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THE IDEA OF AUTHORITY

IT is characteristic of our time that the authority of the dominant or "white" civilization is being questioned all over the world. While many members of white civilization regret the tradition of its dominance and look forward to a time when color and race will be taken as signs of superficial difference, and nothing more, it must be admitted that this attitude is seldom represented in national policies. Even the democratic and so-called "progressive" countries of the West are reluctant to withdraw from positions of political authority in lands where they have exercised administrative power.

In these circumstances, two historical results are possible: (1) representatives of the Western powers can be *driven* from authority by one or another of the methods of revolutionary revolt available to the "subject" peoples, or (2) they can withdraw under the guidance of constructive intelligence, in recognition of the illegitimacy of their position.

The legitimacy of power, of course, is an arguable matter. We should hate to have to measure the validity of the various claims to authority over the Suez Canal. The importance of the Canal to economic or military survival of the British Empire is a factor which depends upon how you rate that survival in the terms recognized by the British government. The differences between Israel and the Arab world, again, illustrate the complexities of any sort of moral decision on the question of the control of disputed territories. Manifestly, the element of compulsion and the multifarious influences of international power politics are going to play a large part in whatever resolutions of these difficulties come about.

What we are interested in discussing, here, is the *voluntary* factor in the relinquishing of authority. No doubt historical transitions and exchanges of authority will be governed by a complex mixture of motives for a long time to come. Before any ideal solution of such problems can take place, the peoples of the world will have to achieve far more maturity than is presently in evidence, and undergo extensive reforms in their ideas of nationality, ownership of land, and the values of material welfare, security, and survival. But since there is already an *element* of voluntary moral decision in the relinquishing of authority—best illustrated, perhaps, in the British withdrawal from India, and British policies in certain African possessions of Britain—it is possible to argue that this voluntary element may be increased in weight and influence by means of analysis and discussion.

The prevailing value in any such discussion is clearly the right to self-determination. And when the expression, "self-determination," is used, there must obviously be some sort of national or cultural identity at stake for those who ask for *self*-determination. When one group deals with another group, there is a relation between group-identities.

For example, in the present controversy over the policies of the United States in relation to the American Indians, there is an argument about the identity of the Indians. Unhappily, the administrators of Indian affairs and the legislators who determine the over-all policy of the Government toward the Indians take a view of Indian identity which is radically different from the Indian view. It is natural, therefore, that there should be great differences, also, concerning the "rights" of the Indians. It may be presumed, also, that the Indians themselves do not entirely agree, from tribe to tribe, or even within a single tribe, on the nature of Indian identity. There cannot, therefore, be any sharp and clear answer to the problem, but only an approximation.

But this conclusion applies only to practical decision. There is a larger question which can have a clear conclusion—a conclusion as to the *principle* which should rule in relationships between groups. Once that principle is established, the practical decisions may become easier, less confused by compromises of motive, although the compromises produced by circumstances and the impossibility of giving sharp outline to group opinions will probably always remain.

In the June 1956 issue of *America Indigena*, publication of the Instituto Indigenista Interamerica, of Mexico, Sol Tax, dean of the social sciences at the University of Chicago, addresses himself to the "problem that arises when one person or group is in authority over another and has the power to decide what the other one should do *for his own good."* He defines the problem:

> Main concern is with communities who are under some authority, like colonies under the rule of benevolent powers which remain in power to help the colonials prepare themselves for independence. I think especially of American Indian communities who are under the Indian service, which behaves in a notoriously paternalistic way. The syndrome however is ubiquitous. In India or Indonesia the advent of national political independence has transferred from one group to another the power to be paternalistic; in Mexico or Peru the same power has long been held by nationals; it makes a difference who wields the authority, but the problem I am now discussing arises in any case where there is benevolent authority over communities of people which "accepts its responsibility" and uses the power it has to make and enforce decisions.

To simplify the problem, Dr. Tax reduces it to an uncomplex relationship, as between parent and child, or between the Bureau of Indian Affairs and a particular tribe of Indians. The problem lies in a difference of opinion as to what is "good" for the child or the tribe:

> Mother thinks Johnny shouldn't eat so much candy; it will injure his teeth. Or the pupils in a class decide to chew gum and the teacher forbids it—regretfully—for the same good reason. Or the Indian tribe decides it wants to have its own school on the reservation, but the Indian Service says they should go to the public school so they can learn the ways of the white man, for their own good. . . . This now is the problem—who should have the final word?

