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THE TREMBLING EARTH

LAST month, before a joint meeting in Los Angeles of the American Rocket Society and the Society of Mechanical Engineers, Dr. Fritz Zwicky, well-known astrophysicist of the California Institute of Technology, made some startling announcements. He said that plans were being made to "bomb the moon," going on to suggest that a program of interplanetary aggression might solve the problem of over-population for the inhabitants of the earth. This proposal, reported in the Los Angeles *Herald & Express* for March 16, was made without the slightest hint of "science-fiction" content. Dr. Zwicky spoke of "creating a hundred new planets with a climate like the earth's and moving to them." He continued:

> We can bomb Jupiter and other major planets out of their orbits and into other orbits more to our liking. . . . We can transfer great masses from the surfaces of the big planets to the smaller planets and satellites and make them larger.

Maybe they can. At least, they can try, and that is a frightening enough prospect. We don't know the latest scientific word on whether or not Mars is populated; as we recall, there is doubt that Jupiter, Venus, and Mercury will support life as we know it; but what seems worth considering is the possibility that in these reaches of solar space there may be life as we don't know it. All in all, for an astro-physicist, Dr. Zwicky seems to take a very geocentric view of the matter.

A few years ago, we might have been able to ignore such incredible announcements. We could say to ourselves that the rocket enthusiasts like a headline as much as the next man. But only a few years ago most people thought they could go on living on the earth with comparative safety. As Thomas E. Murray, a member of the United States Atomic Energy Commission, said last November: "Amid wars, pestilences and famines, mankind has always been assured of one thing—that there would be a mankind living here on earth until the day on which man's temporal history would be terminated by an act of Almighty God." But Mr. Murray, whose address was printed in full in the New York *Times* for Nov. 18, 1955, was obliged to add:

> We no longer have this elementary security. Man now has the power to put an end to his own history. In its effort to protect the freedom of the world, America has invented weapons capable of destroying all human life. The avoidance of one danger has thrust us into a more radical danger.

Since the Atomic Energy Commission has incurred considerable criticism from those who feel that this agency has not been completely candid in warning the public of the dangers inherent in nuclear warfare and experiment, Mr. Murray's address has a special importance. He makes it very clear that thermonuclear weapons exceed so much the atom bomb in power that they must be regarded as "a different kind of weapon." Explaining, he said:

> The thermonuclear bomb crosses the threshold into a separate category of power by reason of the sheer force and reach of its blast. Its explosion is so tremendous that it must be reckoned as a different kind of explosion. But this is not the more important difference. The thermonuclear bomb not only blasts and burns more acreage, more buildings, more people; it also releases dangerous radioactive fission products into the atmosphere. True, the "A" bomb also releases these fission products, but on a small scale. However, the atmospheric contamination that results from large thermonuclear explosions is serious. In fact, it is so serious that it could be catastrophic. A sufficiently large number of such explosions would render the earth uninhabitable to man. . . .
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> Let me be more specific. One of the products released by any nuclear explosion is a substance that is called radioactive strontium. Unlike ordinary strontium, this strontium gives off beta radiation,

which is one of the three kinds of radiation emitted by radium and its decay products. Prior to the atomic age, there was no radioactive strontium in the atmosphere or the soil.

Of the radioactive strontium released in an explosion of a large thermonuclear weapon, some falls to earth rather quickly over thousands of square miles and some is shot up into the stratosphere. From thence, it settles down, diffusing throughout the whole envelope of atmosphere that surrounds the earth. Rainfall speeds its descent, but it comes down slowly; only a fraction of it is deposited on the earth during the course of a year. Hence, the contamination continues to be deposited on the earth for years after the blast of the explosion has died away.

From the earth's soil, radioactive strontium passes into food and then into the human body, where it is absorbed into the bone structure. Here its beta rays, if intense enough, can cause bone tumors. We know that there is a limit to the amount of this strontium that the human body can absorb without harmful effects. Beyond that limit, danger lies, and even death. The problem has been to fix the limit. It is still an unsolved problem.

Mr. Murray's point, here, is that an "all-out nuclear war" might produce so much radioactive strontium that the limit would be reached. In addition to this hazard, he speaks of the "sheer fact" that radioactive products have an effect on human genetics, and that "the new power we have in hand can affect the lives of generations now unborn."

In the same issue of the New York *Times*, Hanson Baldwin, military expert, discusses a civilian committee report on the Chemical Corps of the United States Army. After quoting and admitting the "logic" of the report's claim that the Chemical Corps "must develop agents and weapons for chemical, biological and radiological warfare to the fullest extent the human mind can compass," as "essential for the deterrent effect these agents and weapons can have on possible future wars . . . or for their actual use as concepts and policies may change," Mr. Baldwin makes this comment:

But neither the committee nor the Pentagon, which released the report, even referred to the moral stigma and the implications of horror and inhumanity which, whether logical or not, are associated with these weapons in the minds of the world's peoples. The same stigma, the same sense of horror should, of course, apply to the use of nuclear weapons against civilian populations.

