

## GREAT QUESTIONS: I

OWING, doubtless, to some mysterious quirk in human nature, the most important questions that a man can ask himself are questions for which we have, for the most part, only all-or-nothing answers. Yet the important questions are never really met by such answers. Take the great question raised by Plato, and endlessly argued by Socrates in the Dialogues—whether or not there is a moral law which reigns in human life. This is a question which skeptics denounce as meaningless, while the advocates of revelation and religious orthodoxy insist that the answer—their answer—is quite plain, involving no equivocation or difficulty at all.

It is, in short, one of the great questions which have been given over to specialists. The "average man" does not wonder very much about the moral order, except under conditions of stress; and then he finds himself but poorly equipped to reason clearly in his own behalf. If Plato is right, and there are those who, by natural endowment, are best fitted to be educators and guides of their fellows, then we can only conclude that some drastic betrayal has taken place in the affairs of mankind, for the very persons to whom the majority look for help in such matters are the persons who provide the all-or-nothing answers. The theologians do not discuss the logical difficulties in believing that a moral law exists, and the skeptics and empiricists treat the inner hope of men that there is some such principle as though it were an hallucination, to be got rid of as soon as possible.

This leaves the idea of moral law with the status of a somewhat weak and sentimental belief—pleasant to refer to on State occasions, and easy to neglect when more "practical" considerations are at stake. In other words, we live in an age and a civilization in which it is possible to say anything you like about the moral

law, so long as you do not pursue the subject with vigor and consistency; at the same time, you can deny the moral law without fear of criticism, so long as you are careful to do it by implication and in the name of "reality" and "facts." The one thing that you must not do is discuss the moral law as though *it* were the all-important "fact."

This, however, is exactly what Plato did. As A. E. Taylor, the eminent English Platonist, observes, "What he [Plato] is in dead earnest in maintaining is that the universe is under the government of a Providence which ignores nothing and forgets nothing and that a man's fate all through eternity depends upon his character." The power that springs from Plato's writings surely grows out of this intense conviction. The reasoning in the Dialogues will not, perhaps, impress us so much as the strength of Plato's own belief in the moral law, and the way in which it works itself out as a way of life for his spokesman and protagonist, Socrates. Socrates is forever upheld by his inner convictions. He goes through a trial for his life and is condemned to death, yet Socrates is not dismayed. His friends try to help him, but they cannot, really. He rejects a plan to spirit him away from the prison before the sentence can be executed, saying that only a weakness of character could permit him to try to escape the penalty of the law. He refuses to sorrow at the prospect of oncoming death, explaining to his downcast disciples that the soul cannot possibly be harmed by physical death. Socrates did not merely "believe" in the moral law—he *trusted* it, which is something far more important. No one can read these three dialogues, the *Apology*, the *Crito*, and the *Phaedo*, without being touched and moved by the faith of Socrates. Where arguments may not move, the drama of a life may compel the respect if not the complete assent of the reader.

This is another sort of logic than that to which we are accustomed. It is the logic which displays its consequences in action. In reading Plato, it is needful to bear in mind this substratum of conviction. The *Republic*, which is commonly thought to be a portrayal of an ideal State, ought rather to be regarded as Plato's idea of a State which is devoted to the development of human character. The modern State, in almost every instance, is devoted not to character but to its own power and self-perpetuation. Plato's State had an entirely different purpose. As Taylor says:

[In Plato's view,] there can be no difference in spirit between the laws of public and of private morality. If the real function of the State and its institutions is to create a tradition of noble life into which successive generations of men and women grow as their rightful heritage, the State itself in its dealings with other States, and the diverse classes or orders within the State, in their dealings with one another, must conform to the very same ideal which we wish each budding citizen to take as the standard of his own personal conduct. Whoever holds that what would be "morally" reprehensible for the individual person may be "politically" admirable when done by the official representatives of the State, has broken with the whole view of the reasons for civic loyalty and political subjection characteristic of both Plato and Aristotle. Both are at one on the points that the true greatness of a State is to be measured neither by its material wealth nor by its territory nor by its success in dominating its neighbors, but solely by the personal worth of its citizens, and that the "law of the land" derives its right to respect from its conformity with the moral law; it is not from Greek philosophy, but from the practice of Roman politicians of the evil age after the second Punic war that modern times have borrowed the doctrines of "empire" as an end in itself and of "reasons of state" as superseding regard for right and wrong.

