

## CHALLENGED ASSUMPTIONS

EVERYONE admits that the world is in danger of another terrible war, and nearly everyone speaks of the threat in the same general terms: it is a war of ideologies, a head-on collision of basic assumptions about the good society. All over the world, the major powers are jockeying for position, and all over the world, the smaller powers are trying to make up their minds. Serious writers are everywhere trying to clarify the differences between the United States and Russia, and men of good will are doing what they can to suggest how those differences may be dissolved.

So far, this preparation for war is an old story. We have seen it happen before, although never on a scale so extensive and all-engulfing. But what we have not seen before is the extraordinary depression which pervades all this restless and fearful activity. Much more than a mere suspicion is abroad that after the next war is over, there will be practically nothing left.

This is a new kind of challenge to our civilization—one we have never had to face. It is that righteousness supported by might of arms seems destined to destroy not only our enemy but ourselves as well. We know how to cope with wickedness—with the dangerous characters who preach subversive doctrines and deny the rights of man. You kill their leaders and disarm their followers and dismantle their industries. It's a harsh treatment, but "necessary." Fire must be fought with fire. We beat the Nazis by becoming stronger in destruction, more ferocious in combat, than they.

But now, not the Nazis, not the Communists—not anybody at all—but certain impersonal facts of modern war have challenged the idea that we can keep on with this method of eradicating evil. War, it seems, is subject to the law of diminishing returns. That is why all the

world is depressed at the prospect of a great ideological war. It is a conflict which no one can win, yet must be fought anyway. This is the real challenge to the ideologists of our time—both the democratic and the communistic ideologists. And neither has an answer.

There are other challenges, less evident, and therefore less "real," on the surface, but they exist and are making uncertain the basic assumptions of Western civilization. Take the concept of medical progress—progress in health. It is a fact well publicized by the popularizers of science that infectious disease has been vastly reduced in the past fifty to seventy-five years. We have made enormous progress in sanitation, in reducing the death-rate of infants, and surgical miracles have ceased to be news. But meanwhile, the advances on these fronts are being eaten away by the ravages of degenerative disease. Today it is cancer which threatens, not tuberculosis, and of the two, cancer is the more mysterious, the less detectable, the less curable. Mental and psychosomatic disorders harass an increasing proportion of the population, and we have no specifics, nor any known procedure of psychological "sanitation" to eliminate or control this variety of disease. We have not even a genuine theory of psychosomatic health that we can begin to apply. The facts of our condition have simply challenged the practice of our lives, but we are not sure which practices, nor why.

There is another challenge, one with more explicit champions, in the movement called "Organic Gardening." A growing throng of practical dirt farmers are questioning the basic assumptions of modern scientific agriculture. Artificial chemical fertilizers, they say, render the soil barren of essential plant nutrients and eventually reduce the human food-value of produce grown by these methods. The founder of

the organic gardening movement, the late Sir Albert Howard, has written searching treatises critical of the conventional theories of agriculture and full of practical suggestion for agriculture reform. *Organic Gardening*, a monthly journal devoted to his doctrines, is published in the United States and now has more than 60,000 enthusiastic subscribers who are testing the movement's theories in the soil. This movement promises to become a minor revolution in farming theory and practice.

Another challenge to the assumptions of the West lies in the changing relation between oriental and occidental cultures. For generations, the Westerner has assumed that he bears the burden of universal progress—that eventually, the whole world will be civilized by becoming "westernized." This belief can no longer be sustained. The rising East—not Japanese militarism, which was an artificial, Eurasian pseudo-civilization—seems determined to reject many of the leading ideas of Western culture. Today, the world of scholarship is compelled to recognize the independent merit of Eastern intellectuality, while the world of religion grows uneasily aware of the superiority, in certain obvious respects, of Eastern moral philosophy and metaphysics. The inchoate masses of Asia are finding a voice. The spell of "white superiority" is broken. The Sahibs have taken ignominious departure and the youth of Asia are wild to learn the disciplines of science, eager for the mastery over nature which the West has so misused. These several changes, already perceptible, are now at the level of primary historical causation. To anticipate where they might lead, we have only to look back a hundred years in the history of the United States and Europe, and compare that period with this.