. . . any war in which unlimited slaughter is implied is unlimited madness; it can achieve no useful purpose. Every military weapon has some psychological and political implication and limitation.

This is what was missing in the Chemical Corps report. We need constantly to emphasize and reiterate that we retain as in the days of our forefathers what Jefferson termed a "decent respect to the opinions of mankind."

It is probably too much to expect that the rocketeers and bombers of the moon will be moved by an appeal to have a "decent respect" for the opinions of the rest of the universe. The general feeling, today, is that the universe is a vast, mindless expanse, and that human beings are free to do what they will with whatever powers they can command. The only restraint, at any rate, that Mr. Murray proposes is one that grows out of a reluctance to destroy the world and ourselves with it. The idea that the systematic development of unlimited powers of destruction, with use of those powers a close second to their development, may give profound offense to Nature, has few advocates today.

Yet there may be a danger, because of the stupefying power of these new weapons of the atomic age, of overlooking matters of even greater importance. It may be wrong to think of thermonuclear destruction as the single, terrifying fact which may restore humanity to its senses. While awesome enough, the achievements of modern physics may be only one symptom of a change in human life which would have produced the same general effects, sooner or later, with or without atomic destruction to shock us into frightened awareness of what has happened.

To put it briefly, we have set ourselves adrift. We have cut root after root which joined us to the organic, traditional life of the past. We have abandoned or corrupted beyond recognition our inherited religions. We have broken the forms and anathematized the rule of old, authoritarian political structures. A large part of the world—the Communist part—has even dispensed with traditional ideas of morality. Meanwhile, technology has unintentionally confirmed all these decisions by changing the external environment of modern society so rapidly that even the symbols of past faiths have disappeared. To the questions, "Who am I?", "Where did I come from?" and "Where am I going?", there is no longer any authoritative answer.

In an article in *Perspectives USA* (No. 11), J. Robert Oppenheimer spoke of the "great and terrible barrenness in the lives of men," who "are deprived of the illumination, the light and tenderness and insight of an intelligible interpretation, in contemporary terms, of the sorrows and wonders and gaieties and follies of man's life." His account of the change that has taken place covers many of its aspects:

> In an important sense this world of ours is a new world, in which the unity of knowledge, the nature of human communities, the order of society, the order of ideas, the very notions of society and culture have changed and will not return to what they have been in the past. What is new is new not because it has never been there before, but because it has changed in quality. One thing that is new is the prevalence of newness, the changing scale and scope of change itself, so that the world alters as we walk in it, so that the years of man's life measure not some small growth or rearrangement or moderation of what he learned in childhood, but a great upheaval. What is new is that in one generation our knowledge of the natural world engulfs, upsets, and complements all knowledge of the natural world before. The techniques, among and by which we live, multiply and ramify, so that the whole world is bound together by communication, blocked here and there by immense synapses of political tyranny. The global quality of the world is new: our knowledge of and sympathy with remote and diverse peoples, our involvement with them in practical terms, and our commitment to them in terms of brotherhood. What is new in the world is the massive character of the dissolution and corruption of authority, in belief, in ritual, and in temporal order. Yet this is the world that we have come to live in. The very difficulties which it presents derive from growth in understanding, in skill, in power. To assail the changes that have unmoored us from the past is futile, and in a deep sense, I think, it is wicked. We need to recognize the change and learn what resources we have.

Nor is there, one might add, any good reason for believing that the breaks we have accomplished with the past are intrinsically bad. They may have been inevitable. The very sense of loneliness and alienation that afflicts modern man may be a condition of growth to some higher level of understanding. It is a question, perhaps, of whether human beings are ready to stand alone, as self-determining units, or whether they will try to fall back upon old and comfortable securities in which they can no longer fit.

Modern problems of religion make a good illustration. There is much talk, these days, by conscientious men of religion concerning the tendency of politicians and other publicly minded people to speak of religion as a sort of "utility" for the social order. This amounts to saying that if we cannot have religion from inner human longing and conviction, we shall have to have it, anyway, because we need it to stabilize society, and arm us with righteous fervor against the threat of atheistic communism. In recent years a number of prominent persons, some of them scientists, have declared for the importance of religion, more or less in these terms. But this seems more a manifestation of anxiety than anything else. It is one of the facades available to those who are unwilling to recognize the fact of the Great Change.

The actual situation in religion is probably quite different. In a recent *Nation* article (Jan. 27), Stanley Rowland, Jr., reporting on "Religion on the Campus," notes that the youth of this generation of college students have been "nurtured on fundamental insecurity." Money was

once an escape from uncertainties for the sons of the wealthy, but "for the college student of today—despite the relative plenitude of money—security can no longer be bought. What price security against the H-bomb?"