Have we, then, fallen among evil days? Perhaps; but it seems more likely that our moral perceptions have grown more acute, making it possible for us to feel more deeply our distance from any sort of moral ideal, while at the same time increasing the measure of the hypocrisy which is necessary to maintain the pretense of high moral standards in our society.

The time is appropriate, then, to return to the age-old question, Is there Moral Law?

It seems to be the case that moral law can be affirmed or denied, but that it is difficult to prove or disprove. And yet understanding of it, if it exists, seems to result from some sort of discussion or prolonged cogitation of the idea. The discourses of Gautama Buddha are almost entirely devoted to what Emerson later called the "law of compensation." For Plato, it meant that moral justice operates from within the human being. A man who neglects the moral law condemns himself by what he does to himself—he cuts himself off from a higher life. It is this, perhaps, which is the real key to the question, for, in these terms, recognition of moral law becomes a psychological experience unique to those individuals who seek out that experience. And how, one may ask, is a man who disbelieves, who is not interested in finding out, ever to discover the reality of the moral law?

This question has plagued all impatient reformers. They want a Decalogue fiercely enforced; they want a Pope to lay down the law; or even a Gestapo or an NKVD to exact the requirements of righteousness. There is reason to think that the impatient reformer does not understand the moral law at all. He seems to think that morality is a way of acting—something that can be controlled by threats or promises. But if Plato and Buddha were right, morality is a way of feeling, and if anything can successfully defy the rule of law or convention, it is the feelings of human beings.

One reformer who understood patience, Henry David Thoreau, had this to say on the problem:

Farewell my friends, my path inclines to this side of the mountain, yours to that. For a long time you have appeared further and further off to me. I see that you will at length disappear altogether. For a season my path seems lonely without you. The meadows are like barren ground. The memory of me is steadily passing away from you. My path grows narrower and steeper, and the night is approaching. Yet I have faith that, in the definite future, new suns will rise, and new plains expand before me, and I trust that I shall therein encounter pilgrims who bear that same virtue that I recognized in you, who will be

that very virtue that was you. I accept the everlasting and salutary law, which was promulgated as much that spring that I first knew you, as this that I seem to lose you.

My former friends, I visit you as one walks amid the columns of a ruined temple. You belong to an era, a civilization and glory, long past. I recognize still your fair proportions, notwithstanding the convulsions which we have felt, and the weeds and jackals that have sprung up around. I come here to be reminded of the past, to read your inscriptions, the hieroglyphics, the sacred writings. We are no longer the representatives of our former selves.

No intelligent man likes to declare himself apart, to hint of a special vision which belongs to him, making him, if not "better," at least more "moral" than his fellows. Yet an honorable man has to say where he stands. Thoreau said it here, we think, with more graciousness than most. He told a kind of allegory, and left it to his readers, his "friends," to decide what the mountain meant, and what was on either side. Perhaps it is best to discuss morality always in terms of some kind of allegory, for a literal interpretation of the moral law must always fall short of the truth. Quite possibly, the plant of moral perception grows from seeds that can sprout practically anywhere in the soil of human consciousness. And then, as a man begins to see by his own moral light, what appear to him are the objects and shadows, the shallows and deeps, of his own moral circumstances, and his good and evil become uniquely his own to comprehend and to evaluate.

If this is so, then the furious rush to some universal canon of behavior is the cause of most of the confusion. Perhaps it is only the light which is universal, while the circumstances and the seeing are particular and individual. This would make men alike in their judging, but infinitely various in their judgments; and if the growth of moral perception is a natural process, then these differences in moral judgment are inevitable and necessary, just as no plant ever looks exactly like any other, but evolves a form for its vital principle in an ultimately individual way, uniquely situated in its own place in time and space.

Yet with all these differences, the plant flowers and comes to seed. We can trust the sun and the soil and the water. We can trust the living essence in the seed. Nature is a vast profusion of living things, all of them rich with the fruition of the past and the potentialities of tomorrow.

We can trust Nature outside of us, but can we trust the Nature within? That is the great question. Are there sun and soil and rain of moral perception? This, really, was the pursuit of Plato in his endeavor to write of the education of the young. And it was his conviction, voiced by Socrates in the *Meno*, that the soul brings with it its own knowledge and moral integrity, the task of the educator being to nurture it. Basic to this view is faith in man, faith in the moral law, and faith in the inward knowledge of good and evil in human beings. The puzzling thing about education, of course, is that no one can tell how a child, or a man, will turn out. There is always something in him that resists classification and prediction. One might say that this "something" is what makes of man a moral agent—that the *moral* law applies only to beings who have the power to choose for themselves, even if they seldom use it with full awareness.