Dr. Tax deliberately eliminates all complicating factors, in order to elucidate a principle. For if Johnny has a sister, there is the modifying problem of Johnny's *example* to the other child, which will affect the mother's judgment; or if there are some Indians who want *their* children to go to the Indian Bureau's school, this will be a further support of the Bureau's position and an embarrassment to the other members of the tribe. Taking the simplest instance, that of Johnny and the candy, Dr. Tax states his ruling values:

> Among the objectives that a good parent has is to protect the child from harm until he is able to protect himself. The younger the child, the greater the need for protection, but training for independence begins early and needs to increase rapidly. Therefore, although there is no single general rule to help a parent decide when and whether Johnny should have his way, the first rule is the *quicker the better* for any good influence on a child.
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> There are two main limitations. One is safety; the parent cannot let the child do serious damage to himself. The other is more difficult. A child doubtless needs the feeling of protection that an authoritative parent may give him; but this is just the kind of protection he should lose as soon as possible. Aware of these two cautions, the parent ideally gives the child his head as early and as often as possible. Child psychology is not my field, but it is my understanding that no age is too tender—on principle—to begin.

This is Dr. Tax's first rule. But before we go on we should probably explain his justification for using the illustration of a child, in connection with the problem of the authority of one group over another. Having pointed out that such authority is commonly considered to be "wrong" because a group of human beings, as we say, "shouldn't be treated like children," he remarks that "we ought to ask also if even children ought to be 'treated like children'." Thus, in his discussion, he seeks

first to establish the kind of "paternalism" which is necessary and permissible.

The first right of the child, then, is to have his way "as quickly as possible." Dr. Tax continues:

> The second rule is almost equally obvious, difficult as it may be to apply in practice. The child should be permitted to have his way only as he is able to understand the consequences of alternative decisions. Theoretically, for example, Johnny may be allowed to decide whether or not to eat the candy only if he knows the feeling of a dentist's drill. When this point is reached, it is difficult to know; and it is easy to be wrong in either direction. The safe rule appears to be that if there is no great absolute danger to the child of a wrong decision, then he ought to have his way even if the parent cannot be sure he understands completely.

Dr. Tax now makes the point that seems most important of all. For it does not matter, he shows, which of the two parties in such a controversy is "right." Both, of course, whether parent and child, or Indian Bureau and Indian tribe, believe they are right, and the issue between them is not one of being "right" at all—it is the issue of *freedom.*

The child, the Indian tribe, the minority, the colonial people, or any subject of external authority, should have the right to make mistakes. Dr. Tax is eloquent on the subject:

> If freedom means anything other than to think dark and bitter thoughts—and every slave everywhere has that poor freedom—it must mean freedom to act. That implies freedom to decide how to act. And any decision implies the possibility of error. It is, therefore, a grievous mistake to deny a child the right to make the decision about his own action only because the parent—or teacher—believes the child is wrong.
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> This is not only a matter of logic, however. Think but of the common phrase that experience is the best teacher, or that one learns from his mistakes, and it becomes evident that to deny the child the right to make mistakes deprives him of his opportunity to learn, to grow, to become independent.
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> The salient rule, therefore, remains that *provided* that emotional factors and real and present danger are not pressing—and *provided* that the parent is reasonably satisfied that the child understands the consequences of the decision—then the child must have it his own way. The same rule, exactly, applies in the classroom or in a student organization with an adviser dedicated to guide its activity. In the last analysis, the children have to decide for themselves, and they must be permitted to decide in a way that their elders know is wrong.
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> I would like to stress this again. If a parent wants to make the decision, he has the power to do so. But if he wants to perform properly the function of bringing up the child, he should never exercise the power except in the limits posed, and never simply because he is sure he is right. As a parent I know full well that we cannot easily approach this ideal. Usually there is neither time, patience, nor opportunity for full discussion with the child. I want to emphasize that in practice it is difficult and often impossible to apply the principle. Let parents not add unnecessary guilt to their overburdened consciences. But the principle is still there and important to use. I should think it proper for the parent to make the decision for the child because there is no time to understand the child's point of view, or no time for the child to understand all of the issues. These are human limitations. But it is wholly improper to make the decision on the grounds that mother or teacher—knows best.
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> It is very easy for a parent or a teacher to use the subtle authority of his position and the respect in which a child holds him, and to let this satisfy him that they have discussed the matter fully and achieved agreement with the child. Within reason, this seems wholly appropriate; I have not suggested that any person is convinced only by reason, or that mother and teacher do not actually know better than the child. My only point is that if persuasion fails and the child continues to disagree, it is generally right to give in and *certainly wrong to use force where persuasion has failed.* And when I use the word child, I mean a teen-ager too. Perhaps these strictures apply especially to young adults with strong independent ideas!