Mr. Rowland typifies the mood of present-day students as different from their fathers':

> Twenty years ago students often simply shed religion and embraced the sciences as the key to solving man's problems. Here is where a number of today's students part company with their elders. It's no longer easy to choose sides between science and religion, for the clash between them is no longer sharp; indeed, it sometimes does not exist. Many neat, mechanistic assumptions about human personality have been shattered in the laboratory of human events. It has become quite obvious that man isn't just a complicated amoeba with a preference for gin.
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> Students are well aware that man's lot can be and often has been greatly improved by the sciences. They are also well aware that science and "social engineering" can be used for brainwashing and for producing conformity and thereby depressing mass culture. In short, "social engineering" can also produce *1984*—and at times seems to be heading that way.

This mood of questioning and skepticism is not only on the campus. Last October, Ann Sayre, a contributor to the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists,* observed:

> If reason could bring universal enlightenment, it would have brought it centuries ago, for by no means has man just learned to reason. Obviously there is a wayward element which has kept the world chaotic, and we may just as well assume that this element lies in man himself. And the pity is that science, by definition, is not interested in the study of man as an individual. Even the most modern science tends to remove from consideration as irrational, trival, unimportant, or fictional a great many matters having to do with humanity . . . including the mysteries of creativity and individuality. This simplifies the scientist's problem, but it seems to advance us no further toward our dream of a new humanism. When this *a priori* decision concerning the unimportant and the important has drastically reduced the field of vision (which is called, I believe, reality), a tendency still remains to claim an enormous potency for science alone. If this contradiction were not so dangerous, it might be an amusing example of a bright new superstition. But dangerous it is. It is not pleasant to think of a system of law based upon mathematically-determined equations. It is in the nature of a bad joke to think of art as a laboratory synthesis. And a world from which both law and art have been deleted is in fact horrifying. It is toward this end which science can lead us just as easily as toward its better humanism, and in fact, the chances of the anti-humanistic end seem at the moment somewhat brighter.

The interesting thing—or rather, the thing that is vitally important to recognize is that some of our best thinkers are engaging in arguments of this sort, instead of announcing settled conclusions about man, life, and nature, and what ought to be done next. Not long ago, Linus Pauling, probably the world's greatest living chemist, was asked on a TV program what he thought of the statement of Robert A. Millikan, that the more "he [Millikan] read and the more he studied, the more he was sure about the existence of God." Pauling did not agree. "My experience," he said, "has been different, in a sense almost opposite, of Professor Millikan." He added that while there were many aspects of religion that offered no conflict with science, there remained some question as to the extent a "good scientist" could accept religious dogma.

Another expression of the scientific view is found in the opening paragraph of a *Science* (Jan. 27) review by A. J. Carlson of Oscar Riddle's *The Unleashing of Evolutionary Thought.* The author, Prof. Carlson reports, calls upon the leaders of men "to make up their minds on how much they care for truth." While "many religions render notable services to man," at the same time "they frustrate or misdirect the capacity or aspiration of modern man." Both author and reviewer seem to agree that the old "war" between science and theology is over. Today—

> The meaningful and enduring warfare is now between a genuinely modern society, struggling to be born, and the organized religions. Through dominant majorities, in all advanced Western nations, religious tradition and power now suppress or mask vital fact

> and modern thought concerning the supernatural. Thus no society dedicated to human purposes, rather than to supernatural purposes, can come into existence.

But the scientists, for all their eagerness to be "advanced," may play as big a part in the frustration and misdirection of human capacity and aspiration as organized religion does. Both these great forces in our society, in their institutional aspect, are reluctant to give up the idea of "authority." In the one case, it is the authority of supernatural revelation and of a God whose will can be "interpreted" according to the opinions, wise or otherwise, of religious leaders; and on the other, the authority of the mechanistic principle of explanation, which, as Miss Sayre intimated in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists,* bars notice of "the mysteries of creativity and individuality."

The historic surge toward freedom from tradition—blind, irrational tradition—is really the only aspect of Western history that can be called "progressive." And now, the failure to find any *regulative* principle of freedom which is independent of past tradition, and free, also, of the compulsive equations of the social engineers, has produced a kind of intellectual hysteria. This is the mood which looks first in one direction, then in another, flirts with inadequate compromises between the authorities of both science and religion, and even, in occasional desperation, finds "values" in educational methods which are the very opposite of human growth.

The difficulty, in a situation of this sort, is to give concrete embodiment to ideas which may represent a possible solution. After a man is stripped of both his inherited religious beliefs and his faith in science as a *deus ex machina,* what has he left? For this, in reality, is our situation. It is like asking, What timeless convictions do we possess, which no one can take from us?