Education, then, is nothing more than the process of removing obstacles which stand in the way of the moral perceptions of the young. To try to *sway* their choices in one direction or another would be to substitute a manmade artificiality for the moral law itself—to repeat the mistake and crime of all the totalitarianisms and freedom-denying religions of history. One has to wait, of course, for the power of moral perception to emerge, but this means to maintain an attitude of constant expectancy that it is there, trying to emerge; and means, also, the capacity to recognize it, in the terms and circumstances of the young, and not merely our own. This attitude and capacity formed the blessed "ignorance" of Socrates, the teacher of morality to the ancient world, insofar as morality can be taught at all.

## *Letter from* **CENTRAL EUROPE**

INNSBRUCK.—Negotiations in connection with the proposed remilitarization of Germany are necessarily affecting all Europe; in particular, they have brought to the surface the inner attitude of Central Europeans toward the Western Powers, especially toward the USA. Quite evidently, a large portion of the population is not in favour of the Americans. It is argued that Central Europe, being well aware of the danger on its Eastern frontiers, was suitably equipped at the beginning of World War II to crush the Red Army and settle the Communist problem once and forever. The Americans, however, not only concluded an alliance with the tormenter of mankind in Asia and supplied the Bolsheviks with a huge number of modern weapons, but also, by means of air raids, they ruined most of the cities and towns of Central Europe, killing hundreds of thousands of men, women and children who had nothing to do with war whatsoever, thus opening the doors of Europe to the Soviets.

Reasoning thus, many Central Europeans are now convinced that the Americans operate under the guise of philanthropic or "democratic" motives, but with the sole purpose of intervening wherever they see a possibility—in order to make other countries more and more economically dependent upon them. The president of a labourers' union here declared recently that a Marshall Plan would not have been necessary, had the Americans prevented the destruction or removal of a great number of Central European industries after the war. Meanwhile, the commentators of the powerful, Communist-influenced networks incessantly claim that the US intervened in Korea, not to preserve the "freedom" of the Koreans, but because Wall Street wanted to regain by force the economic influence which had been lost in consequence of the awakening of the Asiatic nations.

The fact that the US wants Europe to rearm has opened a wide held of action to those who feel antagonistic toward the Americans. They recollect that the war-criminal courts, presided over by American judges, tried and condemned a lot of Central Europeans accused of "taking part in preparations for a possible war with the Soviet Union." They assert that the Americans, at the present time, are doing exactly the

same thing. They claim that the Americans, pretending that militarism was something immoral, disarmed Central Europe even to the point of blasting away the concrete air-raid-shelters. They declare that Central Europe was made helpless in order to build up new divisions as cannon-fodder for American defense and imperialistic ends—with the European forces, in theory, under the command of the Atlantic Nations, but in practice, under the Americans. They ridicule the American speakers who try to convince the Central Europeans of the gruesomeness and brutality of the Eastern leaders, asserting that the Central Europeans knew this twenty years ago. They attempt to discredit the American efforts for a United Europe by pointing to the passport-barriers between Western Germany and Austria.

Austria, although forming the heart of Europe, has so far taken no part in the discussions about remilitarization. There can be no doubt that—if rearming comes—quite a number of volunteers (professional officers and sergeants, adventurers and young boys who have not been soldiers yet) will enlist. But the masses will show no enthusiasm for new military preparations. They have, during two world wars, gone through the same experiences as the Germans—hundreds of thousands killed, many more wounded, crippled or ill, with a considerable number not yet returned from the prison-camps. Furthermore, Austrians are certain that, in a war against Russia, there would be not only a destruction of Central Europe as never before, but a terrible famine right from the start. Not unnaturally, therefore, the opinion is spreading, as a well-liked political leader put it a few weeks ago, "It would be better to live as healthy human beings under Soviet rule, than as cripples on democratic ground."