The West is challenged most of all, perhaps, in its theories of political economy and liberalism. Again, this challenge is not by any party or opposing nation, but by the pattern of development inherent in modern industrialized society. The "bigness" of corporate enterprise—

especially the enormous aggregations of productive power created by the requirements of war—has made some kind of practical "control" over both business and the labor force seem virtually inevitable. Such control spells doom for either *laissez faire* economics or democratic socialism. Frightened by the prospect, the theorists of both sides hurl moralistic epithets at one another, alike ignoring the circumstantial realities which threaten both "free enterprise" and political self-determination. Socialists see an inherent viciousness in the policies of any large commercial undertaking, apparently oblivious to the fact that no private business is as large as the national enterprise of a socialist state would be. Apologists for capitalism assert that bigness is simply the form that "success" takes in the modern world, and is hardly to be condemned. But whether capitalist "success" or juggernaut of exploitation, mammoth industry increasingly sets the pattern of economic relationships in the modern world. This development is creating its own "necessities," which seem to involve a kind of planning wholly unforeseen by Adam Smith and far too complicated for any but *national* socialists to dare to integrate openly with a theory of government. This is the brutal fact, and no amount of theoretical wriggling can evade its implications. Only the anarchists and the various schools of decentralists have had the imagination to face the issue at all, and with these tiny and virtually unheard-of minorities lies the ideological future of whatever free society men of intelligence can hope to create.

The field of education is challenged, too, but here, at least, there are the beginnings of awareness of the confusion. The problems of educators overlap those faced by intelligent churchmen and other moralists who are appalled by the obvious decline—amounting to virtual collapse—of standards of human conduct both inside and outside the home. The prevalence of juvenile crime, the spread of alcoholism, the absence of any sense of fitness in sex relations—all these tendencies bespeak a failure for which

only superficial causes are assigned. Basically, the assumptions of humanitarian Christianity are as much challenged today as the assumptions of theological Christianity were challenged during the last half of the nineteenth century by the rising authority of Geology and Biology. We are beginning to realize that Unitarian religion and a vigorous trade union movement—despite the persuasions of *How Green Was My Valley*—are not enough. Teachers like Robert M. Hutchins are attempting to tell us, also, that endless scientific objectivity plus a little humanism to make it socially benevolent is no education for free human beings; he sees the challenge to modern education and is making a tremendous effort to get others to see it, but this is more than a one-man job, and it is far from clear that Mr. Hutchins has the serene confidence in what he is doing that a twentieth-century Socrates ought to possess. A Socrates for our time needs the whole-souled conviction that moves in the pages of the *Phaedo*—the voice of an untroubled man.

We are, to put it briefly, all of us, challenged human beings. The things we have counted on are giving way. Our formulas are not working out. All we have left, really, is ourselves, and the intrinsic qualities with which we were born. Nature, History, or the Gods, are revolting against the assumptions we have been living by, and we can go on to the bitter end, crying against all three in what we think is their betrayal, or we can throw out our old assumptions, before Nature, History or the Gods do it for us, and try some others. But we'd better hurry. The slack in our line is almost gone.

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

SALZBURG.—A captain of the United States Army who had stayed in the house of a friend of mine since the occupation of Austria in 1945, returned home recently, leaving behind a number of American newspapers, magazines, periodicals and pamphlets. As my friend cannot read English well, all these papers have been given to me.

The captain, I find, must have been a man of comprehensive interests. There are city newspapers as well as provincial ones, journals of all political colors, army magazines, fiction magazines, periodicals edited by clubs and religious societies, and publications dealing with philosophical or technological subjects. I started to thumb them through, reading a few lines here and there. The oldest ones dated from May, 1945, the latest had been printed within a month. It was of course impossible to read them all, so I began to notice only material relating to Central Europe. The more I read, the more interesting it became. At last, I cut out every word about Germany, Austria and Italy, and filed the cuttings chronologically. The result was revealing.

In summary, there were, during the second half of 1945, many articles full of reproaches and threats, directed against the population of Central Europe. One journalist declared that the United States occupation of Central Europe would last at least a hundred years and that this period would be extended if necessary. I was not unduly disturbed by such articles. The war had, at that time, just been finished, and it was only human that the fighting spirit had not yet quieted down.

Reading on, I saw that the later articles were generally written by men who had visited the places they were discussing. Some were journalists who had posts in the occupied cities; others were Army officers or government officials who gave the impressions they had collected. Politicians enlightened their constituents, priests and missionaries wrote for church periodicals, businessmen forwarded reports to home offices, which provided material for publication in commercial magazines; scientists and social workers informed their headquarters, and even people who only

sent a letter home to their relatives or friends saw their remarks unexpectedly published in the local paper.