If one reads carefully Dr. Tax's conditions and qualifications, it is difficult to find any flaw in his reasoning. Even if, to take an extreme example, a child insists upon behavior that is devastating to the harmony of the home and disturbing to the necessary economic activities of the parents, there is still a way to allow the child a kind of freedom. The "consequences" to be

pointed out to him would then involve the measures the parents will be obliged to take to maintain their home and work. These consequences can be imposed without anger, and as a matter of course. Presumably, they are of a sort that can be expected as a preventive to anti-social behavior. It can be pointed out that the child's destructive behavior has placed him outside the home, so that he can no longer expect to participate freely in its benefits. He may be denied such rights and privileges as the parents determine, not as a technique of prohibition, nor even as a punishment, but as measures which the parents adopt to protect themselves. In this way, the *idea* of the child's freedom is preserved, and the child can understand that he has in a sense *chosen* to bring those consequences upon himself. He was left free to decide, after being told what he might expect.

Dr. Tax now turns to the question of authority over subject peoples:

> Do the principles apply to the relations of administrators to colonies under their jurisdiction? Particularly do they apply in North America to Indian tribes under the authority of the Bureau of Indian Affairs?
>
> I think that the rule which we have established applies without any doubt at all. If the governor and the community disagree on a course of action for the community, and the governor cannot persuade them, *he must let them have their way.* Whether or not the community turns out to have chosen a wise course of action is quite beside the point. Every people, if it is free, is free to make decisions, hence must have the right to make mistakes.

Now to be considered are the differences between a child and a community. The community, in the first place, unlike the child, is able to make rational decisions. Second, a community is made up of a number of adults who may discuss what they wish to do. Practical wisdom issues from discussion, so that, as Dr. Tax says, "the administrator would be wise to take their view seriously indeed." Finally, the administrator is generally in a position of authority over persons with a cultural tradition different from his own. He is "very likely to think he knows more about the point of view of the people than he really does." If he insists upon his own view, he is likely to be wrong; and—

> If the administrator makes a wrong decision on behalf of a community, it may be a very serious matter which will affect their welfare for generations. The issue is much more grave than in the case of a disagreement between parent and child. The community builds up a distrust of the governing power, because of past mistakes, and communication is made even more difficult.
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> Therefore, again, it is even more important than in the case of the child that the administrator not exercise his power to make choices, but rather permit the community to make its own mistakes.

Turning directly to the problems growing out of the Indian Bureau, Dr. Tax has this to say:

> . . . most administrators in these positions are members of our dominant culture who believe our culture is in fact superior to other cultures, and they assume that the people of the colony are all naturally anxious to become like us. In the United States, our whole policy with respect to the Indians rests on the assumption that it is only a matter of time before Indians will adopt our ways; that some of them have made more progress than others, who are more "backward." The fact is that many Indians are *not* anxious to become like us; they are comfortable in their own culture; and it doesn't help matters at all to call them "backward." The result is a kind of passive resistance and complete breakdown of communication and understanding. The administrator then imagines that the Indians no longer are "reasonable," so he feels justified in using force.
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> In fact, however, force does not work, not only may the exercise of force be ethically wrong, but it usually does not achieve the result that the administrator tries to achieve.

So far as we can see, Dr. Tax stakes out certain irrefutable claims concerning the sort of political authority that is exercised by colonial powers and by government bureaus such as the Indian Bureau of the United States. First, if we assume that the peoples subjected to authority are "childlike," this is no excuse for withholding their freedom from them "for their own good." Their

own good demands that we give them their freedom "as quickly as possible."

Second, these peoples are *not* children. They are doubtless different from ourselves, and may, through the debilitating effects of long subjection to our power, have been seriously weakened, but this only increases our responsibility to restore their freedom to them, in whatever way we can and as soon as we can.

Now a realistic view of colonialism and of the administration of areas inhabited by non-dominant cultures forces us to differentiate between the motives of exploitation of a subject people and ill-considered paternalistic efforts to do "good" to such people.

Both these motives have undoubted existence in such situations. In addition, these motives are commonly confused with each other, by design.

The first task, therefore, of those who would see justice done is to distinguish between these motives. But they can be set apart and examined only on the basis of Dr. Tax's analysis. If it is argued, for example, that the Indians of a certain reservation ought to be led out into the American world of free enterprise, there to learn the ways of white men and to become happy and productive members of our society; and if, as a consequence of depopulating the reservation, uranium-bearing land becomes available to mining interests that want only to protect America from a fate worse than death; then there are certain unequivocal things to be said. First, taking the Indians off the reservations and trying to "educate" them in American culture may be regarded by the Indians as a final indignity to their religion and a mutilation of their lives. It is often a thumping lie and an intolerable fraud to pretend that this is doing good to the Indians. If we want to do these things anyway, then let us admit that we do it as an act of naked imperialism, and not "for the good of the Indians."