CENTRAL EUROPEAN CORRESPONDENT

## *REVIEW*

### "EVOLUTION IN A PRISON"

WARDEN CLINTON T. DUFFY'S *The San Quentin Story* (Doubleday, 1950) provides occasion for one of those "this should be read by everyone" remarks by reviewers. The best volumes of statistical analysis about crime and the most scholarly sociological dissertations fail to touch the level of understanding Warden Duffy shares with his readers, for here was a man literally born to fulfill an important if unusual destiny. Duffy's father was a San Quentin guard at the time Clinton T. was born, and the future Warden grew up in the atmosphere of the Big House, returning to the prison enclosure every day after school. The prison became a world in itself, and childhood ambitions were directed toward thoughts of fulfilling some significant part in the mechanism of its government—much in the manner of other youngsters who have dreamed of being princes, kings or presidents. Young Duffy's conditioning, however, was extremely unorthodox. His father disliked guns, violence, and brutality and constantly feared he would lose his job because he was always leaving his weapon behind; he had even been known to confront an armed murderer on the loose with nothing more than persuasive talk in favor of relinquishing his weapon. In a sense, too, Duffy inherited from his father his thorough dislike for capital punishment, and *The San Quentin Story* is a reasoned and seasoned appeal to voters in the state of California to outlaw the death penalty entirely.

Duffy walked into the Warden's job in a remarkable way, replacing former Warden Court Smith, from the obscure position of clerk, after a state investigation of tortures, graft and incompetence among the guards had led to demands for an entirely new deal. Duffy, having only a thirty-day trial period, immediately abolished the dungeons, "the foul fifty-foot cave where hundreds of men had suffered unbelievable tortures through the years," stopped the short-changing of prisoners on food, eliminated stamped

numbers on the prisoners' backs, and fired every guard who practiced brutality in any form. He did something else, too, which seems much more important, and perhaps it was the quality of fearless sincerity which pervaded this episode that won him the continued confidence of the men. For the first time in the history of the prison a Warden walked alone in the Big Yard, without guns and guards, determined to give the men hope that they would receive consideration and fair play by someone who regarded them as human beings:

I suppose I should have considered that there were men in that yard who would have no use for Clinton Duffy, or any warden; that there were also men who had murdered other men for small change or just for the hell of it. I imagine that there were probably no less than two hundred knives, daggers, blackjacks, or other hidden weapons somewhere in those thousands of pockets and sleeves. I suppose I should have remembered also that I was no longer a clerk, but a man who might be worth kidnaping because he could order gates unlocked and guard fire withheld.

But I wasn't thinking of those things. I saw them not as strangers or criminals or even numbers on a file card, but as human beings whose virtues and faults I knew better than anyone else, whose case histories I had studied for the parole board, whose wives and mothers and children I had known from many a tearful visit over the years. I have since been told that this was a naive and dangerous view, but I have walked the yard alone another thousand times or more since then, and nothing has ever happened to change my mind. My mind might be mistaken, but my heart tells me I am safer in San Quentin than most other men are on the streets of their home towns.

On the basis of his record, we would say that Warden Duffy is probably right. While not every criminal is susceptible to gratitude or reason, inmate society exercises a strong deterrent to any unapproved violence, and Duffy is an approved man so far as the inmates are concerned. He has brought them good food, an opportunity to wear more respectable clothes, incentives for work, leisure for learning new trades, radio communication with the outside world—and a sense of something like human equality which

Duffy shows he feels with even the men on condemned row. Warden Duffy *earned* his right to "rule" the prison in every basic sense, just as democratically as if he had been elected by the convicted.

Many penologists are familiar with the great impetus to prison reform brought about by the work of Lewis E. Lawes, Warden of Sing Sing. Duffy's innovations have probably done even more, in some ways, especially in minimizing the distinctions between free and imprisoned men. Lawes has often asserted that the difference between those inside and outside bars is apt to be very slight, but because Duffy was working for the men in terms of their own evolution to a better condition of mind and a greater security in the world to which they would finally be released, he made possible all manner of programs which would *demonstrate* the intelligence and varied capacities of the men within San Quentin walls.

Duffy and his wife, the latter the daughter of a former captain of prison guards, have had but one viewpoint since the beginning. This viewpoint amounts to a positive and active faith; they believe that the evolution of the human soul is seldom completely stopped, provided any encouragement is given for a reconstruction of moral energies. One of the most impressive passages in the book comes in Duffy's summation of the written reflections of a former inmate, once a District Attorney:

"Prison doesn't help any man," he said the day he left. "It's a poison, degrading all but the strongest. I don't know what to substitute for penitentiaries, but if I were district attorney again, I would hesitate about sending so many men to prison. It is far more terrible than people realize, and the sentences are too severe."