It was, in most cases, amazing what these various correspondents had to say.

One declared that an overwhelming majority of the people in the occupied zones were repenting and asked God to forgive them. He based his knowledge on the fact that, after a lecture, three young girls came up to thank him and hoped for another opportunity to do their part in rebuilding their nation on a Christian and democratic basis. Another asserted that the people, especially the youth of occupied Europe, showed little interest in getting rid of the ideas which were instilled in their minds during the past ten or fifteen years. After having exchanged ideas with the inmates of a camp, he came to the conclusion that the people in the occupied zones do not care much for religion at all, that they possess no sense of democracy and that they will, when permitted, resume their former ways and prepare a revenge which will be irresistible.

A member of a state legislature in the United States points out that in Austria, with her limited resources, hundreds of thousands have died from weakness, that millions are debilitated to an incredible extent and that the entire population will soon perish if assistance from the outside suffers further delay. A traveling journalist admits that the food rations are not generous, but argues that this must be the fault of the Austrians themselves; they certainly had the chance to produce food of better quantity and quality, but chose to lament and wait for shipments from overseas instead of getting to work.

A bank manager expresses his astonishment to see the dance halls in an occupied capital crammed with merry crowds. He arrives at the conclusion that Central Europeans pass frivolously over their misfortunes, whereas an officer of the Military Government maintains that the same folks are weary of life and have lost their spirit—probably forever. A Red Cross nurse attributes the increase of illness among the Bavarians to under-nourishment for the past fifteen years, while a medical scientist, after a tour of inspection, reports that the Bavarians were, in 1936, the best-fed community in the world. A GI happily informs the inhabitants of his native town about the good understanding he and his comrades have gained among the families of an occupied town; another

writer—a union secretary—maintains the opposite, namely, that in the same occupied region, old as well as young people loathe every single American uniform and that a girl, should she only be seen with a United States soldier, is sure to receive threatening letters the next morning. A university professor assures his readers that technical science, chemistry and physics are far behind the times, being carried on with only worn-out equipment, while the chief reporter of a news agency says that endless masses of captured documents, describing the most extraordinary inventions, in nearly all the divisions of technical, chemical and physical science, will save the USA research of from ten to twenty years, and that the laboratories which survived the air raids possess instruments and arrangements in advance of other countries. Finally, a "Political Observer" foresees the entire population of Western Germany turning communist, thus extending Bolshevik influence to the shores of the Atlantic, while another commentator prophesies that the Soviets, comprehending the impossibility of converting the eastern Germans to their ideals, will leave Central Europe to the Western Powers.

I stopped, trying to visualize myself as an American reader. What a confusion! But no one person would read all these papers. Those who had subscribed to one paper would get *its* opinion, and so on. But no. There were even papers which had published one kind of "facts" one week, and another kind of "facts" the next.

How could there be such an endless chain of contradictory reports? A few of the writers had intentionally exaggerated—especially politicians devoted to the interest of a certain political group or party. Probably there were others who shaped the most simple detail into a sensational story, to get praise at home.

But the majority of the writers—well-known journalists, high-ranking officers, influential clergymen, serious scientists—could they have intentionally misrepresented? But what was wrong, then?

The man whom the three young girls assured of their hope for Christianity and Democracy lectured without exception before religious audiences, and was therefore convinced that an overwhelming majority of

the people in the occupied zones were "repentant." His opponent in opinion, who found no sense of religion or democracy among the people, had spoken to the inmates of a camp; he probably did not notice that they were DP's who, because of their active cooperation with fascism were not permitted by their native countries to return home. The legislator visited mines and hospitals and believed that his appeal to American readers for food would only find a hearing when he exaggerated conditions, while the journalist had probably talked to some overworked official who had become cynical through a bad personal experience. The bank manager, surrounded by entertaining friends, had never seen the endless queues waiting in front of bakeries and grocery stores in the over-populated, war-ravaged districts of the city, whereas the duties of the officer of the Military Government kept him in constant contact with these problems and he, therefore, could see nothing else. All, in fact, had put on paper what they saw and felt, but it turned out to be only their personal truth.

