

BOOK FOR OUR TIMES

INITIAL inspection of *A Philosophical Scrutiny of Religion*, by C. J. Ducasse, made it clear that this volume deserved a longer-than-usual review; further reading exerted the persuasion that this book is of a caliber—to our way of thinking, at any rate—which makes it a logical companion of the books dealt with under the general heading, "Books for Our Time," in a series of MANAS articles in 1953. (See MANAS, Dec. 9, 1953, for a list and discussion of these books—copy on request.)

For one thing, Ducasse, writing as a devotee of "pure reason," contributes striking counterpoints to Erich Fromm's psychological analyses: *Psychoanalysis and Religion* and *A Philosophical Scrutiny of Religion* belong together. For another, vistas of thought opened for the reader by Macneile Dixon's *Human Situation*, through Dixon's peculiar genius for ensouling philosophy with poetic inspiration, are here examined with severe logical discipline. Last but not least, the fact that the language of *Philosophical Scrutiny* can be comprehended by any careful reader is a strong recommendation. Too often, contemporary men of philosophy revel in terms the layman has never encountered. In his Paul Carus lectures, published as *Nature, Mind, and Death*, Ducasse was profound but sometimes difficult. The present book, however, covering a wider field, does not, we think, lose anything of depth by its greater simplicity of expression.

Paragraphs from the Preface and the Introduction to *Philosophical Scrutiny* provide insight into the author's intent and point of view. "Because religion is an enduring and highly important aspect of culture," he writes, "it is imperative that responsible men and women pierce the fog of emotional superstition and of equally emotional cynicism which commonly obscure the subject. . . ." He continues:

The author's purpose is not to lead the irreligious to embrace a faith, nor to cause the religious to repudiate religion or to change belief. His aim is only to clarify the whole subject, so that the religious person may better discern the aspects in which his religion importantly resembles or differs from others and may better appreciate the merits, no less than the defects, of religions other than his own; and so that the irreligious too may better understand and respect the positive values of religion. . . .

Toward a subject charged with so high an emotional voltage as that of religion, complete philosophical objectivity is perhaps impossible; but in the pages of this book it has at least been constantly striven for. As could be expected in hewing to the line of it, and as the preceding remarks will have made evident, the chips have fallen in quite a variety of directions—hitting at one time some opinion prized in certain religious quarters but abhorred by secularists, and at other times hitting beliefs cherished by the latter but condemned in the former.

The attempt at objectivity cannot spare, nor cater to, either orthodoxy or skepticism, whether scientific or religious. Rather, it must enter to the debit or the credit side in each case whatever seems to belong there.

There are many recent books on religion. Most of them, since the vast tide of militant skepticism generated in the eighteenth century is now on the wane, seem to be attempts to restore Christianity to a place in the sun for the intellectuals. Even the *Partisan Review*, a secular periodical if there ever was one, found this trend important enough to notice back in 1950, by way of a series entitled "Religion and the Intellectuals." From some of the efforts of this sort, one gets the feeling that writers and editors begin with the desire to provide compromises pleasing to agnostic and religious devotees alike, but the trouble with compromise in respect to basic philosophical issues is that the issue is merely buried—which is quite a different matter from its resolution. The real philosopher, we take it, while

quite willing to compromise with people in matters of conflicting personal interests, will not, cannot, allow himself to endorse oversimplification. He is after the truth, and the truth may have little to do with winning friends or pleasing the public. As Ducasse puts it: "The philosophical motive is neither the will to disbelieve nor the will to believe, but the will to get at the truth." The chips, to use his own expression, have to fall where they may.

After the parings dislodged by Ducasse's precise tools are swept away, important conclusions become clear. For instance, he demonstrates that neither Morality as an ideal, nor Immortality as a hope, in any way depends upon the premise of God. To argue that they do, in a manner habitual to Christian apologists, obscures both questions. The postulation of God will not help us to discover whether the soul is immortal, nor provide us with ethical insight. And the confirmed skeptic, who thinks himself free from theological conditioning, nevertheless indicates his acceptance of the logic, if not the views of his opponents—by assuming that once one has disposed of God he has also eliminated any reason for being concerned with transcendental questions, either in regard to ethics or a possible future life. Ducasse writes:

The idea of a divine government of the world is absent in some of the higher religions. Most of us, if asked what religion is, would probably propose some such answer as that it is essentially belief in and worship of a God or gods, together with related subsidiary beliefs and rules, and the practices, feelings, experiences, and conduct based thereon. But although this answer is plausible so long as only the theistic religions are in view, it leaves altogether out of account the fact that some religions exist, in which worship of or belief in a deity has no part.

Buddhism is not the only religion in which worship of a god has no part, nor belief that the world was divinely created. This is true also of Jainism, another reform movement, which arose in India a generation before Buddhism; and also of Confucianism. According to Mahavira, founder of Jainism, each individual completely makes his own destiny and has to achieve his own redemption.