Subsequently Keyes was granted a gubernatorial pardon and made plans to open an office in Los Angeles. But the excitement and the strain were too much and he dropped dead two months later. This was unfortunate in more ways than one, because Keyes would have made a very vocal and sincere ambassador for the cause of modern penology. I was particularly impressed with what he said about the uselessness of prison terms for most men, because not

long afterward thirty American prison wardens, polled by an Eastern jurist, reached a similar conclusion. I personally believe that prisons with walls and cells and guns are necessary for a great proportion of our so-called criminals. For some first offenders twenty-four hours in San Quentin would be—and is—a nightmare, and is thus a sufficient deterrent. For others the critical point comes in a month, or a year, or years. But there is a saturation point in practically every man's servitude beyond which every additional hour is wasted and destructive punishment. Occasionally men who are locked up too long become "stir simple." We have them in San Quentin, men who could have been salvaged ten or twenty years ago, when the scars of their crimes—they're not all murderers, either—were still raw and painful. But there is no hope of rehabilitating them now, and they will be a public charge as long as they live.

Few men would single out for special attention the incident recorded below—probably no one with less than Duffy's share of interest in the fate of all human beings. Perhaps in these lines, too, we will find ample explanation for his earlier statement that "capital punishment is a tragic failure and my heart fights it even as my hand gives the execution signal in the death house." One of Duffy's strongest arguments against legal execution is that new evidence may be turned up, and often is, shortly after the man has been put to death. But behind this is a deeper sense of the way in which each man "turns up" new forms of important thoughtfulness in himself, even on the eve of his enforced departure. If a man can confess and respond in these ways, it seems to Duffy, as it seems to us, that he should not die:

"Warden," the condemned man said, "what happens tomorrow . . . after I . . ."

I knew what he meant. He was trying to say "after I die." He was wondering whether someone would come for him after the execution, so he would not have to lie in the crude San Quentin cemetery, with nothing but a numbered stick over his grave. I have been asked that last minute question before, but I have rarely had the heart to give a direct answer, especially when I know in advance that no one will claim the body.

"Now don't worry," I said. "Everything is arranged for. Everything will be the way you want it."

He gave me a strange, fixed smile. "Yes—I know all that, Warden. But what I also want to say is—where do I go when it's over? I mean . . . is there a life after death? The men on the Row talk about it all the time. What do you think?"

He said it as casually as though he was asking about the weather, but I knew he was strung up like a bow. The death-cell guard turned away in embarrassment, and at that moment the greenish glare of the newly painted steel walls seemed almost indecent. Life after death? What do you tell a man who has only twelve hours to live, a man whose thinking is a characteristic state of shock, a sort of twilight zone of distorted movement and shadow talk? What do you tell a man who has no God, a man without a church who has turned the prison chaplains away? I knew he was not afraid, as most men understand fear, because death is a welcome friend when you have already died a thousand deaths in the cat-and-mouse play of the law—the endless writs, appeals, petitions, and reprieves. His fear was of the unknown, and so I told him, as I have since told many others, to search for the answer in his heart and in his mind, and that there he would find whatever he wished.

Perhaps that was a wrong and hollow answer. Perhaps it was an evasion. I don't know. But he believed me because in that hour there was no other belief for him. I watched him die in the gas chamber the next morning, and I could see that during the long night he had found an intangible something to give him strength for the coming darkness. He nodded to me through the thick observation window, his lips formed the word "okay," and he was smiling. . . . I wonder what he found.

**COMMENTARY**  
**ADVANCE NOTICE**

DR. HUTCHINS' remarks about television (see *Frontiers*), to which we heartily subscribe, have extensive confirmation in the judgments of other educators. In January, after a week-long continuous survey of all the programs televised by New York City's seven TV stations, Dr. Donald Horton, a sociologist speaking for the National Association of Educational Broadcasters, told the Federal Communications Commission that the programs were "unsatisfactory." Even the so-called "informational" programs, he said, were too superficial to be called educational. He found these programs "a hodge-podge of isolated, relatively superficial material, presented without plan and often without advance notice to the public." Of all the programs presented during the week of the survey—from January 4 to January 10—only a single performance could qualify as "educational" under the definition of the Educational Broadcasters, and that program was the Johns Hopkins Science Review, originating in Baltimore, not in New York.

What is the future of television? According to Charles Siepman, a critic of the communication arts, television will probably "conform rapidly to a few . . . stereotyped conventions. It will be technically ingenious and inventive but artistically poor." And Gilbert Seldes, in *The Great Audience*, has this to say:

Television will be used as the primary force in the creation of a unified entertainment industry which will include sports, the theater and the movies, newsreels, radio, night clubs, vaudeville, as well as any minor activities, and will profoundly affect newspapers, magazines, books, the fine arts, and ultimately education. Co-existing within this pyramid of entertainment there will be a highly unified communications industry affecting political life.