To write articles which sometimes are read by hundreds of thousands and discussed by millions, carries a full burden of responsibility today. The reader takes the words literally, and generalizes from them. In consequence of a single sentence which he can't forget, he may retain prejudice against a whole nation for years or a lifetime. A writer, naturally enough, passes by daily commonplaces and seeks for the unusual. For the reader, however, to whom the circumstances are altogether strange, the important observations are those relating to daily life. Not that articles should be composed of a boring enumeration of routine happenings; but the little occurrence, the short conversation, the simple touch, has been and will always remain the life-essence of any true report of this kind. If the writer intends to pass a judgment, he should not hang on the utterances of a religious audience, or listen to the inmates of a camp, to a bad-tempered official or a few jolly companions, only. If he accepts the feelings of one, he should take the trouble to meet others, and note their opinions as well. The authors of such articles should avoid reliance on personal impressions, and seek the general truth.

CENTRAL EUROPEAN CORRESPONDENT

## *REVIEW* ORIENTATION

A MULTITUDE of books issued during the past four or five years attempt to describe what must be done in order to obtain a lasting peace. We have just read a small volume—*Our Threatened Values*, by Victor Gollancz—a selection of the Progressive Book Club (published in the United States by Henry Regnery in Hinsdale, Illinois), which serves the cause of world peace better than any other book we have seen. This, of course, is only an opinion, but an opinion, we think, that can be justified.

Mr. Gollancz is an Englishman, a publisher, a socialist and a liberal. He is also a Jew—which would be irrelevant except that the author turns this accident of birth into a more than ordinary contribution to the value of his discussion of the post-war world and England's part in it. He finds the facts of the post-war appalling, England's part in it ominous. But England, at least, has a Victor Gollancz who has written *Our Threatened Values*. The United States has no such man. The United States has her own critics, to be sure, but no one, so far as we know, who has written so searchingly, so completely, so reliably and so honestly about what we are doing and what we have done—and at the same time, is unalienated from his native land. For Mr. Gollancz writes to Englishmen, not against them. He believes in his countrymen, and expects that they—some of them—will understand him.

This book ought to be a part of the education of every high school student in the United States. It ought to be read and discussed by every adult American. To be an intelligent, liberal citizen of the modern world is virtually impossible without knowledge of the essential facts which this book contains. Everything in it, or nearly everything, applies as much to the people of the United States as to the English. Mr. Gollancz writes chiefly of the central value of democratic liberalism—respect for human beings as units, not in terms of

an abstract mass man. According to the liberal credo, a man has rights simply because he is a man.

*Our Threatened Values* is full of quotations. Mr. Gollancz sets out to show that the values of liberalism are threatened because of what seems to be a growing disbelief in their meaning: "Fewer and fewer men," he says, "fight for these values: more and more either imply or openly proclaim a belief in their contraries." He shows from the published statements of national leaders and from numerous press reports that "respect for personality, our value of values, is today everywhere threatened. In thought, in speech, in act it suffers hourly dishonour. I must repeat that this, and not the atom bomb, is the major threat to our civilization."

This author is no sentimentalist who ignores the horrors of Belsen and Buchenwald. When he appeals for humanity, for kindness and social intelligence in the treatment of the German people, he speaks as a man who was outraged by the crimes of the Nazis at a time when other Englishmen and many Americans were complacently referring to Hitler's Germany as a bulwark against the spread of Communism in Europe. Mr. Gollancz is also author of a pamphlet, *What Buchenwald Really Means*, and in this book he says:

I could deal, if I had the space, with the outcry that deafened us at the time of the Buchenwald "revelations," which were no revelations at all to those of us who had been trying ever since 1933 to rouse a lazy and sceptical public and to speak for men and women who, shut away from the world and without voices of their own, were suffering unspeakable torments in those camps of iniquity. Now at last we knew, people said, that the whole German nation was guilty: if not, why didn't they protest against these outrages and revolt against Hitler, no matter what the cost? It did not occur to them to ask what they would have done in similar circumstances: they did not pause to wonder whether, when the cost of which they talked so glibly would have been death or torture not for themselves alone but for their children also, they would have been, without any possibility of doubt, sufficiently heroic to

run the risk of it. They did not even ask themselves why, so long as we were still at peace, Buchenwald had been no concern of theirs, even though to raise their voices in protest would have meant not death or torture or even the risk of imprisonment, but the loss of a few seconds of time and the expenditure of some negligible fraction of energy. Instead of asking themselves things like that, they preferred to luxuriate in the sense of their own immense superiority.