There is no good for the Indians that is not recognized by them as a good. With a tool like Dr. Tax's article, critics of the policies of the Indian Bureau are in a position to demand an end to hypocrisy and pretense. This tool can be brought to bear on the specific problems of the various tribes, and the policies of the Bureau examined in its light.

The traditional Hopis, for example, have for years insisted that the Government of the United States has no sovereignty over the Hopi people. Why not let the traditional Hopis have their independence? Monaco, the gambling capital of Europe, has been an independent principality of Europe for something like a thousand years, except for an interlude under the French. The people of Monaco live on a rocky promontory eight square miles in size. The Hopis live on mesas in Arizona. Why should it be impossible or "impracticable" to permit the Hopis to resume a freedom they regard as rightfully their own? Who would be harmed by this? If not all the Hopis want independence, then the Hopis that do want it should have it. Is the Hopi value of an independent life to pursue their convictions without interference from white Americans of less importance than the casinos of Monte Carlo? Can't we manage what the French were able to manage in giving Monaco back its freedom?

Must *all* the imagination and ingenuity of Americans be expended in the design of guided missiles and communist-catching techniques?

REVIEW
IMMORTALITY—SHADES OF VIEWPOINT

FOR those who began to ruminate on the possibility of a rational theory of immortality after reading C. J. Ducasse's MANAS article (April 25), "Is a Life After Death Possible?", the Bantam publication, *Reincarnation—the Whole Startling Story*, by DeWitt Miller, will be a puzzler. Miller's background seems to be largely Spiritualist, and the Spiritualists are often reluctant to give credence to the rebirth theory, since, as with those who believe in Heaven, the "Other World" of discarnate personalities loses interest if the actual life of the future becomes a continuance of the life we already know. So it seems a shame that a book destined to reach so wide an audience should not be written by a man like Dr. Ducasse, who, while not classifying himself as a "believer" in reincarnation, does full justice to the idea.

The passages from Miller's book we have in mind for discussion relate directly to Dr. Ducasse's views. First, Mr. Miller begins by quoting from Dr. James Hyslop, well-known psychical researcher. With a bias which seems common among those of Spiritualistic leanings, Dr. Hyslop briefly disposes of the idea of rebirth:

> What it is that can recommend the doctrine of reincarnation to its believers is difficult to understand. It (reincarnation) contains nothing desirable and ethical. . . . Reincarnation is not desirable, because it does not satisfy the only instinct that makes survival of any kind interesting, namely the instinct to preserve the consciousness of personal identity. . . . A future life must be the continuity of this consciousness or it is not a life at all.
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> Moreover, there is nothing ethical in the doctrine. The absolute fundamental of all ethics is a *memory* and the retention of personal identity, and memory and personal identity are excluded from the process of reincarnation. . . . I can only say that, if proper evidence be advanced to prove reincarnation, I shall admit it, although I shall have to regard the cosmos as irrational.

Miller then quotes from Ducasse, when the Brown University teacher of philosophy declares rebirth-theory logically and philosophically tenable (note the difference in tone between these writers). Dr. Ducasse says:

> . . . It does seem that if survival is a fact, then the most plausible form it might take would be rebirth on earth, perhaps after an interval occupied by the individual in distilling out of the memories of the life just ended such wisdom as his reflective powers will enable him to extract. And this conception of survival also seems to be the one which would put man's present life on earth in the most significant perspective.
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> What is it that could be supposed to be reborn? An intelligent answer may be returned by saying that it might be the core of positive and negative capacities and tendencies which we have called a man's individuality, as distinguished from his personality. And the fact might further be that, perhaps as a small result of persistent striving to acquire a skill or trait he desires, but for which he now has but little gift, aptitude for it in future births would be generated and incorporated into his individuality.