There are "gods"—spiritual beings higher than man in various degrees; but praying to them is useless. They cannot interfere with the lives of men, indeed, even if at a higher level, the gods are in the same case as man; they too are responsible for their own fates and have to work out their own salvations. "Divinity" means only the highest ideal man is able to conceive for the soul. For the Jaina, "god," as distinguished from the gods, means "the soul at its best, i.e., when, freed from all that is material, it has attained perfect knowledge, faith, power, and bliss." In Jainism, "worship and reverence are given to all human souls worthy of it. . . . The worship is *impersonal*. It is the aggregate of the qualities that is worshipped rather than any particular individual."

Dr. Ducasse is by no means alone in his recognition that Westerners need some assistance in discovering that the Judeo-Christian tradition is *not* ethically superior to most religious traditions of the East. But in *Philosophical Scrutiny*, proof of this point is both ample and succinct. No one who reads the chapter on Buddhism—unless he be a partisan of some rival faith—will cavil at the statement that here we have "one of the noblest religions of mankind," constituting also "one of the most important touchstones by which to test the adequacy of definitions of religion that attempt to apply to all religions." Nor are such considerations of merely intellectual interest. We recall the fact that Selective Service, with the consent of Congress, recently saw fit to define religion as necessarily embodying "belief in a Supreme Being"—when providing evaluative criteria for draft boards faced with the task of determining the sincerity of conscientious objectors to armed service. As William O. Douglas has pointed out, this constitutes a "test of religion" which exceeds the prerogatives of governing bodies under the Bill of Rights. Perhaps if our politicians and jurists can be educated to realize that religion should not and cannot be given so exclusive a definition, ominous approaches to a "state religion" can be counteracted.

Throughout much of the latter part of *Philosophical Scrutiny*, Ducasse attempts to show how important investigations in the field of

Parapsychology may prove to be for the further evolution of both religious and scientific attitudes. Among modern philosophers, Dr. Ducasse is one of the very few who champion the relevance of psychic research for sciences other than psychology. His last chapter, "Religion in Perspective," indicates his point of view:

The questions, affirmative answers to which have the kind of psychological leverage relevant to the two momentous functions whose performance has until now been left to faith, are questions such as whether there is for the individual some kind of life after death, and if so, what kind; whether justice for the individual somehow ultimately obtains; whether there are gods, demons, spirits, or other invisible beings capable of aiding or plaguing men. Concerning such questions, what the religions have offered us is, let us repeat, only articles of faith. But verifiable facts are what it would be much better to have, and scientific investigation may be capable of giving them to us. Not, however, the investigations carried on by physics, chemistry, astronomy, biology, or any of the other sciences that take the material world as their subject of study; but instead scientific investigation of the various kinds of paranormal facts studied by parapsychology, by some psychiatrists, and by the societies devoted to what has come to be known as psychical research. For these facts strongly suggest that the universe, and the human personality, each have a dimension additional to the material one so capably and successfully explored by the natural sciences.

At this point we are naturally led to a range of evaluations characteristic of all Ducasse's writings, signaled by the clarity with which he shows much of orthodox skepticism to be a negative version of "blind faith." Anyone who during the past twenty years has undertaken to speak a kind word for the parapsychologists in scholarly circles will realize that, once the kind word is spoken, heavy the cloud that hangs over his head. The mind-set of the twentieth century, until very recently, placed interest in the possibility of telepathy, psychokinesis, clairvoyance, or survival of the soul after death, as considerably beyond the pale of "respectable" science. The suppositions, however tentative and undogmatic, of those who undertook research in these fields—

notably Dr. Rhine and his associates—were regarded as ridiculous. Every *scholar* should have known by this time, it was felt, that the ghost of mysticism had been laid. ESP could not be a fact, for, if it were, the whole structure of popular "scientific" assumptions regarding the ultimate nature of man and the universe would have to be revised. Once, however, we are encouraged to view all beliefs—not only those labeled transcendental but also those deriving from faith in mechanism—as subject to reevaluation and criticism, the possibility emerges that authentic levels of reality exist over and beyond the confines of what has previously been regarded as "real." Thus Ducasse is vitally interested in pointing out the reluctance of many psychologists and philosophers to give fair consideration to the question of survival after death, particularly when parapsychological research has been so patently fruitful.