Mr. Gollancz writes with both the conviction and the modesty that characterize a man who has always tried to practice what he preaches. In 1939, he published G. E. R. Gedye's *Fallen Bastions*, "the classic denunciation of Hitler's attack on Czechoslovakia." Now, in his own book, he describes the "abominable cruelty" of the Czech expulsion of the Sudetan Germans from their homes in Czechoslovakia—Germans of whom never less than a third were staunch anti-Nazi supporters of Dr. Benes in the days before Munich.

The transfer of the German population from East Prussia and Polish-occupied Germany, fulfilling the Potsdam agreement, was accomplished in a nightmare of suffering, disease and death. Some families had to leave on ten minutes' notice. Aged men and women and little children arrived in Germany in a starved condition, and wholly without hope. Mr. Gollancz quotes an observer of these arrivals:

In the woods around Berlin corpses are hanging from the trees. Other men, women and children throw themselves into the rivers. Hundreds of corpses are continually drifting down the rivers Elbe and Oder. All the roads leading to Berlin are crowded with exiles. Thousands fall exhausted at the roadsides. Children may be seen trudging pathetically along without their parents. Hundreds of people are dying daily beside the roads from hunger and disease.

The refugees were numbered in millions. As Gollancz says, "That's one of the troubles: we stare stupidly at the ciphers, and forget the bodies and the souls."

This book is more than a record of organized inhumanity: it is also a profoundly intelligent

discussion of the psychology of totalitarianism, with careful differentiation between the ideas of the Nazis and the Russian Communists, together with an inquiry into why the methods developed under these two ideologies, starting from opposed assumptions, ended by being almost identical. It should be noted, also, that Mr. Gollancz is careful never to overstate his argument. A temperate spirit pervades his writing. Always, he tries to understand. He has, for example, a deep admiration for some of the traits of Winston Churchill, and gives his reasons.

An appeal to the reader, after a discussion of Britain's 1946 debate as to policy in sending food to Germany and India, sums up the message of the book:

Abandon utterly the concepts "Germany" and "India." "Germany" and "India" simply do not exist. Remember instead what does exist—so many millions of individual human beings like you and me, living in Germany and India, and with precisely the same potentiality for suffering as yours and mine. Until that truth is not merely intellectually grasped but emotionally lived with, a sane solution of the world's problems is impossible. And, if you cannot get out of your head the question of "guilt," which in fact is totally irrelevant in this connection, realize at any rate that no one but a lunatic could regard German children up to thirteen years of age—those born, that is to say, after Hitler came to power—as "guilty" of anything whatsoever. I say nothing of the German victims of Hitler's camps, or old peasant women from Silesia, or any of the others in a list that you can easily fill out for yourselves.

It is possible, from reading this book by Victor Gollancz, to find out what a real liberal is like. There are very few left—few, that is, who have joined their sense of liberal values with a knowledge of the facts of what is going on in the world and have uncompromisingly spoken their minds. No other sort of liberalism has much practical value, today.

## *COMMENTARY*

### **NON-PARTISAN FOUNDATIONS**

THE "growing together" of the peoples of the world, through advances in transportation and communication, is frequently spoken of as the foundation for international fraternity. It is true enough that invention and industry have removed the barriers of time and space between nations, but what is less commonly realized is that progress in technology has also meant an equal emphasis on specialization, with the result that men increasingly work—and therefore live—in isolated "cells" of specialized undertaking. Division of labor means separation of men, in terms of practical daily contacts, tending to make them find less and less in common with one another.

They will come together, of course, on the basis of partisan interests, in such groups as the industrial union, the association of manufacturers, or the business men's club, but these alliances are distinctive symbols of the separateness of which we speak, fortifying differences instead of contributing to a common ground. And when group relationships are for the purpose of realizing some partisan end, the participating individuals acquire the habit of thinking only in partisan terms. Religious associations are supposed to provide a common ground for all men, without distinction, and yet, sectarianism in religion has been more notable for the separations it has accomplished than for any broad moral unity achieved for the human race.

