they had been bravely shouting for ten or fifteen years. This has been bad for their peace of mind—or ought to have been—and bad for their intellectual integrity, for the change was seldom a reasoned rejection of socialist ideas. They simply dropped opinions that had become too hot to handle.

Consider for a moment the formation of those opinions. They began, for the few, in the closing years of the first world war, when the dream of a socialist paradise seemed on the verge of realization through the Russian revolution. Mr. Flynn recalls those days himself:

> I remember when the old Czarist regime collapsed in Russia and the Kerensky government took power there. I recall the joy that filled the hearts of the American Socialists. I remember sitting in the old Rialto Theatre in New York watching the moving pictures of the sailors and soldiers and people marching down the streets with their banners hailing the dawn of freedom. I saw men around me weeping at this incredible liberation and I could not restrain the tears myself. How little they suspected the harsh reality that would rise out of that glorious redemption and spread its dark influence all over eastern Europe.

Then, after the orgy of the twenties, came the Great Depression and the Golden Age of radical propaganda. What would you expect of a people of normal good-heartedness and impulsive sympathies? If the intellectual atmosphere turned a bright pink during the thirties, this was evidence that writers and college professors, if not industrialists and merchants, felt some deep concern for the welfare of the common man. It seems stupid to call the parlor radicals of fifteen years ago names for wanting to create the kind of a society that would have no more depressions. Suppose they were impractical—as we now can say in the bleak, morning-after atmosphere of 1950; suppose they were drawn into commitments to plans and programs with unseen consequences: the backslapping Rotarians and super-salesmen of Prosperity in the 1920's promoted a doctrine that was equally misleading, and one that was entirely devoid of a serious humanitarian tone.

Meanwhile, as we moved toward the forties, the ideological war between communism and fascism added its numerous bewilderments. We were to disapprove communism for its furious attacks on individuality, to like the Germans for their distrust of Russia, but to despise the Nazis for their cruelties to the Jews. Then, when Russia became our ally in World War II, we had to see the Soviets in a new and more tolerant light. Virtues suddenly grew in places that were thought to harbor only the seeds of atheism and bureaucracy. A year or two passed and, again suddenly, we were called upon to see behind the deceptive facade of socialist "democracy" and to recognize an insidious threat to our free institutions in all types of "socialist" propaganda.

Is it too much to say that only saints, fanatics and cynics could preserve their principles unaltered throughout the years from 1920 to 1950?

A few of the people who acquired "liberal" or "socialist" convictions during the thirties have not

been able conscientiously to shift gears again and to endorse with unqualified praise the Free Enterprise system which Mr. Flynn so much admires. These people think that the system has the same serious defects in 1950 that it had in 1935, when so many others felt the same way. And, in a choice between what we have and what they think we ought to have, they choose the latter cause.

It is easy to agree with Mr. Flynn that the stubborn "liberals" who still believe in a Welfare State and who seem to think that the *right* social legislation can bring justice to the American people are not much of a Saving Remnant. The good society is not made by legislation; it is not even preserved by legislation. But neither is it made or preserved by Business as Usual and by being Proud of our Capitalist Tradition. There is no strenuous moral challenge in Mr. Flynn's prescription. He is too much against the critics of Capitalism, and not enough against the things which made it possible for the critics of Capitalism to become convincing. Now, we are asked to regard these critics as a menace, not so much because they are wrong, but because of the mistakes they might persuade us to make if we should listen to them. This is not a heroic doctrine. It is a doctrine which silently confesses defeat while shouting accusations. Even if the accusations have substance, it is still a doctrine of defeat, for no man or party ever built a healthy social community out of accusations.

This book is just another chapter in the old argument about Economic Man. And as that argument led to nothing but the confusion of human issues with the technology of economic distribution, so this book has approximately the same effect.

COMMENTARY
"MEN WITH IDEAS"

OUR new series, "Men with Ideas," continues some of the themes of "Great Reformers," which ran through the first two years of MANAS. "Great Reformers," however, gave attention to personal life-stories, while the present series will concentrate upon philosophical ideas. There will be little concern for chronological sequence. Spinoza, for example, who will be treated in some future issue, ought to have preceded Leibniz, in respect to the succession of thought, but as the spirit of individuality is the genius of our own age, Leibniz seemed the better man to begin with.