Reevaluation of what has loosely been called modern materialism certainly opens up a variety of new perspectives and possibilities. The following paragraph in *Philosophical Scrutiny*, for instance, should provide "scientific humanists" with much to think about:

Like many other religions, Humanism too has its "devil," which is "Supernaturalism" and which it steadily attacks. Unfortunately, a definite idea of what Humanists mean by the term is hard to obtain from their expressions. By "Nature" they appear to mean whatever is discoverable by scientific study of the facts which sense perception presents. It is conceivable, however, that in this very manner "gods" or other intelligent beings, as imperceptible to our senses as are the subatomic particles or the magnetic fields of physics, but like these capable of being known to exist through characteristic perceptible effects, should some time be discovered. It is also conceivable that the empirical evidence—of which some already exists—that human consciousness survives death should one of these days become conclusive. Then gods and spirits would be as "natural" as electrons and protons. One therefore wonders what "the supernatural" ultimately means for Humanists, if not natural facts not yet discovered.

Some readers of *Philosophical Scrutiny* will perhaps feel that Ducasse, despite protestations of "objectivity" and nonpartisanship, runs down the Christian tradition beyond the call of the duties assumed in his preface. It should be borne in mind, however, that clear distinction is made between *religion* and *theology*, and if Ducasse calls our attention to the inadequacy of many theological arguments, he also recognizes that an underlying core of meaning may exist in Christian symbolism. But how can a philosopher fail to protest illogicality and presumptuous claims? That is his business. For our part, we enjoy especially a passage wherein Ducasse allows himself a touch of irony. At the close of a discussion of "The Problem of Evil," his intent is to show that theological maunderings need to be gently pushed to one side whenever they obscure matters of greater importance:

Mill's suggestion to leave the omnipotence, at least, out of the conception of its [monotheism's] God, or, to the same ultimate effect, perhaps the omniscience, commends itself highly. For the *goodness* of a monotheistic God—besides possession by him of a reasonable measure of power and of knowledge—is the attribute most essential if he is to be available for religious purposes.

To these considerations may be added the further remark that even if blame for the existence of moral and of intellectual evil could be shifted from man's postulated creator to man's misuse of his freedom; and even if, further, the allegation were defensible more than occasionally that the physical and psychological sufferings of individuals are just punishments for their sinfulness; even then there would remain to be accounted for, and necessarily in some other manner, the evil which the pains of animals constitute.

This, however, could hardly be expected to constitute a difficult problem for theologians who find themselves able to regard the fact that many new born infants undergo acute physical sufferings as divinely just punishment for Adam's and Eve's sinful curiosity concerning the taste of apples.

Of particular interest are Ducasse's discussions of Pantheism, the Buddhist and Hindu doctrines of *karma*, and the relevance of theories

of rebirth to central philosophical problems. Pantheism, for instance, is shown to have a lineage of descent from great Western philosophers. From the Pythagorean and Platonic sources, from Giordano Bruno to the present day, pantheistic orientations have played an important role in restraining excessive anthropomorphism in religion.

The doctrine of *karma*, as Ducasse has previously indicated in *Nature, Mind, and Death*, is habitually distorted by Westerners who discuss it—even when strongly attracted to this belief that a law of natural justice rules the ethical world. Conditioned for so many centuries by the predisposition of theological Christianity, Westerners tend to interpret *karma* in terms of eye-for-an-eye punishment or reward. But this is not the meaning of *karma* suggested by Buddha. Ducasse explains by remarking that, for the believer in *karma*, "the relation between the man who sows in one life and the man who reaps in a later one is of essentially the same kind as that between the child and the adult. The two are the 'same' person not in the sense that any item, physical or mental, in the infant's makeup has persisted unchanged and is identically present in the mature man, but only in the sense that the former has changed into the latter by a gradual transformation from hour to hour, day to day, year to year. The sameness of the two is thus sameness in the sense only of continuousness of becoming." This seems a valuable light on the question of what constitutes individuality—a light which does not overlook the subtlety of the considerations which are involved.

He continues:

The significance of the present life of the "self" so conceived and of its preceding and succeeding lives is the contribution each makes, through Karma, to the individual's moral, intellectual and spiritual *growth*, which eventually will culminate in emancipation from the realm of becomings. Karma is therefore to be regarded not essentially as reward and punishment, but as natural and spiritually educational consequence; just as being burned is not a punishment for touching a hot stove but a natural and

educational consequence of having done so. It is true enough that one does not "learn" moral lessons from the consequences of past acts that one does not remember; but moral improvement nevertheless can result from those acts if, as the Karma doctrine assumes, they cause one, for example, to land eventually in a situation of the kind which compels or fosters development of the particular virtue lack of which was responsible for one's having acted as he did.

Actually, the sort of interrogation of the theory of rebirth that Ducasse provides might well be regarded as itself a "touchstone" for the revaluation of the whole subject of immortality. Here is a thinker who believes that disciplined inquiry is pertinent for both sides of the controversy about religious "beliefs"—and not simply a weapon for use by iconoclasts. Readers of *Philosophical Scrutiny* will find the chapter, "Life After Death," fully as provocative as the author's earlier treatment of this subject in *Nature, Mind, and Death*.