Such facts, while well-known, are usually ignored in pretentious plans for world unity. Some basic fallacy in the thinking of modern internationalists has made it possible for them to write extensively on economic opportunity, access to raw materials, and problems of "national interest," and to deal with questions of civil and "human" rights resoundingly, while neglecting the universal need for habitual *non-partisan* thinking. Such devotees of economic theory imagine

themselves to be "realistic" in their approach to the problems of the world because conflicts seem always to arise over "concrete" issues. Yet the fact, it seems to us, is that economic problems are trivial compared to the inability of the great majority to take the position of other men and to see life through their eyes. This, we think, is the only practical or "realistic" issue before the world today. It is the issue of preserving the humanity in the individual, instead of "saving mankind" in the mass. We see no persuasive reason for giving much attention to anything else.

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

COLUMNS about children are usually expected to deal with the specific problems of "child management." Apart from our determined distrust of any "managerial" attitude, the reason for our frequent wanderings, here, in the realms of religion and philosophy—which children themselves hardly recognize or distinguish—is simply that "child management" can mean nothing to us other than personal authority unless there is first some conscious determination of our own values. What are the beliefs of those who do the managing, and in what way do those beliefs become a final part of the human beings that are "managed"? Fascism is an efficient system, managerially speaking. We quarrel with Fascism, on those few occasions when we do quarrel with it, because we profess a belief in man's nature contrary to that held by Fascist managers. In terms of education, this ought to mean that we can accept only those views which actually aid in producing the sort of human beings who may make this a better world—as distinguished from a more "efficient" State. Adjustment to society, then, is "good," only if our society is itself a good society.

We know of one gentleman who, we think, makes this point rather well. He is becoming increasingly familiar to parents who are attempting to educate themselves through the Great Books Seminars sponsored by the University of Chicago. On page 54 of the Modern Library edition of Plato's *Republic* occurs the following:

And now when the young hear all this said about virtue and vice . . . how are their minds likely to be affected, my dear Socrates,—those of them, I mean, who are quick-witted, and, like bees on the wing, light on every flower, and from all that they hear are prone to draw conclusions as to what manner of persons they should be and in what way they should walk if they would make the best of life? Probably the youth will say to himself in the words of Pindar—

“Can I by justice or by crooked ways of deceit ascend a loftier tower which may be a fortress to me all my days?”

For what men say is that, if I am really just and am not also thought just, profit there is none, but the pain and loss on the other hand are unmistakable. But if, though unjust, I acquire the reputation of justice, a heavenly life is promised to me. Since then, as philosophers prove, appearance tyrannizes over truth and is lord of happiness, to appearance I must devote myself. I will describe around me a picture and shadow of virtue to be the vestibule and exterior of my house; behind I will trail the subtle and crafty fox, as Archilochus, greatest of sages, recommends. But I hear some one exclaiming that the concealment of wickedness is often difficult; to which I answer, Nothing great is easy. Nevertheless, the argument indicates this, if we would be happy, to be the path along which we should proceed. With a view to concealment we will establish secret brotherhoods and political clubs. And there are professors of rhetoric who teach the art of persuading courts and assemblies; and so, partly by persuasion and partly by force, I shall make unlawful gains and not be punished. Still I hear a voice saying that the gods cannot be deceived, neither can they be compelled.

But what if there are no gods? or, suppose them to have no care of human things—why in either case should we mind about concealment? And even if there are gods, and they do care about us, yet we know of them only from tradition and the genealogies of the poets; and these are the very persons who say that they may be influenced and turned by 'sacrifices and soothing entreaties and by offerings.' Let us be consistent then, and believe both or neither. If the poets speak truly, why then we had better be unjust, and offer of the fruits of injustice; for if we are just, although we may escape the vengeance of heaven, we shall lose the gains of injustice; but, if we are unjust, we shall keep the gains, and by our sinning and praying, and praying and sinning, the gods will be propitiated, and we shall not be punished. 'But there is a world below in which either we or our posterity will suffer for our unjust deeds. Yes, my friend, will be the reflection, but there are mysteries and atoning deities, and these have great power. That is what mighty cities declare.

What Plato says, it appears to us, applies not only to Greek society, but to any and every society. The first question in education is not what we may expect of children in *our* society, but

what might be expected of them in a far better one. The only progressive education, then, is that which attempts to create, within the existing society, an oasis that opens the way to deeper meanings than the surrounding society will permit. This may be only another way of saying that the primary educative force is that of example, yet to realize precisely how all-inclusive "good example" must be has a value of its own.