Attacking the question obliquely, perhaps we should note that a world overtaken by desperate dilemmas is a world without humor, patience, and a feeling for beauty. The desperate men are always doctrinaire and fearful of disagreement. What, then, is a man likely to believe of himself and his fellows, if he can live without fear in a world filled with frightened, angry, and apprehensive people? What will *his* values be, and how may he have confirmed them, regardless of how he seems to have found them?

What sort of a being must a man be to maintain friendliness, tolerance, integrity, reasonableness, and hope in the world of today?

If we could have an answer to these questions, we might have the beginnings of a philosophy for the coming age.

REVIEW
AMERICAN SCHOLAR SYMPOSIUM

DISCUSSIONS such as "The Human Situation Today"—in this case occurring in the Winter *American Scholar*—can hardly avoid dealing in "high-level abstractions." The odds are that much of what is said in such contexts has been said many times before, so that the reader may gain the impression of a somewhat uninspired paste-pot job, a collection of generalities seldom more than once removed from cliches of cultural criticism. However, the current effort in the *Scholar*, gathering "distinguished writers" from various fields, contributes at least a widow's mite of clarification.

At one pole of orientation we encounter Reinhold Niebuhr, the world's most sophisticated defender of "original sin" as an explanation of man's present behavior, and at the other, Harvard psychologist B. F. Skinner, author of *Walden Two* and *Science and Human Behavior*. Dr. Skinner is a frank advocate of more effective social conditioning, so that human beings can be turned out in the precise types we consider the most useful to society. Dr. Niebuhr cautions us to "wait upon the disintegration of a tyrannical system" of politics and ethics, and to be patient and modest. "Materialism" will die and the child of God will return to his father, as soon as he discovers how utterly lost he is without him. Dr. Skinner, on the other hand, implies that we have marched the road to "materialism" only half way to the goal. To condition the human species as we condition a trained animal is the next logical step, and those who fail to see that the future is in this sort of science and not in religion need a new sort of conditioning in the worst way. Dr. Skinner wants men to be "automatically good," and, thinking in terms of a social ideal, has little patience with critics who maintain that there is no heroism or true virtue in the realization of an ideal unless it has been accomplished against great odds. Nonsense, says Dr. Skinner. Why depend on spontaneous insight when even "insight" can be made predictable? Dr. Niebuhr, on the other hand, will maintain that if man tries to control his environment without worship of God and a proper humility for his sinfulness, he will produce a society of even greater psychic confusion than the one we know today.

The best contributions, as we read them, are those by Max Lerner and Erich Fromm. Mr. Lerner, author of *It Is Later Than You Think*, believes that "latter-day man lives amidst an encompassing sense of doom":

> He has seen and experienced enough to make him weary of the garment of the earth and the tent of heaven and the body of his own flesh; within his New Society he is surrounded by automatism, battered by sounds and images hurled at him as a target, pressured toward conformity; he wanders lonely as an alienated cloud, roaming over a wilderness of commodities; he scarcely knows what to do with the wealth that his own contrivance has placed in his hands, and he is aghast at the destructive power he holds in his grasp. The pathos of latter-day man in the New Society is that he hungers for personal fulfillment and for a sense of community with others, and he has been unable to attain either. Much of the reason for the spread of mental disease is that, with the problems of making a living less and less pressing, hungers have been awakened for making a *life* before the social means and the social wisdom have been found for satisfying them.

But Lerner is more than a critic, and a great deal more than a pessimist. In this article, "The Flowering of LatterDay Man," the reader is invited to view the present as a necessary kind of purgatory, which may enforce awakening. Lerner continues:

> Yet amidst it all a surprising number of people are buoyant and hopeful, wanting more than anything else to pour meaning into the new molds of abundance that technology offers. This area of alienation, automation and looming radiation is exactly the time when more people are more eager than ever to learn how to get more enjoyment and meaning out of more life.

It is easy to mock them for their eagerness and perhaps their naïveté, or to mourn over their failures, but neither of these is the point. The question is not how wise or sophisticated they are, nor how much of that elusive commodity of "happiness" they are achieving. The massive fact is also the paradoxical one that such a flowering of energy and eagerness is taking place in so bleak an area.

Dr. Fromm, another contributor, pursues the analysis for which he has become famous—the alienation of man from his own institutions, from his work, and finally, from his own acts: "He is alienated in the sense that his acts and forces have become

estranged from him; they stand above and against him, and rule him rather than being ruled by him. His life forces have flowed into things and institutions, and these things, having become idols, are not experienced as the result of his own efforts, but as something apart from him which he worships and to which he submits. Alienated man bows down before the works of his own hands. His idols represent his own life forces in an alienated form. Man does not experience himself as the active bearer of his own forces and riches, but as an impoverished thing, dependent on other things—things outside himself, into which he has projected his living substance." What Dr. Niebuhr sees as sin—sensual indulgence—Fromm attributes to an understandable confusion:

> One might epitomize the way many of us today have been conditioned from childhood with: "Never put off till tomorrow the fun you can have today." If I do not postpone the satisfaction of my wish (and I am conditioned only to wish for what I can get), I have no conflicts, no doubts; no decision has to be made; I am never alone with myself because I am always busy—either working or having fun. I have no need to be aware of myself because I am constantly absorbed with consuming. I am a system of desires and satisfactions, I have to work in order to fulfill my desires, and these very desires are constantly stimulated and directed by the economic machine.
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> We claim that we pursue the aims of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, the love of God and of our neighbor. We are even told that we are going through a period of a promising religious renaissance. Nothing could be further from the truth. We use symbols belonging to a genuinely religious tradition, and transform them into formulas seeing the purposes of alienated man. Religion becomes a self-help device for increasing one's own powers for success. God becomes a partner in business. The "Power of Positive Thinking" is the successor of "How to Make Friends and Influence People."
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> Love of man is a rare phenomenon too. Automatons do not love; alienated men do not care. What is praised by love experts and marriage counselors is a team relationship between two people who manipulate each other with the right techniques, and whose love is essentially a haven from an otherwise unbearable aloneness, an egotism *à deux.*

Turning to Joseph Wood Krutch's regular *American Scholar* column, "If You Don't Mind My Saying So," one finds the helpful suggestion that nearly all of the serious debates and discussion of our time revolve around the definition of "materialism" and/or a failure to understand the shifting meanings of this term. Once upon a time, when a man announced that he was a "materialist," it meant as Krutch puts it, "I believe that the only fundamental reality is that which occupies space and which has weight." It is different now:

> The matter which disintegrated privately over the American desert and then publicly over Japan ceased in those instants either to weigh anything or to occupy any space. At those instants, therefore, the meaning of the term *materialist* disappeared as completely as the disintegrated atoms themselves When men fought in the streets of Byzantium over the terms *Homoöusian* and *Homoiousian,* some shadow of meaning may have remained in them. But between the man who says, "I am a materialist because everything is material," and the man who says, "I am not a materialist because nothing is ultimately material," no definable difference any longer exists. What is material at one moment may become, in an instant, not material at all.
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> On the basis of this seemingly demonstrated fact, many a scientific treatise will have to be revised if the now meaningless statements are to be eliminated from them. Almost at random I opened a recent book on one of the biological sciences. There the authority of a distinguished scientist is quoted to support the contention that the appearance of life on earth can be accounted for "without the intervention of the non-material." Does this statement, in the light of the most recent knowledge, mean anything at all?

Dr. Krutch places his hope in the sort of man who will begin to think for himself when he discovers that "science" cannot think for him, when he realizes that the standards of the Good and Beautiful will never be *provided.* Man—tending to be either a religionist or a short-sighted hedonist—has to become a philosopher instead.

COMMENTARY
WITHOUT BOUND

SINCE the great question of the day (according to Mr. Krutch) is the meaning of "Materialism," and since, opening a copy of Lewis Mumford's *In the Name of Sanity* (Harcourt, Brace), we came upon our favorite quotation dealing with the nature of man—a problem closely connected with questions about Materialism—we quote again, after Mr. Mumford, a passage from Pico della Mirandola's "oration" *On the Dignity of Man.* The fact that we have probably quoted this passage, in one translation or another, some four or five times during past years does not deter us, for we think it likely that Pico gave the best account of Man, animal, human, and divine, that Western civilization has produced.

The designing deity is made by Pico to assign to man an indeterminate nature and a place in the middle of the world. The deity then addresses man thus:

> Neither fixed abode nor a form that is thine alone nor any function peculiar to thyself have we given thee, Adam; to the end that according to thy longing and according to thy judgment thou mayest have and possess what abode, what form, and what functions thou thyself shalt desire. The nature of all other things is limited and constrained within the bounds of laws prescribed by us. Thou, constrained by no limits, . . . shalt ordain for thyself the limits of thy nature. . . . As maker and molder of thyself, thou mayest fashion thyself in what ever shape thou shalt prefer. Thou shalt have the power to degenerate into lower forms of life, which are brutish. Thou shalt have the power, out of thy soul and judgment, to be reborn into the higher forms, which are divine.

Pico was an intellectual comet of the Italian Renaissance. Born in 1463, when he was twenty-four he challenged the Church to debate with him the 900 theses with which he placarded Rome. The Pope forbade any debating, since thirteen of Pico's propositions were pronounced heretical, and the youth left for the more liberal atmosphere of Florence, where he came under the patronage of Lorenzo de Medici. In Florence, Pico became the leading spirit of Lorenzo's Platonic Academy. He was an admirer of Plotinus, and the influence of the great Neoplatonist is plain in what Pico says on the subject of Deity, in *De Auro* (Sir Thomas More's translation):

> God is not Being; rather is He the *Cause* of Being. As the one primal Fountain of Being, He is properly described as the ONE. God is all things, the abstract Universal Unity of all things in their perfection. To even think or speak of God is profanity.