These articles will not attempt anything like a "complete" presentation of the thought of those discussed. We seek the vital elements in the ideas of men of the past, in order, if possible, to extend the present horizon of thought. Although blind alleys of speculation will be avoided, contemporary prejudice will not be considered sufficient reason for ignoring the views of an original thinker of some other age. The Neoplatonists, for example, have long been ridiculed by modern scholars for their serious interest in what we contemptuously call "magic," but which they termed *theurgy.* Few modern readers, however, are aware that the Neoplatonists—in particular Plotinus and Iamblichus—gave more comprehensive explanations of psychical phenomena than most modern writers. Their vocabulary was different, of course. We should call it "animistic" or "teleological," while they would describe the current language of psychic research as "soul-less" and barren of any moral inspiration. Of the two accounts of apparently supernormal happenings, we candidly prefer the ancient interpretation.

Ours is an age when "going back" has powerful attractions. We are constantly being invited to "go back" to traditional religion, or to yesterday's economic practices. Well, if "go back" we must, we might as well return to what is living in the past—to the undiluted inspiration of past religions and philosophies—rather than to the mediocre orthodoxies which became their dead forms. This, at any rate, is what Leibniz did. We have his word that he went back to Plato for inspiration, and that he regarded his own system as an expansion of the Platonic philosophy.

There is reason to think that this kind of "going back" holds some promise of enabling us to "go forward" in the future. It ought at least to show how others learned to go forward, each in his own way, in his own time.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

[Readers of Tolstoy's novels are seldom familiar with the educational theories and experiments associated with this revolutionary mind. Tolstoy did originate a school, however, on his estate, from which it derived the name Yasnaya Polyana. During November and December of 1862 he wrote various accounts of the progress of his "radical" venturings into the educational field, interspersed with essays on educational theory. Tolstoy's insistence upon the spirit of freedom in the classroom and the conditions under which he most preferred to teach have reminded some readers of Bronson Alcott and his method of teaching children in "conversations."

The following passages are gleaned from some 140 pages of Tolstoy's writings on the Yasnaya Polyana school. Our arrangement of these quoted paragraphs has no especial meaning—more or less isolated ideas have been reproduced because they seem to bear upon thoughts expressed from time to time in this column.]

VISITORS, who have done so much injury to the instruction at the Yasnaya Polyana school, have in one direction conferred a great service on me. They have definitely convinced me that written and verbal examinations are a relic of medieval scholastic superstition, and that in the present order of things they are decidedly impossible and only harmful.

Often, under the influence of a childish conceit, I have wished to show some esteemed visitor, in an hour's time, the attainments of our pupils, with the result either that the visitor would be persuaded that they knew what they did not know,—I surprised him by a certain hocuspocus,—or else the visitor would suppose that they did not know what they really knew very well. . . .

There is in the school something indefinite, something that is almost independent of the teacher's control, something entirely unrecognized by the science of pedagogy, and yet it constitutes the foundation of the success in our teaching; this is the spirit of the school.

This spirit is amenable to certain laws and to the teacher's negative influence; that is to say, the teacher must avoid certain things in order not to destroy this spirit.

The spirit of the school, for example, is always found in inverse proportion to the compulsion and order required; in inverse proportion to the teacher's interference with the pupil's mode of thought, in inverse proportion to the duration of lessons, and the like. This school spirit is something which is quickly communicated from one pupil to another, communicated even to the teacher, is apparently expressed in the tones of the voice, in the eyes, in the motions, in the zeal of emulation,—it is something perfectly palpable—indispensable, and invaluable, and should, therefore, be the aim of every teacher. . . .

It is easy to say *understand.* Why can't all comprehend, and yet how many different things may be understood by different persons reading from the same book? The pupil, though he fail to understand two or three words in a sentence, may comprehend the delicate shades of thought or its relation to what went before. You, the teacher, insist on one side of the concept, but the pupil does not require what you wish to explain to him. Sometimes he has understood, only he cannot make it plain to you that he has, while at the same time he vaguely surmises and absorbs something entirely different, and yet something quite useful and valuable for him. . .

At the present time I am convinced that to sum up all the knowledge of a pupil is as impossible for the teacher or the stranger as it would be to sum up my knowledge or yours in any subject you please. To bring a cultivated man of forty to an examination in geography would be no more strange and stupid than to bring a man of ten to the same. The one as well as the other cannot answer the questions in any other way than word for word, and in an hour's time it is actually impossible to test their knowledge. Really to learn what either one knows it is necessary to live with him for months.