With these measured statements in mind, the reader has opportunity to form a judgment of Miller's partisan mood:

> Professor Ducasse's remarks present a theory, as to what happens to the individual between incarnations, which I have met with many times. It may be so. Like Dr. Hyslop, I would be forced to admit the existence of anything if I were confronted with conclusive proof. But if conclusive proof should ever be forthcoming of Professor Ducasse's hypothesis, I would not only consider the cosmos irrational; I would consider it the product of a sadistic deity who was insane. If I were forced to choose between reincarnation with an interval between "occupied by the individual distilling out of the memories of the life just ended such wisdom as his reflective powers enable him to extract" and the medieval conception of hell as an eternal bed of hot coals, I would certainly choose the latter. At least it would be warm there. Fortunately, there appears to be no logical necessity for such a choice.
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> Dr. Hyslop makes a goddess of conscious memory and clothes her in a dozen unbecoming petticoats; Ducasse strips her so naked that there is

nothing left to take off and hence the show is over and we might as well go home. At least give her a Bikini and a bra. . . .

Come on, guys and dolls, let's see what we can find out about it all.

We doubt if anything more is needed to indicate why we regard the publication of Miller's *Reincarnation* as an unfortunate event. Far better the flitting shades of "Bridey Murphy" for the cause of discovery. Bernstein at least offers a suggestive account of something which may (or *might* have been) an argument for reincarnation. Though convinced, personally, in the doctrine of rebirth, Bernstein, moreover, unlike Miller, does not presume to tell the "whole story" of the reincarnation hypothesis. But in *Reincarnation—The Whole Startling Story*, we encounter biassed Spiritualistic denials of reincarnation, via the seance room—as if such peculiar communications carried genuine weight—and these denials constitute the central theme of Miller's supposed "impartial examination." Someone ought some day to bring out a contrasting volume not to argue belief or unbelief, which is rather silly—but to provide the public a fair jumping-off-place for personal speculations on rebirth-theory. So far, Dr. Ducasse seems to have provided the best current material of this sort, as in the closing section of his book, *Nature, Mind and Death*, and in the discussion reprinted in MANAS.

People seem to go on talking about this subject, once they begin. We have had numerous comments on the Ducasse article, and recently received a paper, prepared by a MANAS reader, which seeks to place rebirth-theory in the broad context of associations which it seems to deserve:

Many of the great thinkers of ancient Greece were not materialists but reincarnationists. They saw no reason to be materialists, because their kind of philosophizing and science did not emerge in a hostile atmosphere of bigoted religion. The prime characteristic of the ancient Greek was an attitude of wonderment. He felt no threat to the freedom of mind in a philosophy of immortality because there was no personal Jehovah to "administer" that immortality—to present it or to take it away. That was the theological conception which played a determining role in the formation of modern materialism. So we may look with envy at the ancient Greeks, who found nothing alien to their ideas of nature and process in the acceptance of the cycle of purification through rebirth—as celebrated by the Greek poet Empedocles, and found as explicit teaching in the mysteries of Orpheus.

It appears in the writings of Plato, and is repeated in the teachings of Plotinus. There were, in fact, nine hundred years of continuous teaching of reincarnation by the Pythagoreans, the Platonists, and the Neoplatonists; and it also emerged in the earlier—Gnostic—Christianity.

Now there is the question of what goes along with this teaching, what its implications are, and what consequences it has for other departments of our life. Let us take first the question of growth. We know what growth is: development in the case of the individual. We are familiar with the biological side of growth, and know what happens to an individual during the growth from a germ plasm to a many-million-celled organism. That is the physical side. The *moral* development of the individual is less easy to pin down; there is vast variety among human beings in the moral nature—even to polar opposites. A great light is thrown on the polarities of our moral character by a consideration of the possibilities of reincarnation. For evolution would then become the opportunity for *continuous* unfoldment of our powers and capacities.

COMMENTARY
THE WISDOM OF THE LAW

SINCE most of the articles in these pages take a dim view of the influence of institutions, there should be value in recognizing that institutions sometimes embody far more of social intelligence, and even moral insight, than critical opinion ordinarily allows. Of course, institutions as traditional foci of power and authority have no moral intelligence. It is the men who use them and modify their function that exhibit the moral intelligence. But the record of institutional behavior may include a record of the consistent practice of human wisdom.

The courts, for example, while often a source of frustration and a barrier to what common sense regards as simple justice, may also act as a corrective to impulsive decision. The courts have been the scene of a long and arduous experience of human nature. This experience enables the participants in court actions to anticipate issues and situations which would seldom occur to the layman, and to provide for them.

One thing more: The courts are actual instruments of public decision in a society in which difficult dilemmas are constantly confronting administrators. The critic, on the other hand, is free of such responsibility. The critic can go to the public with his complaint over the miscarriage of justice in a single instance, forgetting or neglecting to point out the extreme complexity of justice in many cases which involve legal decision. This fact, as much as anything else, may explain why the most respected social "idealists," when confronted by the practical needs of government or administration, often reveal serious unfitness for these responsibilities, sometimes becoming angrily authoritarian, if not actually tyrannical. It would probably be a good idea for every man who wishes to set up as a social critic to undertake practical administrative responsibility for at least a year or so, before rushing into print with condemnations and panaceas.