Pico was the great philosophical eclectic of the Renaissance. He quoted the Kabala and the Pythagoreans as well as the Gospels to support his contentions; he mastered Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Chaldean, and Arabic and during his short life (he died of a fever at thirty-one) he laid an ineffaceable mark upon his times. His influence has been immeasurable. Johann Reuchlin, the teacher of Luther, followed Pico in his interest in Kabalistic lore, and it is likely that the mystical strain in the works of the great inspirers of the Reformation owed something to Pico's idea of a Kabalistic esotericism in Christianity. But like Reuchlin who came after him, Pico was above all an educator, and virtually the founder of European Humanism.

Pico's interest in exotic mysticisms and even "magic" has led writers of Encyclopedia articles to accuse him of paradoxical contradictions. *Chambers,* for example, says:

> . . . his works are a bewildering compound of mysticism, scholasticism, and recondite knowledge. He interpreted the Mosaic text by the Neoplatonic doctrine of the microcosm and the macrocosm, and maintained that in natural magic lay the strongest testimony to the truth of the Gospels. . . . he exhibited, along with childlike credulity, an argumentative ingenuity worthy of the subtlest schoolman. . . . His writings are of little value but the magic of his personality survives. . . . He was one of the most chivalrous, generous, and versatile of men; his character is as engaging as it is curious and complex.

The *Britannica* remarks: "Pico was the first to seek in the Kabbalah a proof of the Christian

mysteries and it was by him that Johann Reuchlin was led into the same delusive path."

In these chastened days, one may wonder how a man who accumulated so much wisdom in so short a time could be guilty of "childlike credulity," and why Kabalistic studies, which also inspired Newton and Spinoza, and as a byproduct led Reuchlin to be the first opponent of the waves of bigoted anti-semitism which swept sixteenth-century Europe, should have constituted a "delusive path." Pico's wisdom stands, whatever may have happened to the "climate of opinion" in which he lived. Will our wisdom survive as well?

CHILDREN
and Ourselves

As indicated by our discussion of last week's question, we are in basic sympathy with the view that a parent had best not aim at achieving a certain type of "result" with a child. The mood of non-interference, stemming from a conviction that each young person has the right to discover his own right way, is nicely expressed by Gibran:

> You may give them your love but not your thoughts
> For they have their own thoughts. . . . and
> You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.
> For life goes not backward or tarries with yesterday.

Yet it is possible to construct an ethical purview we may wish our children to share with us. While there are a million and one conflicting "moralities," varying with land of birth, blood lines, communal and economic conditioning, the philosophers and psychologists all seem to agree that man cannot fulfill himself without the knowledge and practice of love, and, conversely, that hate corrodes the central fibers of our being. So we can say, of our children, "Let them love much and hate little."

Or, to be less general, since all men have some experience with love and with hate, we can say that the important thing seems to be to let hate die quickly, when it appears. Love, when it must die, should die reluctantly. The man whose loves die hard and whose hates die easily is a good man.

But what may be meant by "love," in this context? Love is a willingness, a desire, to give of one's best to the cause, the one, or the ones, loved—by which is implied devotion in its purest sense, having little to do with formal religion or any other inducement to ritual. A devoted love withstands disappointments, and expects that the best may come in spite of many of them. The man devoted to his country does not let untoward events destroy his love, for he has always the hope and promise of a brighter future. Steadfast, he gathers other steadfast men around him. Of such caliber, it is said, were those now called the "Founding Fathers" of America. Of such caliber was a Gandhi, and of such, it seems, is India's present president, Jawaharlal Nehru. Neither attacks from within, nor years of prison, left sores of bitterness in these remarkable personages. Their love lasted, and their hates, if they ever had them, died easily.

Turning to the field of interpersonal relationships, we encounter two sorts of men: one allows professed love to become animosity, and may harbor resentments for a long time; the other honors all that is noblest and best in a friendship until he dies—whatever attitude the other may have come to adopt. When marriages break, the man of love and honor keeps a measure of love and honor still, in thought of the best that was once seen and known in a former partner during happier days. The average man, it appears, finds it far easier to place the blame for all shortcomings on another, so that no problem of responsibility will have to be personally assumed.

After all, why should the children of today find it so hard to "honor their parents"? Among many answers to this question, one of them—frequently mentioned—is that religion, with its emphasis on devotion, is not now a binding force. No longer do parents stress devotion as at once an inspiration and an obligation. Do we mean that true devotion can be "inflicted," or conditioned into existence? Not a bit of it. But if it is true, as we suspect, that each child has a fairly large capacity for love, and if "devotion" is one of the open sesames by which that love comes to find and understand itself, a child can at least acquire a rough *description* of devotion from conventional religion—that is, if parents are themselves sincerely devout.