All in all, *A Philosophical Scrutiny of Religion* seems the most instructive general work on religion that is presently available. Moreover, it seems eminently suited for a text to be used for university courses of the same name. So far as we know, not since McTaggart's *Some Dogmas of Religion* (1906) has there been a book of academic origin that has genuine impartiality, viewing the field of religious inquiry from the independent stance of the philosopher, yet without skeptical animus.

Since an original intention of the "Books for Our Time" series was to encourage discussion, the hope for comment on themes like these is now repeated, and questions, objections, and discussion are invited from readers.

(*A Philosophical Scrutiny of Religion*, 441 pages, is published at \$4.50 by the Ronald Press, 15 East 26th Street, New York City.)

REVIEW

THE PROPHECY OF SOCRATES

WITHOUT any intention of doing so, this Department has for months, or even years, neglected to mention the Great Books. This is not a subject that ought to be dropped for long, and we are grateful of Alexander Meiklejohn for drawing attention to one who is for us greatest among writers of Great Books—Plato.

In the *Nation* for April 23, Mr. Meiklejohn reviews *The State Versus Socrates*, a collection of papers which examine various sides of the issue involved in the trial and death of Socrates. (The editor is John Montgomery and the book is published by Beacon at \$3.50.) The issue is set by the editor, whom Mr. Meiklejohn quotes:

When the Athenians condemned Socrates to die because of his ideas, they placed themselves forever on trial.

The choice they offered Socrates was between conformity and martyrdom. They left no room for freedom. Their decision was an uncompromising one, but the verdict that history has placed upon them has been harsher. Attempting to liquidate the apparently subversive elements in their society, they were to find that they had destroyed their claims to the loyalty of free men.

The "great books" involved in this debate are the *Apology* and the *Crito*. It is necessary, as Meiklejohn points out, to read them both in order to grasp the issue as Plato presents it—without partisanship—and to recognize the scope of Plato's intent. As the reviewer says:

The *Apology* demands that even under penalty of death a free teacher-citizen shall disobey his government. But the *Crito* urges, with equal insistence, that even though it leads him to his death the teacher-citizen owes and must give obedience to the government. To take either horn of the dilemma without taking the other is to misconceive the basic purpose of Plato's argument. He is not a propagandist for freedom. He is a sober and well-balanced student of the political institutions by which men are both free and governed.

Plato, therefore, because of his insistence upon both points of view, has never been popular with either conservatives or radicals of the conventional sort. He disturbs the conservative who has no real feeling or love for the search for truth, and he angers the radical whose contempt for what exists leads him to ignore present social commitments and responsibilities in the name of an utopian tomorrow. When, in the *Crito*, Socrates explains that to evade the law condemning him to death would be to betray his entire life, he is expressing allegiance to the *principle* of a good society, not subservience to the fearful and tyrannical administrators who have sentenced him.

The contradictions between the ideal of freedom and the ideal of order are always evident in an imperfect society made up of imperfect men. To resolve those contradictions at the social level, in terms of group decision, is sometimes impossible. It was impossible in the case of Socrates. Their resolution by Socrates as an individual caused him to die. That Socrates chose this course made him the most unforgettable character of Western history. And it placed the *Apology* and the *Crito* among the great books.

The occasion for publication of *The State Versus Socrates* is of course the fact that the present is "a time when American teachers in school and college are officially and unofficially denied the independence of mind which is essential for their work." Its point, however, as Meiklejohn makes clear, is not the determination that Socrates was right and unjustly dealt with, but that the method applied to such problems, then and now, is unmistakably wrong. Meiklejohn says:

Mr. Montgomery's book, as we reflect upon it, reveals how little can be gained toward an understanding of the bewildering relation between intellectual freedom and governmental control by merely matching "the case for the prosecution" against "the case for the defense." If we wish to grasp the politics of freedom we must go far deeper than that method of external controversy. We must seek

for a theory of political structure and function in which freedom and control are not in conflict with each other, in which they do not strive for reconciliation by making compromises and concessions and "exceptions" to each other, but are seen to be two mutually complementary aspects of the same self-governing process. But that kind of thinking is not easy for present-day Americans.

It has never been easy. For only men who are fearless, who love the truth, to whom their personal "security" is a negligible matter, are able to find an underlying identity in freedom and order.

What did Socrates do?

We do know that in a time of national danger for a terrified and desperate "democracy," the irony of the great teacher slashed through the ineptness and the folly of men in power who were ill equipped for the exercise of that power. Such criticism was, as he understood the life of Athens, a proper part of the work of a teacher.

What was his method?