Under our present laws we are not likely to get a single monolithic entertainment industry, but each network will be, in effect, a vertical trust, creating or subsidizing its own sports events, its own movies, investing in plays; and all the TV broadcasters

together will profoundly influence the outlying independents in many fields, just as the movies now influence the production of plays and books and, to an extent, the writing of short stories.

It is not so much a question of the future of television, as of the future of the rest of us, in a society so dominated by what amounts to an incalculably powerful "cultural" monopoly. As anyone can see, Dr. Hutchins does not exaggerate.

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

Editors: It seems to be a popular practice to offer a young child his food in dishes made to look like "choo-choo trains" in order to distract him from the business of eating, which is the *real* objective. We suspect this approach is very widespread, though it may not always be admitted, since cartoon fun is made of parents who go through antics to get a child to eat.

How are we to look at this "mode" of education? Surely these practices are carried forward into adult life as attitudes, although I can't at the moment offer an example. Could such practices be termed the "dodging of the real issues" in relation to children? It is most certain that the instant we pinpoint an objective, clarify it, and stick to it with determination, we arouse obstacles and oppositions. Further, we hear that we teach most effectively by example. Does this mean that the real issues of life are wordlessly conveyed: that the learning process concerning "issues" is best left undiscussed until the person has reached an age making possible an appeal from a mental basis?

If the phrase the "real issues of life" comes under scrutiny, it might be said that we may consider the cultivation of good eating habits for foods that will give the growing child a strong useful body in his adult years an example of a real Childhood Issue. There are again the attitudes of cheerfulness, willingness, dependability, promptness, etc., all of which will make the child better equipped to face the problems of adult life. What should be the basic premise, in such problems, for the one who is inevitably the teacher, since he is a parent?

PARENTS, unfortunately, are not much better than other people and too often find the easy way out in the discharging of responsibilities. Our questioner raises a good point in suggesting that there may be some need for a basic criticism of all cajoling techniques in dealing with children. The wrong parents are probably too often concerned with "opposition" from the wrong children for the wrong reasons. Obstacles and oppositions are a very real part of the educational equation. The greatest educators do not avoid these, but instead demonstrate a guiding genius in assisting the child to demolish obstacles after they have been faced.

We once suggested that the child may be considered to have two kinds of mind: one is that which conjures up clever ways of securing an immediate object of desire, regardless of the cost to anyone or anything else, while the second portion of the child's mind, as of our own, has a propensity for appreciating the Principle of Justice, which, finally, includes concern for the welfare of others. What our questioner calls "real issues" may invoke this second sort of mind. The "invoking" may be a very long process, and certainly we may not expect our children to retire to a secluded place for two or three hours for profound meditation (though encouraging them to spend a little time in solitude and deliberate thoughtfulness is a very fine idea indeed).

The first step in bringing forth a capacity for understanding an issue is to have the issue really confront us. We have to know *something is there* before any constructive thought can be expected, and it is one of the primary tasks of parents to let issues and problems be known. Here, again, we come to the subject of the craven fears which lead so many parents to avoid risking the opposition, dislike or anger of their children. Just as there are a great many "adult-haters" among children, so are there many "children-haters" in the ranks of adults who have been conditioned by seeing the way in which some children tyrannize a household simply with the unspoken threat of withdrawing an affection upon which parents have become dependent. We can sympathize with anyone who dislikes this type of child, but we must sympathize far more with the child himself, who is encouraged and helped into his tyranny over his parents' emotions.

We have to love our children well enough to give them absolute emotional freedom, and that means loving them well enough to risk incurring their extreme dislike or even professed "hatred," if such could conceivably result from a course undertaken in the interest of justice or truth. There is nothing worse than allowing our sense of justice to be perverted by our affections; such

perversions, on a larger scale, are the mystic stuff out of which fanatic totalitarianisms are made.

The same thing might be said in respect to the inquiry about "teaching by example." No, the real lessons, we think, are not "wordlessly conveyed"—nor are they conveyed *with* words. The real issues of life are met on innumerable levels of consciousness. Words have their place; silence has its place. We will of course have to recognize that this "learning process" about which we profess so much interest cannot be fully grasped by the child at an intellectual level, and, further, that if we continually prattle about "learning" and "mental growth" these will become vaguely disagreeable shibboleths to the child. A little awareness of "the learning process" will go a long way for a child, although that small portion needs to be there.