The inspiration for these observations is a book published last year by the Indiana University Press—*The Moral Decision—Right and Wrong in the Light of American Law,* by Edmund Cahn. There is a wealth of sagacity in this book, which might easily become a text for discussion groups concerned with social issues. It is largely a record of cases requiring moral decision which have come before the courts of the United States. A discussion group would find it profitable to consider these cases in three steps—(1) after the statement of the facts as established, to see how the members of the group would rule to accomplish justice; (2) after the court's decision has been read, as a basis for reconsideration of the thinking of the members of the group; and (3) after hearing some of Mr. Cahn's illuminating comments on the decision rendered by the court.

To take an example: In a case that was finally decided by Judge Benjamin Cardozo when he sat on the Court of Appeals in New York state, a man named Arthur Wagner sued a railway company for damages to compensate him for an injury he received in falling beneath a trestle which formed the approach to a bridge. Wagner's cousin, Herbert Wagner, was thrown from the car when the train lurched in turning a curve at the point where the track changed from the trestle to the bridge. The car was crowded and the conductor had failed to close the platform door. The train stopped after crossing the bridge and Arthur Wagner walked back to the point where he thought Herbert had fallen. Other passengers climbed down beneath the trestle and found Herbert's body, and while they were standing there, Arthur fell at their feet. He had slipped in the dark and was severely hurt.

Arthur brought suit for his injuries against the railroad. The railroad disclaimed responsibility, on the ground that Arthur's attempt to rescue Herbert was his own act, and not the fault of the railroad.

In this case, the railroad won in the lower court, but Judge Cardozo reversed the decision and awarded damages to Wagner, declaring, "The wrong that imperils life is a wrong to the imperilled victim; it is a wrong also to the rescuer." Judge Cardozo also said: "The cry of distress is the summons to relief. The law does not ignore these reactions of the mind in tracing conduct to its consequences. It recognizes them as normal."

There are dozens of cases in this book which show the fine discrimination practiced by American jurists. *The Moral Decision* should provide engrossing and informing reading to all those concerned with understanding the problems of social order.

CHILDREN
and Ourselves

Editor, Children . . . and Ourselves: Since I am a new subscriber to MANAS, I may be asking you to deal with a question already dealt with many times in your column. The question is this:

> Is there value in members of a community agreeing on specific rules in the training of children, or should each family bring up its children in its own peculiar way? We have made a dogma of "non-interference," but could there not be a golden mean—a minimal agreement, at least, that might result in good habits such as come from the control of bad tempers and disagreeable moods? Would not this make for a future co-operative spirit in all the children?

We don't believe that this question has been discussed here before—perhaps because the word "community" requires an extended effort at definition. However, in Platonic fashion, we sometimes arrive at worth-while conclusions by beginning with the broadest considerations and working our way along back to particulars.

In respect to the philosophy of education, one might regard the whole United States as a community of opinion. For such a movement as that of Progressive Education, with its emphasis on "permissiveness," has influenced nearly every school in the land to some degree; it is doubtful if even parochial rigidities have remained entirely unaltered. This has given rise to the opinion that educationists in the United States are faddists who oscillate between extremes as to how much "freedom" and how much "discipline" are best for the child. Oscillations, though, do not affect all schools at the same time, and the general tone is still that of experimental freedom.

All of this has been an inevitable result of the history of religion in America. So many creeds, so many sects—and always, in the background, the inexorable march of scientific opinion towards the areas once entirely ruled by the theologians. Most denominations have relinquished literal belief in Original Sin and in Heaven and Hell, with only the Catholics, among the large religious groups, still feeling entirely sure of themselves as to how the child should be taught and what he should be taught. Smaller Fundamentalist sects reflect the old certainty of the dogmatists, but these have little influence upon the larger "community" of educational opinion. Some Protestants, by the way, send their youngsters to Catholic schools because of a growing impatience with what they regard as the "hit or miss" methods in education—and the quality of reading, writing and arithmetic in the parochial schools, at least, may argue for oldtime insistence on drill and discipline.