By the use of "ironical" question and answer about urgent and significant matters, in which the teacher acts as a gadfly, pupils are provoked, challenged, criticized, encouraged into developing those powers and habits of independent judgment which are essential for the growth of a free personality, for the creating of a free community. . . . The method is successful in so far as the pupils establish, in their relations with one another, that same reasonable and friendly cooperation in the search for practical wisdom which they have had with their teachers. To learn that lesson is to become morally and intellectually equipped for citizenship in a free society.

There are two obvious questions. Are there circumstances, defined, as we might define them, as a "national emergency," when it becomes necessary and "right" to suspend this educational activity until calmer times arrive, when it may be resumed with safety?

The second question is this: Is it not possible that, under the cloak of educational activities, a supposed teacher will deliberately confuse and unsettle the minds of the young, unfitting them for the duties of responsible citizenship?

The answers of Socrates, or of Plato, to these questions seem beyond doubt. To the first question the answer would be an unequivocal no. It is impossible to conceive of a national emergency in which the refusal to think clearly would benefit the community. On the contrary, emergencies require our best, most searching thinking, not a timid withdrawal. Hence Socrates replied to his judges:

Some one will say: Yes, Socrates, but can not you hold your tongue, and then you may go into a foreign city, and no one will interfere with you? Now I have great difficulty in making you understand my answer to this. For if I tell you that this would be a disobedience to a divine command, and therefore that I can not hold my tongue, you will not believe that I am serious; and if I say again that the greatest good of man is daily to converse about virtue, and all that concerning which you hear me examining myself and others, and that the unexamined life is not worth living—that you are still less likely to believe. . . .

The difficulty, my friends, is not in avoiding death, but in avoiding unrighteousness; for that runs faster than death. I am old and move slowly, and the slower runner has overtaken me, and my accusers are keen and quick, and the faster runner, who is unrighteousness, has overtaken them. And now I depart hence condemned by you to suffer the penalty of death, and they too go their ways condemned by the truth to suffer the penalty of villainy and wrong; and I must abide by my reward—let them abide by theirs. I suppose that these things may be regarded as fated—and I think that they are well.

Plato's answer to the second question is the one in which we may find much difficulty, for it is no grand sweep in behalf of "freedom," but a careful if reluctant admission that it is possible for "corrupters of youth" to masquerade as teachers. He admits, moreover, the necessity for some sort of control by the community or the government over the teaching profession. This, then, is the real problem, for how shall we answer those critics of Socrates who seize upon this admission with triumphant agreement, arguing that Socrates was in fact a corrupter of the youth of Athens, that since he refused to be silent, the general welfare required that he be suppressed, purged or eliminated?

And now we have a third and ultimate question: Can the good of the community be defined by law, so that judicial bodies will have a sure guide in determining which are authentic teachers, and which a baneful influence?

We see no way in which such a definition can be made. The best attempt, which, fortunately, falls short of any finality, was that of the Founding Fathers of the United States. As Meiklejohn relates:

Two centuries ago our forefathers, having learned much from suffering and injustice, were thinking into being a tentative unification of the claims of freedom and control which gave form to our plan of government. That thinking is our greatest national achievement. It was daring and novel and experimental. So far as conflicts of ideas were concerned it was ready for a fair fight on any open field. But two centuries of frenzied and successful preoccupation with the acquisition of power and wealth have transformed our attitude toward free inquiry. It has now come about that the "free men" of the United States are not called upon to think through their political institutions, to understand and criticize them. On the contrary, we are forbidden to do so.

The point, here, is that if we deny such men as Socrates access to the forums of opinion, in the hope of excluding those who are truly "corrupters of youth," we lose the power to distinguish between teachers and corrupters. And then, as Meiklejohn says:

Our duty as citizens is . . . not to understand but to believe. Loyalty requires of us that we defend our principles against the attacks of "alien" ideas, not by reasoning about those ideas and our own, but by bringing to bear upon our "opponents" or "enemies" the pressure of military force, or economic advantage, or the trickeries of propaganda. And the effect of that corrupting of our minds has been to transform our intellectual heritage, from an exploring and fearless idea which led the world forward, into a timid, defensive, and hysterical dogma which holds the world back. That is why, like Athens, we hunt our teachers down as "corrupters of the youth." That is why, to make sure of their "loyalty," we demand of them a conformity and submissiveness of mind which make them utterly unfit for the work we give them to do.

It seems fitting to end these considerations by hearing what Socrates said to his judges:

And now, O men who have condemned me, I would fain prophesy to you; for I am about to die, and that is the hour in which men are gifted with prophetic power. And I prophesy to you who are my murderers, that immediately after my death punishment far heavier than you have inflicted on me will surely await you. Me you have killed because you wanted to escape the accuser, and not to give an account of your lives. But that will not be as you suppose: far otherwise. For I say that there will be more accusers of you than there are now; accusers whom hitherto I have restrained: and as they are younger they will be more severe with you, and you will be more offended at them. For if you think that by killing men you can avoid the accuser censuring your lives, you are mistaken, that is not a way of escape which is either possible or honorable; the easiest and the noblest way is not to be crushing others, but to be improving yourselves. This is the prophecy which I utter before my departure to the judges who have condemned me.