But we are not sorry, as some seem to be, that present youth has little exposure to the moralizing rigors of the old religious atmosphere. As a matter of fact, few of them can be

successfully exposed any more, mostly because their parents, when *they* "believe," seem now to do this in a different way. Some readers may recall William Bernard's study of delinquency, wherein he pointed out that even parochial schools, with all of their boasted strictures, do poorly enough when the delinquency statistics are added up. It is as though an old and simpler conception of love through *stylized* devotion has passed away, leaving no natural substitute in its place. Parents are no longer so serious, even in Catholic families, about maintaining a constant demeanor of "devotion" towards husband and child in the home.

And so, though all human beings, young as well as old, may love much as before—love parents, love partners of opposite sex, love friends—our culture furnishes so few examples of constancy that it is not easy to learn how to become a man whose loves "die hard." Love has become less and less an accompaniment of devotion, and is considered more and more to be an *experience.* "Experiences" are of necessity of fragile duration, compounds made of time, emotion and circumstance. Even love for one's children—the children a parent seldom sees in a genuinely cooperative work-relationship around a home both help to maintain—becomes more symbolic, less an actual presence.

We can suggest no way to teach children how to become those whose loves die hard and whose hates die easily, save the obvious ones, but this does not mean, in our opinion, that the subject is not worth thinking about. The obvious ways are to emphasize in our own actions, speech and general demeanor, that our *feelings* in regard to any human situation are far less important than our desire to understand. If we consider animosity purely negative, a sort of road-block in the way of understanding, even our children will tend to try to get rid of "hate" as quickly as they can, when it is felt, since love needs the quality of devotion for its full fruition. Finally, *any* example of constancy serves to tell our children something of the true meaning of love, and why, unless love can last well, it is not a love worth talking about.

Whenever a parent shows unalterable determination to follow through on each one of his promises—no matter how apparently trivial—he is teaching his children to gain a capacity for loves that "die hard." He is teaching them faith in themselves, really—faith in the ideal they dream of in whatever they set out to do.

FRONTIERS

Freedom Road

THE reports from Kenya—which initially seemed incredible—that African resistance to British policies in that colony is changing to a non-violent form, now have confirmation. We learn from a recent *Peace News* that the Kenya correspondent of the London *Times* has sent in a dispatch asserting that "the Mau Mau, having lost the terrorist battle," are "now adopting a policy of passive resistance on the lines employed in India to bring about the end of British rule."

Already more than a thousand Africans have been arrested by the Kenya Government for participating in the passive resistance movement. The arrested persons were accused of being "the passive wing of Mau Mau" and of plotting "an underground revival of Mau Mau." Commenting, *Peace News* said that "it is the policy of the Kenya Government to label any African group which is opposed to the status quo as Mau Mau." The fact of these arrests was admitted by the British Government in reply to a question by Fenner Brockway, MP.

Mr. Brockway, who has long interested himself in the plight of the Kenya Africans, said recently at a meeting for colonial freedom:

> The terrorism of Mau Mau is gradually subsiding and the Africans are looking for more peaceful methods of securing their freedom. They are being largely influenced by the Indian community, who have identified themselves with their cause, and passive resistance is being widely practiced.

Brockway remarked that while many Kenya Africans were shocked by Mau Mau methods, they would never be loyal to the present regime. He added:

> Our Government will be making a great mistake if it thinks that the mere physical suppression of Mau Mau is going to end the demand of the African people for human equality and liberty. The situation in Kenya is very bad. The forced settlement in villages, the economic frustration and the new voting proposals are all meeting with dissatisfaction among the Africans. Not until we realise that these Africans are human beings and we treat them as such will real peace come to the troubled land.

In the United States, a similiar series of arrests has taken place, also directed toward the perpetuation of racial injustice. Some 115 Negro leaders, including twenty-six clergymen, were arrested recently in Alabama and charged with violation of a 1921 law designed to protect the public against economic boycotts by labor unions. What had the arrested persons done? They refused to ride on buses in which Negroes are obliged to sit in a segregated, "Jim Crow," section.

In Alabama, Negroes constitute 32 per cent of the total population of the state. The Negro strike against riding in the bus lines of Montgomery, the state capital, began on Dec. 5, 1955, when a Negro seamstress refused to move out of her seat at the order of a bus driver who wished to draw a line separating the white and Negro passengers. These buses used to handle 30,000 fares daily. Today, the economic strength of the Negro population has, in the phrase of a New York *Times* reporter, "converted the buses into 'yellow ghosts'."

While the early days of the boycott were marked by violence—buses were shot at in Negro districts during the first week—the mood of non-violent resistance now pervades the campaign against segregation in public vehicles. One of the arrested leaders (who were released on bail, since the jail was too small to hold them all), the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., spoke to a crowd of more than 2,000 on Feb 23, saying:

> This is not a war between the white and the Negro but a conflict between justice and injustice. . . . We are seeking to improve not the Negro of Montgomery but the whole of Montgomery. . . .
>
> If we are arrested every day, if we are exploited every day, if we are trampled over every day, don't let anyone pull you so low as to hate them. We must use the weapon of love.