Each family will inevitably "bring up its children in its own peculiar way" to some degree. Educationists are frustrated when they discover that entirely different methods are employed at home, and this is why "parent-teacher conferences" seem so important to any teacher who believes he has discovered the most effective method of instruction. A "golden mean" between parents' and teachers' ideas is possible, however, only when both teachers and parents are willing to learn. Above all is the consideration that each child is an individual, and that the methods which will draw out the learning capacities of one will be totally inadequate for another. A few weeks ago (August 15), we endeavored to suggest that the fundamental school discipline should be considered as based upon the fact that the teacher is paid to teach. He is being paid by the community, and the parents, since they pay taxes, are buying something for their children. When we hire someone, we accord him a measure of respect, and assume also that he is performing his function well enough to justify his position. On this view, children should not be coaxed into attending classrooms, into devoting their attention to school work. The child is abiding by a community decision that he attend school, and the community also insists that he show a measure of respect for each teacher as such, whatever the incidental failings of the teacher's personality. "Bad tempers and disagreeable moods" are not to

be tolerated in the classroom as they interfere with the progress of the work of the school.

It is possible to derive something, we think, from these considerations when we turn to the less easily defined situation within the home. Parents have a right to demand cooperation, for they are constantly cooperating with the child—adding desired items to the daily diet, providing for holiday amusements and playthings. And sometimes there is only one way to teach cooperation, and that is by declining any longer to cooperate with the non-cooperator. We have before suggested that the child is aided to grasp the real nature of his situation in the "family community" by thinking of it in terms of a contract to which both parties must pay attention if they are to do well with the arrangement. To grasp a situation clearly, in terms of responsibility, is to automatically subject oneself to discipline, and the child who knows just where he stands in the home and why—just what price his own non-cooperation with his family program will exact—is in a good position to come to terms with the larger communities of school, town, state or nation.

Indulgence of children is not "non-interference," but simply indulgence. The distinction lies in the fact that the parent who wishes to allow free decision to his child, and wishes this sincerely, may still establish other areas in which no freedom at all is allowed. Complete "non-interference" can lead to careless destruction of property, to the hitting or harming of other children, to a wasting or spoiling of food, etc. In respect to all of these things the parents are captains of the ship, and if the children want to eat anything besides hardtack and water they had best acknowledge the right of their providers to some arbitrary decisions. If parents tend to be easy-going and permissive, it is difficult for them to tighten up on rules of the home. If they are moralistic and arbitrary, it is hard for them to determine areas where the child may make up his own mind and a few minor mistakes, also without punishment.

There is another important element in the secret of obtaining the "cooperative spirit." The child who loves his parents and who is loved in return will be reasonably cooperative simply because he finds this a way of expressing his affection. Love often can override bad tempers and disagreeable moods in a short space of time, but, alas, love cannot be manufactured by either the educationists or parents, nor can any rules be based upon the psychology of love and affection—save one. Borrowing a page from Plato, we must recognize that it is often the parents who love their children with great intensity who are unable to be judicial in dealing with their children's anti-social behavior. It is a common thing to blame difficulties upon the influence of "the neighbor boys," or the example of behavior found at the public school. "My child would never have done this except for the influences to which he has been subjected." Plato would say that the first step for the loving parent who also recognizes an obligation to foster a cooperative spirit in his community is to regard his child's actions as impartially as he regards others. No youngster who is consistently granted special privileges and attention, provided ingenuous excuses for his own failures at cooperation, will ever learn to be just. With the young as with the adult, failure at self-evaluation precludes cooperation, because cooperation, save for isolated selfish purposes, rests on the ethical base of psychological equality.

FRONTIERS

Dilemma of Faith

AMONG the more valuable recent discussions of the hope for synthesis between science and religion are articles by Richard P. Feynman, professor of theoretical physics at the California Institute of Technology, appearing in *Engineering and Science,* a Cal Tech monthly. Prof. Feynman's articles, it seems to us, are good, not because he exhibits great learning or philosophical sophistication in relation to this subject, but because he admits and defines problems which are not solved. There has been far too much glib assurance on how science and religion can get together.

In *Engineering and Science* for last December, Prof. Feynman proposes that one great value of science is that it has given both validity and respectability to the doubting attitude of mind. But lest it be supposed his mood is merely "negative," we should add that science, for Prof. Feynman, is also the source of wonderment—of awe at the magnificent spectacle and endless mystery of nature. It is this mystery which, initially, obliges the scientist to adopt the rigors of doubt. Then, with the progress of the body of knowledge called Science, it becomes evident that there are areas of experience and decision concerning which science yields no certainty.