COMMENTARY

PREREQUISITES TO RELIGION

THE discouraging thing in writing defenses of philosophers and artists (see *Review and Frontiers*) is that they don't seem to make much of an impression on anyone except philosophers and artists. We take the not very popular view that the decent world of tomorrow—or however much of the world may be left after those who are neither philosophers nor artists are through with it—will belong to the philosophers and the artists. It will belong to them because it will be recognized that to consult your mind before you act, as the philosopher does, is not merely virtue, but necessary for survival; and to consult your heart before you decide what is worth doing, as the artist does, is a fundamental requirement of happiness.

We submit that the world, as presently managed by people who are neither philosophers nor artists, is a place inhabited for the most part by miserable people. And since this misery is by no means necessary, but springs, as Gotama Buddha long ago pointed out, from voracious desire for the wrong things and too little interest in the right things, we shall continue with our defense of artists and philosophers, hoping to grow in persuasiveness if not in circulation.

Some words from Jacob Burckhardt's *Force and Freedom*, concerned with human greatness, are to the point:

Of the discoverers of distant lands, Columbus alone was great, but he was very great because he staked his life and expended a vast power of will upon a hypothesis which gives him a rank among the greatest philosophers. The confirmation of the spherical shape of the earth was a premise of all subsequent thought, and all subsequent thought, in so far as it was liberated by that one premise, flashes back to Columbus.

And yet it might be possible to argue that the world could have done without Columbus. "America would soon have been discovered, even if Columbus had died in the cradle"—a thing that could not be said of Æschylus, Pheidias and Plato. If Raphael had

died in his cradle, the *Transfiguration* would assuredly never have been painted.

Artists and philosophers, in short, add to the riches of the world, not by finding something which already existed, nor by amassing wealth that grows from serving material needs, but by creating something new—a new vision of the meaning of all the other things, a new revelation of the resources of human beings.

Artists and philosophers are thus concrete justification of abstract claims about the dignity of man and the immeasurable worth of the individual. They vindicate the idea that there is an ultimate originality in human beings—"that of God," as the Quakers say—for what is more Godlike than pure acts of the imagination?

The world, some say, needs a new religion. This may be so, depending upon what you mean by religion; but first it needs the honesty of the artist, and the philosopher's common sense. Without these, even the best advertised and best promoted religions fail, and fail miserably.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

You ask, Glaucon, what wisdom I have brought back from my last—and perhaps it was my last—journey to Delphi. This is flattery, young man, for the most I ever hope to harvest from visits to the oracle is a puzzle of magnitude to bring home for reflection. Only the priests claim to have ultimate truths revealed to them. Unboasting philosophers find only great questions to be pondered.

On the journey my thoughts ran persistently to a somewhat trivial subject—how Socrates would be regarded in the years to come. It is necessary to confess at the outset that curiosity of this nature is foolish, and less than noble; nevertheless, even if blighted by unworthy preconception, no one need come away entirely empty-handed when seeking enlightenment. What was revealed to me I now relate; as usual, it was presented in the form of a paradox, so that the likelihood of truth in the vision must rest upon former experience.

In the first place, it appears that Socrates will receive at least a measure of approbation during the coming centuries, though chiefly from the very young and the very old. People of ages in between are less enamoured of puzzles, ethical paradoxes, and philosophical problems, preferring to have matters of the mind already thought out and embodied for them in tradition, so that they may pursue power and wealth undisturbed. The young, though—the intelligent young—would rather have most things remain puzzles, so that they can exercise ingenuity in finding solutions. While such are seldom able to formulate this point of view with precision of term, they feel the *desire* for original expression—which of itself furnishes explanation of why it is that adults who wish to teach children too much and too soon seldom have their efforts crowned with success. The very old, on the other hand, no longer expect the certainties of tradition to suffice, having from long experience learned that however much one may

wish for pleasant simplicities in the life of the mind, this is impossible.

The Five Hundred regard me disapprovingly, to phrase their feelings with a feeble word. This we both surely know for a fact, Glaucon. But it is interesting and still fortunate that the terms used in voicing this disapproval arise from unrelieved confusion. From the oracle I learn that, a few centuries hence, people will have a name for my insistence that the Gods be questioned—rather than blindly obeyed. Before the coming age—some say it will be "Roman"—is well on its way, the word "moral" will be coined. The "moral" man will be the man who is at all times satisfied with tradition, and who is therefore willing and able to denounce others who deviate from comfortable surety as "*immoral*." By this time, Glaucon, I must tell you that the remaining Athenians will have been swallowed up in the new ways, and while they will have more intelligence, on the average, than their conquerors, it will be almost impossible for them to play a determining part in matters of government. Employed as tutors of the Roman young, their only public dignity will consist of a status in pedagogy.