Commenting, a *Peace News* writer, Gene Sharp, observes:

> Montgomery, Alabama, may go down in history as the scene of one of the most significant and hopeful events of the mid-twentieth century.
>
> In this struggle the Negroes of the Deep South have acted on their own, relying on themselves, the justice of their cause, and the power of truthful, non-violent action, to attack continued domination of their lives by the forces of reaction and white supremacy.
>
> Never in American history has there been such mass-sustained, non-violent action as there has been in Montgomery. That this mass non-violent defiance should take place in the heart of the Deep South is profoundly significant.

In Mississippi, the state with almost half its population Negro—white (55 per cent), 1,188,632, Negro (45 per cent), 986,494—there has been no attempt at integration of the races in response to the United States Supreme Court ruling on public education. It was in Mississippi that the brutal murder of a Negro boy, Emmett Till, went unpunished last fall; it was in Mississippi, also, in Yazoo City, that the Negroes who petitioned for the right to send their children to school with white children found themselves without work or livelihood, as the result of an economic boycott. (See MANAS for Jan. 25, page 6.)

But even Mississippi is changing. A thoughtful article by Gladwin Hill, New York *Times* correspondent, reports a conspicuous cleavage between the older generation which feels a responsibility to the existing system and the young, who tend to be more open-minded. Feelings run so high on the issue of segregation that discussion within families is sometimes impossible. Mr. Hill's article, which is part of a large "Report on the South" published in the *Times* for March 13, has the following to say about conditions in Mississippi:

> Down the years Mississippi's largely agricultural economy, pegged on cotton, has yielded steadily decreasing revenue in relation to the growth and diversification of other states, leaving Mississippi the poorest state in the Union. There is little question that the restricted productivity of half its manpower—the Negro half—has been a sizable factor in this.
>
> Recent decades have brought a succession of blows to the comfortable and once-lucrative socio-racial pattern inherited from slavery days. The New Deal, with its social legislation and exaltation of "the forgotten man," tended to put plantation-style paternalism, the keystone of the segregation system, out of business. The industrial boom of World War II gave Mississippi's Negroes, while they remained politically impotent, a degree of economic enfranchisement. The war also cracked Mississippi's isolation, taking young people of both races abroad and exposing them to new concepts.

While Mississippi is a "horrible example," along with Alabama, of resistance to the Supreme Court ruling, incidents of violence have not been common. The state is not an armed camp. White resentment is against the Federal Government, the National Association for Advancement of Colored People, and the North, rather than against the local Negroes. Then there is the effect of recent changes:

> Mass action against Negroes, such as pressures to drive them wholesale from the state, has not materialized for one evident reason; the Negroes are economically important. Unlike twenty or thirty years ago, they now represent a sizable fraction of consumer purchasing power. And they constitute a big segment of the labor supply on which Mississippi is dependent in its effort to "balance agriculture with industry" and make economic headway.

Mr. Hill thinks that time and economic pressures will eventually triumph over the resistance to integration. Mississippi must have peaceful relations between Negroes and whites to attract the Northern capital that is needed to build factories for industrial expansion, and in time the leadership will pass to the more liberal, younger generation.

What is common to all these events is the changed conditions which reduce even the likelihood of anything more than isolated incidents of violence, due to the economic interdependence which welds the races together, and the growing interest in non-violence as a means of obtaining

justice. Some weeks ago a MANAS editorial remarked that Gandhi's demonstration of the power of non-violence launched a "movement of immeasurable potentiality for good"—"a movement, moreover, which can do nothing but grow." The Negroes of South Africa have made an effort to use non-violence in their struggle for justice, and now the people of Kenya have adopted this principle. The American Negroes have caught the spirit, and who can tell how soon it will spread to every corner of the world where colonialism, racial discrimination, and oppression still dominate the scene? Gene Sharp exclaimed in *Peace News:*

> One of the qualities of non-violent resistance is that, once it is used, its example is a challenge to oppressed people everywhere.
>
> White supremacists in South Africa are probably shuddering at the news from Montgomery, if the newspapers have dared to print it. It can bring hope to the people of Cyprus, Kenya, and Malta.

How ironic it would be if the dispossessed of the world—the presumably "primitive" black men of Africa, and their "childlike" cousins in the United States—should be the ones to teach the civilized West the power of non-violent resistance to evil! What if their non-violence is at the outset the child of necessity, born of the failure of violence and lack of the arms which successful violence requires! There would still be the lesson that, in an economically interdependent world, men do not *need* arms to obtain justice.

Change is certainly in the air, and these may be days of new revelations—not from on high, but from the capacities of ordinary men who are overtaken by a great idea.