The incapacity of scientists to give an account of "the meaning of life" leads to the admission, *"we do not know,"* and this admission, Prof. Feynman believes, is the foundation of intelligent search, for modern science as it was for Socrates. He writes:

> This is not a new idea; this is the idea of the age of reason. This is the philosophy that guided the men who made the democracy we live under. The idea that no one really knew how to run a government led to the idea that we should arrange a system by which new ideas could be developed, tried out, tossed out, more new ideas brought in, a trial and error system. This method was a result of the fact that science was already showing itself to be a successful venture at the end of the eighteenth century. Even then it was clear to socially-minded people that the openness of the possibilities was an opportunity, and that doubt and discussion were essential to progress into the unknown. If we want to solve a problem that we have never solved before, we must leave the door to the unknown ajar. . . . It is our responsibility to leave the men of the future a free hand. In the impetuous youth of humanity, we can make grave errors that can stunt our growth for a long time. This we will do if we say we have the answers now, so young and ignorant, if we suppress all discussion, all criticism, saying "This is it, boys, man is saved!" and thus doom man for a long time to the chains of authority, confined to the limits of our present imagination. It has been done so many times before.

In another article, "The Relation of Science and Religion" *(Engineering and Science,* June), Prof. Feynman brings this temper of doubt, essential to science, to bear on the question of religious faith. He examines the nature of religion under three aspects. The "metaphysical" aspect he finds relating to ultimate questions such as the cause of all things—where they come from, how they work, what their nature is. For Prof. Feynman, "God" plays an essential role in religious metaphysics, but this is probably only because he is unaware of the existence of great religious and metaphysical systems which are wholly without an extra-cosmic "God." Buddhism is a "Godless" religion, and Neoplatonic metaphysics had no need of a special creator.

The second aspect of religion, in his view, is religion as a source of moral counsels or ethical principles. The third aspect lies in religious inspiration, providing the moral energy or stimulus to human beings to live according to ethical precepts and values.

It is Prof. Feynman's view that science has greatly shaken the metaphysical aspect of religion. The familiar religious or Christian *explanation* of things, that is, has lost much of its authority in the struggle with science. The demonstration of the heliocentric system was a severe blow to those whose religion included belief in the Ptolemaic doctrine endorsed by the Medieval Church. Then

the Darwinian Theory was a further unsettler of faith in respect to the origin or "creation" of man, as recounted in the Bible.

The ethical and moral ideas found in religion, however, Prof. Feynman believes, have been able to survive these shocks. Even atheists can be moral men, with no "metaphysical" beliefs at all, and while the metaphysical aspect of religion may suffer continual revision at the hands of science, this need not mean the dying out of religion. Prof. Feynman believes that certain aspects of religious belief are beyond the scope of scientific evaluation, and may thus continue as guides to human life.

But what of religious inspiration? If our scientific and democratic culture rests upon the habit of doubt—on our ability to live with uncertainties while we search for the truth—then what will happen to the inspiration which springs only from whole-hearted belief? In Prof. Feynman's words:

> The source of inspiration today—for strength and for comfort—in any religion is very closely knit with the metaphysical aspect; that is, the inspiration comes from working for God, for obeying his will, feeling one with God. Emotional ties to the moral code—based in this manner—begin to be severely weakened when doubt, even a small amount of doubt, is expressed as to the existence of God, so when the belief in God becomes uncertain, this particular method of obtaining inspiration fails.
>
> I don't know the answer to this central problem—the problem of maintaining real value in religion, as a source of strength and of courage to most men, while, at the same time, not requiring an absolute faith in the metaphysical aspects.

The problem, as Prof. Feynman formulates it, is indeed a dilemma. Various solutions have been offered, none of them especially adequate, so far as we can see. The atheists declare that metaphysics can be dispensed with entirely. The humanists, when they are also naturalists, imply the same thing, proposing the development of a naturalistic philosophy. The Unitarians make no use of metaphysics save in a somewhat vague conception of God, and thus avoid any conceivable conflict with science.

But what neither the atheists nor the humanists nor the Unitarians will allow—so far as we know—is that the tendency of human beings to think metaphysically is both incurable and good, and ought, therefore, to have the guidance of intellectual discipline.

Moreover, there are metaphysical systems which suffer little or not at all from the impact of science. Buddhism, while not precisely a metaphysical system, is at least a psychological system with clear metaphysical implications, and encounters no difficulty with science, especially if the Positivist version of the valid findings of science be accepted. Neoplatonic metaphysics would also be little affected by science, likewise the views of both Leibniz and Spinoza.

Prof. Feynman speaks of the importance of "a satisfactory philosophy of ignorance," as implied by the requirements of scientific progress. It is quite conceivable that there can be also a "metaphysic of ignorance"—which, paradoxically, would also be the metaphysic of the discovery of truth. At any rate, the suggestion is worth pursuing.