There is hardly a doubt that the results of the peace-at-any-price method are carried on by the child to later life in the form of attitudes. Anyone whose "loyalties" swerve to those who most flatter his ego may have been a child whose parents allowed him to think that pleasing Him was the summum bonum of the universe. This switching of the concept of Right from an impersonal to a personal base will also account for the ease with which alleged public servants have been known to change allegiance to the hand placing the most butter and sugar on the bread. Moreover, while we do not mean to suggest that the Nazi regime was due to high-chair pampering, there is a psychological alliance between racist attitudes and egocentric family attitudes. Moral perversion can begin in discriminatory favoritism at home, and frequently does in an over-rich culture predisposed towards pampering.

From all this, we may deduce one good "premise" for the parent to take that the secret of character growth in the child is locked up in the number and quality of choices before him to make. The parents' task should be to help him see that those choices are there; but not to "make" them

for him through bribery: these latter are no choices at all.

## *FRONTIERS* Educational Credo

*Dr. Robert M. Hutchins has given up his post as Chancellor of the University of Chicago to take up new duties with the Ford Foundation, of Pasadena, California.*

*Upon leaving the University, Dr. Hutchins delivered a farewell address to the students. His remarks, so far as we know, have not been widely published, but as the measured views of a great reformer in education, they ought to be. We take pleasure, therefore, in printing important parts of Dr. Hutchins' farewell address.*

We have been struggling to create here a model university. A model university is not one that asks, "What is good for these individual students?" but "What is good for all students?" for a model is useless unless it can be imitated. Some aspects of this are not perhaps as serious as might at first appear. It is more than a verbal twist to say that a model university will do its best to see to it that each individual student has the greatest opportunities and the chance to make the most of them. But other aspects of the effort to create a model university are as serious for the students as they seem to be. If a model university is needed, it must be because the educational system and the public attitude toward it need in some degree to be changed. . .

A model university in America at this time is necessarily at war with the public, for the public has little or no idea what a university is or what it is for. I don't need to tell you what the public thinks about universities. You know as well as I, and you know as well as I that the public is wrong. The fact that popular misconceptions of the nature and purpose of universities originate in the fantastic misconduct of the universities themselves is not consoling. It shows that a model university is needed; it shows how much one is needed; but it also suggests the tremendous difficulty of the enterprise upon which a model university embarks and the strength of the tide against which its students have to contend. . .

There must be something refractory about the material out of which a university is made, or perhaps my efforts have been too modest and too intermittent. At any rate I have concluded that there is something about institutional life, at least on a large scale, that makes it impossible to do anything about it, just as I have concluded that the food in the various faculty clubs is identical, even though the clubs are as far apart as New York and Palo Alto, and that nothing can ever be done about it either. One of the reasons why I would favor the development here of the Oxford and Cambridge system of small residential colleges that are federalized into a university is that I believe the smaller the unit the less institutional the institution.

. . . The whole doctrine that we must adjust ourselves to our environment, which I take to be the prevailing doctrine of American education, seems to me radically erroneous. Our mission here on earth is to change our environment, not to adjust ourselves to it. If we become maladjusted in the process, so much the worse for the environment. If we have to choose between Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, let us by all means choose Don Quixote. The flat conformity of American life and thought, toward which all pressures in this country converge, raises the only doubt one may have about democracy, which is whether it is possible to combine the rule of the majority with that independence of character, conduct, and thought which the progress of any society requires. . . .

One of the most interesting questions about the higher learning in America is this: why is it that the boy who on June 15 receives his degree, eager, enthusiastic, outspoken, idealistic, reflective, and independent, is on the following September 15 or even on June 16, except at Chicago, dull, uninspired, shifty, cautious, pliable, and attired in a double-breasted blue serge suit? Why are the graduates of the great American universities indistinguishable, even by their

grammar, from the mass of the population who have never had their advantages? . . .

The answer must lie in the relative weakness of higher education compared with the forces that make everybody think and act like everybody else. Those forces beat upon the individual from his birth upon almost a twenty-four-hour-a-day basis and constitute the greatest obstacle with which the schools have to contend; so that it can now be seriously argued that since education cannot cope with the comic book it should absorb it and substitute elevating and instructive comic books for textbooks. The horrid prospect that television opens before us, with nobody speaking and nobody reading, suggests that a bleak and torpid epoch may lie ahead, which, if it lasts long enough, will gradually, according to the principles of evolution, produce a population indistinguishable from the lower forms of plant life. . . .