This word, moral, while not to be invented for several centuries, will come, Glaucon, to enjoy a commanding role in the further unfoldment of civilization. But the puzzle here will be doubled or tripled—for it will be precisely in the name of "morality" that rival temples will endeavor to set the multitudes against each other, and this is hardly a civilized prospect. Not only will priests be thus engaged, but monarchs will similarly arm the claims of this "morality" to establish or defend their positions, backing pious utterances by force of weapons. And if any like Socrates appear to argue issues, Glaucon, they will have short shrift indeed, it being unlikely that they will even be allowed to debate in front of a council such as the Five Hundred. So, for a long time, the memory of Socrates will not be popular, since both rulers and priests will contrive to see that safety lies in conforming to established patterns of behavior.

I should of course make clear, Glaucon, that it is not really the name "Socrates" that I have been speaking of, in terms of future regard, but rather the nature of the course I have taken. Whether or not one's name is preserved for future generations is certainly a small affair, and much more a matter of historical accident than of anything else. A man might have been named anything, and, if he has lived many lives, has already *been* named almost everything under the sun, during the passage of millennia. But a man's essential nature is surely not a matter of historical accident at all, is rather the one determination entirely within the power of his own will and design. No, it is how people of natures *like* that of Socrates will be regarded which prompted my inquiry at Delphi, and, as I have said, the vision seemed to show that, if granted fifty times a normal life-span, the reception of my ways would grow poorer all the while.

But this is not the end of the vision, Glaucon. It seems that for the Socrateses of the world, this confused story, like many others, may have a happy ending. It was told me that in a far-distant century—to be termed "the twentieth" by some odd pagan reckoning—though not before even this far-away epoch has passed its mid-point, more and yet more people will rebel against "morality." This will not be, fortunately, because they hate the thought of showing respect to any customs or traditions, but only because they will have finally realized that to judge others for not following habits commonly espoused is to set every man against his fellows. Somewhere in this distant time, people will simply have known too many wars, too many hates and denunciations of character because of differing political opinions.

The young and the old, as I have said, will have always been with me, however ineffectually, Glaucon, but in this future age more from the middle generations will come to stand beside me—even though they may know it not, nor I care. They will not be concerned with *whom* they stand, but for what. Though they might have

made great friends with Socrates, if they had known him, the thing finally learned will be that a person must stand alone on important matters, and not care who lends luster to his cause, or who does not. Only when such a position is taken does the yoke of authority weaken, there being nothing left of fear for petty tyrants to use as leverage to compel conformity of opinion.

Now it is here, I think, that the meaning of the word *ethical* will be most truly divined, for the first time during the long cycle of centuries since our Grecian days. The ethical man will be, again, the man who puts nothing before principle, and whose first principle consists of a determination to respect the principles of others.

The young and the old have always wanted to be ethical, as I have said. However, when the leaders of a people—men and women in the prime of mind—see that life is not worth living without the special dignity of integrity, and that integrity requires ethics and not morality, a new and better era may dawn in the affairs of men.

Beyond this point, Glaucon, I could not see the future clearly, nor was it, evidently, intended that I should. But if attitudes of suspicion and distrust, and the habit of condemning the ideas of others may pass away in the course of time, this is a great hope. Then will the desire for knowledge dominate, replacing the disastrous urge to pass adverse judgments before exercising the discipline of impartiality.

FRONTIERS

Protest and Call

[There is enough of a consensus in what articulate artists have to say about the modern world to speak of their feelings and attitudes with generality. And the unity of these expressions is of special interest for the reason that they derive from unmediated perceptions and are uttered without a trace of the pressures of conformity.

The values cherished by the artist are seldom evident in the same measure to other men. He sees, we think, both too much and too little. While other men are doing the work of the world, he is washing his brushes or delighting in a cloud. But lest the artist be spokesman for our lost and unbodied hearts, lest he be the willing captive of the dreams and aspirations we have ejected from our "practical" lives, we had better listen to him whenever he finds a voice. Not only he, but we, also, are alienated men; and he, at least, has found convictions which compel him to speak. The obscurity of his language may be only the coarse rind of our minds, which have too long suffered attachment to a world which, for the artist, exists only in ugliness and shame.

Below we print extracts from the manuscript, *The Words of the Earth*, in which an artist, Cedric Wright, discusses education in relation to world peace.]

OFTEN it seems that only things like blades of grass have sanity—blades of grass, and the whole infinity of non-human things. Man must learn reverence for the non-human things that their serenity, their balance, their native integrity may in part pass over to him—that he may gain fundamental virtue and wisdom.