Problems of "child management" cannot be divorced from the problems of managing society. It is imperative to point out that no books on child-care can solve the central problem of education for us, which is that of making both ourselves and our children organic to a better world. Of course, the idea of "child-management" should also be held suspect, as before intimated, since a managerial *attitude*—the thought that we should control the lives of others—is an effective barrier against any educational progress.

We have available today many books on bringing up children. These are admittedly useful during infancy, when parents' problems are preponderantly connected with stages of physiological development in the very young. The labors of Dr. Arnold Gesell of Yale University have produced several volumes describing what may be called the "reflex behavior" of children—typical reactions in the context of our present culture. Without deprecating the information supplied by his and similar researches, it can be positively stated that to base an educative program for children upon Dr. Gesell's "facts" alone is to assume that the parent is unable to understand the real possibilities of education. Charts dealing with the psycho-physiological behavior of children emphasize the attainment of "normality" by one's children, but if education is to serve the world, it must help men to become something more than "normal." We can easily learn from Dr. Gesell how children characteristically behave at certain ages. This is good to know, just as it is good to know that male human beings will probably encounter the

complex fact of military conscription when they become eighteen years of age. But nothing in this approach to the problem will tell us whether conscription is either good or necessary.

A growing child shows a tendency to belligerence at a certain age. If this is to be a military world, and is to be accepted as such, the belligerent tendency needs to be encouraged, and trained to express itself against the proper enemies. But if we do not accept a military world, we probably believe that belligerence is always a stupid attitude—a conviction we doubtless want to pass on to our children. Yet this we can do only if we ourselves have intelligently rejected belligerence in our own personal and political life.

Dr. Gesell, as a capable scientist who undertook and accomplished a specific type of research, is not obliged to tell us how to decide these things, but we are obliged to tell ourselves.

## *FRONTIERS*

### Religion and "The Church"

FROM a couple—teachers—in France comes this comment:

It is extremely unfortunate that the reviewer of *Human Destiny* (MANAS Jan. 14) makes such sweeping identification between Christianity, the religion, and the Christian Church as established on earth for so long a time! He makes a grave error when he says that the writer "appeals for reforms to the presiding religious institution of that bloody age" when he has just finished quoting Dr. du Noüy as saying that the "salvation of mankind will be found in a sound Christian *religion*." Now we hold no brief for organized "Christianity," which has lent itself liberally to imperialism, racial hatreds, suicidal wars, and so many other evils, yet the "primitive ideals" (which the reviewer seems to approve, having found them in Tolstoy) are as applicable—and as little applied—today as at any time, and his chucking of the whole thing as an "outmoded faith" in the next paragraph shows a mind which allows its prejudices to close its doors and pull down the blinds.

The identification, to which these correspondents object, was rather du Noüy's than our reviewer's, who was objecting to it, too. "Never," wrote du Noüy, "in her two thousand years has *the Church* had a more urgent call and a nobler opportunity to fulfill her obligation as the comforter and guide of humanity." (Our italics.) Tolstoy, in contrast, found no more comfort in "the Church" than he did in the Czar's government. Read *Christianity and Patriotism*, his *Confession*, and *The Kingdom of God Is Within You* for the evidence. A scientist who writes a book offering to serve "religious" needs, yet who fails to make emphatic distinction between reactionary religious institutions and the genuine religious spirit, harms both science and religion.

Obviously, our reviewer did not mean, nor did he say, that Tolstoy's brand of faith is "outmoded." Du Noüy spoke of "the Church," and it must be supposed that by Christianity he meant the body of doctrines peculiarly known to and taught by the Christian churches. What else could he have meant?

What, then, are the distinctively Christian ideas? A statement of the elements which all Christian

churches accept is provided by George W. Richards in the *Christian Century* for Feb. 25. In summary,

1. Faith in a single God, "the almighty creator and ruler of the universe."

To make this medieval expression complete, Mr. Richards might have added, from the Book of Common Prayer, "King of Kings." If it be argued that such anthropomorphic language must be "interpreted"—that religious personifications are not to be taken literally—then both the words and the faith are "outmoded." Mr. Richards did not label his explanation as an allegory.

2. A common historical or special revelation of God—"made apart from the general order of nature and of history, though revelation may be made through nature and the processes of history." The revelation came through the Hebrew prophets and through Jesus as the "final manifestation of God to man."