The child and the man are receptive only in a condition of excitement; therefore to look on the joyous spirit of the school as something inimical is a brutal mistake which we too frequently make.

If this excitement has study for its object, then nothing better could be desired. But if it be directed to some other object, then it is the teacher's fault, since he does not regulate this spirit. The teacher's problem, which is almost always solved unconsciously, consists in all the time providing food for this zeal and gradually getting it under control.

You ask a question of one; another wishes to recite—he knows! Leaning over toward you, he looks at you with all his eyes; he can hardly keep back the torrent of his speech; he hungrily follows the narrator, and does not allow him to make a single mistake. If you ask him, he will tell you his story eagerly, and what he narrates will be forever engraved on his memory. But if you keep him in such a state of excitement half an hour without permitting him to speak, he will begin to occupy himself by pinching his neighbor. . . .

By way of experiment I asked the best pupils to invent and design figures on the board. Although almost all drew in one given style, nevertheless it was interesting to observe their awakening rivalry, their criticism of others, and the originality of the figures they constructed. Many of these sketches were in perfect correspondence with the pupils' characters.

Each child has a tendency toward independence, which it would be injurious to destroy in any kind of instruction, and which is particularly manifested in the dissatisfaction at drawing from models. In the methods here described this independence is not only not vitiated, but is developed and strengthened.

If the pupil is not taught in school to create, then he will go on through life imitating and copying, since few of those that have been taught to copy would be able to make independent application of these acquirements.

By constantly holding to natural forms in our designing, and by frequently taking various objects, as, for example, leaves of a characteristic form, flowers, household ware, and objects used in common life, and instruments, I tried to prevent our drawing from degenerating into routine and mannerism.

FRONTIERS

Partisan Journalism

THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY is distinguished from nearly every other religious publication in the United States by standing equal with its secular contemporaries in all respects. Its articles are well-written and informing. Its editorials are often morally searching. Frequently, the *CC* brings to the attention of its readers matters which the commercial press ignores, thus performing a notable public service.

For these reasons, then, a departure from editorial impartiality in the *Christian Century,* when it occurs, is all the more noticeable. Such a departure is also instructive, as it seems to illustrate the weakness in any advocacy of a moral viewpoint which draws its inspiration from a single or restricted religious tradition. The *CC* for Jan. 4 prints what appears on the surface to be a dispassionate and almost sedate discussion of the fact that numerous members of the so-called "untouchable" caste in India, formerly converts to Christianity, have returned to their ancestral religion of Hinduism. Actually, however, this editorial presents a curious instance of religious imperialism in a paper which has no use at all for political imperialism.

How does the *Christian Century* explain the return to the fold of Hinduism of the Christian outcastes—to the extent of some 1500 persons, formally readmitted recently, in a body, in the State of Travancore?

The first reason given is the reform within Hinduism itself. The rigidities of the caste system, we are told, are giving way to more humane attitudes. Without exactly saying: so, the *Century* implies that the historic faith of the Hindus is crumbling under the pressure of modern technology and the influence of the Christian missions. The editorial asks:

> How can Hindus whose deepest conviction is that man's status is unalterablj hxet by an infinite series of transmigrations, explain their present behavior? They have suddenly set aside this conviction and started changing the status of outcastes as fast as they can.

If the *CC* editors really want an answer to this question, they might write to Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, leading authority on Indian philosophy, who is now India's ambassador to the Soviet Union, inviting him to contribute an article on the subject. Or, if this seems out of place in an avowedly Christian journal, they might at least have looked up the problem in the books of such scholars as Dr. Radhakrishnan and the late Ananda Coomaraswamy. The demands of editorial impartiality could hardly require less. Such an investigation would show that the static caste system of India is a perversion of the original Vedic religious philosophy and in no sense essential to its moral fundamentals.