Walt Whitman speaks of the need to "bring materials, not breaths." I believe he refers to the inner spirit, the beauty and integrity of the earth. These realities, instead of a procession of mere breaths—names—these realities must be absorbed into the human consciousness. This will require a life of simplicity, of uncluttering, the like of which few educators have ever dreamed. It may be a painful change. And it will require sincere desiring—if earth eloquence is to come to man's rescue.

There are those who see in Nature only a cut-throat competition, a battle for survival. This exists between the elements comprising nature, but man is able to escape from such involvement. He may be both master and disciple of Nature.

Great scientists are often among the most intuitive and reverent of men. But there is a lesser caliber of scientist who lacks interest in the mystical side of life. It is a catastrophe that the school has so often become like him. Cold facts, theory about the mechanisms of biology, geology, and so on, dominate school curricula. The results of this have infected the human race, strangling its soul. After four years of photographing for the Radiation Laboratory at the University of California, I know the drive and consecration given to exploring the frontiers of science. But there are other frontiers which man needs desperately to explore. On the horizons which concern creative artists are discovered the inner values of the world. In realms of the spirit, these scientists of the emotional world, the artists, the mystic philosophers, are searching for a life which is rich in mood of heart and soul.

The thoughtful dreamers are working with no less consecration than are the men of science. They know there is something from the artist's workshop which must be brought to the mass human consciousness. They believe we must become better acquainted with the moods and feelings arising from the heart of the universe.

The paths leading toward world-wide human compatibility are discovered only by those who live within awareness of inner meanings. Both in education and in politics, it is time to turn for leadership to those who have companioned the winds of the spirit, who know the creative loneliness of mountain summits. For something of eternity smoulders there, waiting to counsel those who linger. . . . When in your own experience the mystical influence of the wilderness has been strong and clear, you will credit the concrete usefulness of dreaming thought, you will reverence the leading of intuition. In these

channels one realizes the importance of beauty. One knows that, somehow, the precepts of the intangible should be brought into the school. For they involve essentials which should be consciously gathered to use.

By leaving young people numb and exhausted, from a killing curriculum which is filled with triteness—schools smother intuitive awareness. Under perpetual exhaustion there is little incentive to acquire moods of high perception. Too often educators impress their students with only the neutral and sterile side of a subject such as language. When there is no exploration of language as meaning, it becomes a cadaver. Under a continual avalanche of such teaching, the masses are starved for the aesthetic and philosophical roots required in living. These things, language is supposed to convey. While wisdom may be found in the language of every nation, language students rarely find it. . . .

There is another sort of mystical experience, utterly important to humanity, yet inconsequential in familiar appraisal. On going to a hospital for an operation, a childbirth..., perhaps one suddenly becomes aware of the eternal human soul, becomes aware of eternity. After such an experience one has a more humanitarian outlook, a far better chance of solving the problems of human association. For vision which has for a while resided amidst the infinite, retains values magically capable of leavening matter-of-fact living. In experiencing these milestones of the spirit, these crossroads of life and death, one sometimes hears strange footsteps ascending anciently trodden pathways. In the light of the imagination, one is aware of vast tides following. This is vision. Thus are opened horizons which expand forever. Seeing with the eyes of heart and soul, the mystic reads large meanings in cloud movement, and blend. The mystic knows that his life is part of this great life.

Such simple concepts should be the possession of everyone. They are needed in man's work, in man's supra-nationalism. Thus are

bridges created between human life and the universe. Perception of dim outlines along the frontiers appear, in some new astronomy of the spirit. Thus life becomes suffused with trailing loveliness,...

Long ago, while walking the hills, I saw a belt of cloud moving across the sky, a procession of resolving forms. One took shape, then faded as it passed, never to be forgotten. The long white mass reached into the sky like a huge ocean wave. It hung in space, then started to curl, like surf meeting the shore. The crest gleamed, a poised line of light against the shadowed base—then rolled majestically and dissolved in space. . . . Resolving experience is an immortal thing, flowing out of the past and into the unknowable like that cloud procession. And so, what impressed me about the cloud was not only its breathtaking beauty, but the realization that here was a symbol of life. Here were the qualities which amass within the human soul. In contemplation of this, consciousness somehow lost personal dimension, becoming universal. Within a deep dreaming, these beauties, like our affinities, are seen as reflections from out some unknown immortality. Through the sculpture of experience one begins to know that the survival part of ourselves resolves continuously, flowing on through forms utterly beyond present comprehension. What is supposed to be gone and past is often more real than ever, like that cloud processional. Here is the spirit of my hope and of my religion. . . . With such feeling about life, there exists no separation. What we would tell those we love exists already, where communion is deep. So, with a philosophy prepared for parting, our lives, like dreams, endure and reach out over the universe.