With a minor qualification, Religious Truth is here made contingent upon a historical event, or a series of events, unique to a small portion of the world and a brief segment of time. This is a splendid point of departure for religious arrogance, exclusiveness, and even religious imperialism, and all these things developed in historical Christianity—remember the *conquistadors*? If no such claims are made today, then the doctrine is . . . outmoded.

3. Jesus is the mediator between God and man, although salvation is "differently conceived and the mode of his mediation variously defined."

But the early Christians conceived the mediator as the Christ-spirit, and never made it unique to a single man. And how could a Roman atrocity "atone" for any human wrong? Is our burden lighter because a fanatic blinded by emotion shot Gandhi? The story of the Christ is a great and moving drama if taken as a symbol of the moral struggle confronting every human being, and that, it appears, is what Paul intended us to understand. "The Christ of his [Paul's] inspiration," we are informed by a learned article in the *Hibbert Journal* (October, 1938, p. 60), "is not the Galilean prophet but a spirit akin to the Socratic daimon." To take the Gospel

legend literally is to pervert the mission of Jesus beyond repair. Yet that is precisely what the numerous creeds accomplish. The notorious ignorance of the average church-goer concerning the particular theology to which he is supposed to be committed is sufficient evidence that such theological beliefs are "outmoded."

4. The "revelation and benefits" deriving from Jesus continue to be accessible to Christians, from generation to generation, through the Holy Spirit, "who proceeds from God and works in his people, the church, to the end of time."

Again, the sectarian claim of exclusiveness, and personification of spiritual inspiration in the "who" of the Holy Spirit. A passage from E. A. Burtt demonstrates the weakness of this common Christian doctrine:

Confident of the ultimacy of his religion of universal love, the believer in the special revelation of Christianity unwittingly substitutes a local historical doctrine about love for love itself. In the presence of a Buddhist who finds salvation in Amitabha, he cannot allow that such an experience is on a par with his meeting the divine in Christ, and be ready to pool in friendly mutuality the distinctive greatness in each of these exalting transactions; his impulse to love without qualification is rendered subordinate to his devotion to the particular religious tradition he has inherited. And because of this primary commitment, the Jesus in whom Christ was historically revealed is idealized beyond all that the evidence of the gospels can possibly justify, with consequent injustice to other great religious founders.

5. "Jesus is the judge of the world, determining the destiny of all men, good and evil." Final judgment by Jesus will consummate "the processes of human history."

Always, these formulations of basic Christian belief tend to the childlike imagery of the Middle Ages, when they ought to move in the direction of philosophical conviction. The simpler the definitions of Christianity become, the less philosophical, more personal, they are.

6. The dogma of the Trinity and of the deity of Jesus.

Any attempt to *understand* the theological doctrine of the Trinity is a completely bewildering experience—much more so now than it was in the days of Athanasius, who said: "There is one Person of the Father and another Person of the Son" whom we are to worship "neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the substance." Athanasius was schooled in the metaphysical conceptions of Greek philosophy which his Creed confuses more or less successfully, yet he himself confessed a difficulty in comprehending "the divinity of the Logos." And so, we may add, will any man who tries to discuss Platonic universals in personal terms. John Campbell Graham has observed on this subject:

The history of Christianity has been described as the history of a hopeless attempt to resolve a contradiction, but it might be more truly described as the history of an obstinate refusal to accept any solution that eliminates the contradiction. The theology of the Incarnation exhibits the strange paradox that while the various heresies condemned by the Church have for the most part the merit of being intellectually tenable, the orthodox doctrine is, from a theological point of view (for nothing can be truly theological that is not logical), the greatest heresy of them all. (*Hibbert Journal*, January, 1939.)

In conclusion, it seems hardly necessary to point out that what has been called the "intense conservatism of religious organizations" has for generations forced members of the clergy to give lip-service to doctrines that they find virtually incredible, making them technical hypocrites—which is, however, perhaps a lesser evil than enlisting the ministry of men who are able to believe the orthodox dogmas!

There can be no valid objection, we think, to wanting to "chuck" the unbelievable in Christianity, along with the sectarian and the exclusive—the elements which set this faith apart from the core of truth in all religions. The ethical ideals shared by Christians with other faiths are not unique or distinctively "Christian" at all: for these, our reviewer obviously has nothing but admiration—he objected, in effect, to the specious claim that they reached mankind through a special revelation marked "For Christians Only." That, today, is the most outmoded idea of all.