What the editorial does offer to its readers is a grossly misleading account of the character and content of Hinduism. The following are sample statements:

> In modern times, Christian missions have worked in India for more than 150 years. They have presented to that country a religion whose conceptions of God and man are higher than anything Hinduism has to offer. . . .
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> Outwardly Hinduism is a welter of gods, godlings, devils, spirits, ghosts, mystic symbols, talismans, gross superstitions and fantastic and often repulsive practices, scriptures, temples, priests and holy men. Inwardly it consists of a mixture of polytheism and a belief in the transmigration of souls. . . .
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> Its pantheon of deities and half-gods has no roots in history, and the efforts of its devotees to read theistic content into their serried ranks ends in impersonal abstraction. The murky fog of its mythology has no relation to the modern mind and no value for contemporary living. Its customary practices and standards of conduct are related to a static agricultural society which cannot stand before the changes now taking place. Its estimate of personal and family living is so base that it attempts to rationalize one of the lowest moral codes in the world. Whatever Hinduism was for a saint like Gandhi, who owed so much to Christianity, or whatever it is for the speculative and transcendental philosopher, for the mass of Hindus it is little more than a fertility cult like the Baal worship against which the Hebrew prophets thundered centuries before Christ. . . .

The mingling in these passages of shrewd sociological commentary with statements so much in error as to be absolutely meaningless is evidence of the careless indifference which an intelligent sectarian can be capable of when his instinct for special pleading is aroused. Even if everything which Katherine Mayo accuses India of in her notorious volume, *Mother India,* were true—and it is hard to believe that the writer of these lines has read anything else—there would still be unconscionable misstatements to account for. Just where, in Christianity, are found "conceptions of God and man" that are higher than *anything* Hinduism has to offer? The "anything," of course, will have to include the conceptions of the "speculative and transcendental" philosophers of India, among whom are numbered, by all impartial judges, the subtlest metaphysicians the world has known.

The Hindu pantheon, we are told, has "no roots in history." But Hinduism has an elaborate cosmogony as well as a theogony—far more extensive than the Genesis story of creation—and the doctrine of avatars accomplishes a systematic integration of history with the idea of spiritual evolution. If some scholars are to be believed, the Christian teaching of the Incarnation was originally a tenet of oriental religion, known also to the Jews in their belief in periodic Messiahs. It is no secret that Hebrew religion teaches the coming of not one but numerous Messiahs—being in this more faithful to the Eastern original of the doctrine than Christianity with its single Incarnation and hoped-for Second Coming.

As for the generally contemptuous attitude of the editorial toward the Hindu religion, its injustice will become immediately apparent to the reader of, say, Edmond Taylor's *Richer by Asia,* or Vincent Sheean's *Lead Kindly Light*, both percipient studies of the religious culture of India. Taylor, for example, writes:

> Hinduism, unlike Christianity (or Marxism) is not a religion of revealed truth but of truths—truths which by their very plurality are suggestive guide-posts to the discovery of God rather than unbreakable rules for salvation. . . . An individual pilgrim may feel that his path is the best for him—or even for all men—but, if he is a Hindu, he is not disturbed when others take different paths, because what is important to him is not the path but the ultimate goal. Faith, to the Hindu, seems to mean an intense longing and constant striving for religious fulfillment rather than any kind of systematic belief; there is a definite feeling that the intensity of the longing is a much greater factor in religious success than the rightness of the belief. . . .
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> With us, faith, right belief, are absolutes, finally and immutably revealed. Right belief is salvation and error is damnation. Because error is damnation it is damnable—and infectious. It is not just a personal misfortune but a community menace. One man's error may cause other men to lose their souls. The misguided individual is the agent of Satan as well as his victim. Hence he must be purged from the community—or at least shunned as if he had the plague. . . .
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> The cultural humus in which a great number of our specific delusions grow is a threefold delusion of rightness, which apparently the Indians do not have, or have less of: our sense of rightness is apt to be excessively authoritative, our being right confers a quite disproportionate merit on us—and makes disagreement heinous as well as wrong—and the principle about which we are right has transcendent consequences.
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> Hence the frequency in Western history with which heretics get burned and deviationists get purged, hence the reason that psychoanalysts fill their journals with mixed personal and professional abuse of heretical colleagues, hence the tactical dissensions which barely permit the protagonists of the various schools of thought about achieving world unity through world government to remain on speaking terms with one another.

We have quoted more than necessary from Mr. Taylor in the hope that readers will wish to enjoy his astute analysis of cultural delusions in its entirety, and so gain the sort of appreciation of Indian religion which a few paragraphs of defense against a *CC* editorial cannot possibly convey.