The forces that beat upon the American citizen from infancy become really serious when he finishes his formal schooling and has to think about earning a living and getting along in the world. How will those who have jobs to offer and prestige to confer feel about him if he does not merge imperceptibly into the scenery? How far will he get if he does not adjust himself to his environment? I hasten to say that I am for tact, politeness, and good manners. I would not for the world be taken as urging you to be offensive or holier-than-thou or carry a chip on your shoulders or fail to distinguish between matters of etiquette and matters of principle. You may even wear a double-breasted blue serge suit if you find it becoming. But to adjust yourselves to brutality, inhumanity, injustice, and stupidity, of which the world is full, though it is easy, and may look profitable, is, I must warn you, habit-forming, and will make out of you at the last characters that you would shudder to think of now. . . .

Now our lives are overshadowed by the threat of impending doom. If you were neurotic, I could not blame you. To what extent the threat of

impending doom grows out of our ignorance and immorality, and to what extent it grows out of the ignorance and immorality of the Russians I do not pretend to know. I confess, too, that I have a life-long hatred of war that perhaps makes it impossible for me to have a rational view of the present situation. War has always seemed to me the ultimate wickedness, the ultimate stupidity. And if this was true in less enlightened days, when the best we could do was to slaughter one another with TNT, it is plain as day now, when, thanks to the progress of the higher learning, we can wipe out thousands of innocent people at one blow, and be wiped out ourselves in the same way. I am not a pacifist. I would echo the sentiments of Patrick Henry. I grant that when a great power is loose in the world seeking whom it may destroy, it is necessary to prepare to defend our country against it.

Yet the goal toward which all history tends is peace, not peace through the medium of war, not peace through a process of universal intimidation, not peace through a program of mutual impoverishment, not peace by any means that leaves the world too frightened or too weak to go on fighting, but peace pure and simple, based on that will to peace which has animated the overwhelming majority of mankind through countless ages. This will to peace does not arise out of a cowardly desire to preserve one's life and property, but out of a conviction that the fullest development of the highest powers of men can be achieved only in a world at peace.

War, particularly modern war, is a horrible disaster. If this is the destiny prepared for us, we must meet it as best we can. But at least we should have no illusions about it. There is a certain terrifying lightheartedness underlying the talk about war today. Each political party is belaboring the other not because it is too warlike, but because it is too peaceful. Men in public life are being crucified because they are suspected of trying to keep the peace. The presidents of the greatest universities have met and enthusiastically

voted to abandon the higher learning so that the universities may become part of the military establishment. By endless reiteration of the slogan, "America must be strong," we have been able to put a stop to our mental processes altogether and to forget what strength is.

We appear to believe that strength consists of masses of men and machines. I do not deny that they have their role. But surely the essential ingredients of strength are trained intelligence, love of country, the understanding of its ideals, and, above all, a conviction of the justice of our cause. Since men of good will regard war as conceivable only as a last resort, they must be convinced that all channels of negotiation have been kept open till the last moment and that their own government has sought in good faith, and without consideration of face or prestige to prevent the outbreak of war. Men of good will must be convinced that they are not fighting to maintain colonialism, feudalism, or any other form of entrenched injustice. And since it is obvious to the merest simpleton that war must come sooner or later to a world of anarchy, men of good will would hope that their own government would proclaim its desire to transform the United Nations from a loose association of independent states into an organization that could adopt and enforce world law.

There seems to be something about contemporary civilization that produces a sense of aimlessness. Why do university presidents cheerfully welcome the chance to devote their institutions to military preparation? They are of course patriotic; but in addition I think they feel that education is a boring, confusing, difficult matter that nobody cares very much about anyway, whereas getting ready for war is simple, clear, definite, and respectable. Can it be that modern men can have a sense of purpose only if they believe that other men are getting ready to kill them? If this is true, western civilization is surely neurotic, and fatally so.

You are getting an education infinitely better than that which my generation, the generation that now rules the world, had open to it. You have had the chance to discern the purposes of human life and human society. Your predecessors in this place, now scattered all over the world, give us some warrant for hoping that as you go out to join them you will bear with you the same spark that they have carried, which, if carefully tended, may yet become the light that shall illumine the world. I shall always be proud and happy that we were here together.