

## THE EMERGING INDIVIDUAL

A SUBSCRIBER who has been studying in France writes in comment on the differences between American and French intellectuality. The French, he finds, are thoughtfully hospitable to the theories of such modern psychologists as Karl Jung, while America "has not gone beyond the rationalism of the century of Voltaire," except for the popularity of Freudian views. Although there is something to be said for Freud's uncompromising criticism of anthropomorphism in religion, it seems likely that the American attraction to Freud has not always been for the best reasons. Meanwhile, the growing appreciation of Jungian ideas in Europe affords a breadth of understanding which has few parallels in the United States. As our correspondent asks for a discussion of Jung's general thesis, we may start with the former's brief summary of the great Swiss analyst's leading ideas:

The idea of the collective unconscious is this: The individual has a personal consciousness with which we are all familiar during our waking hours. He also has an unconscious, which is much the greater part of our total psyche. In this unconscious, or subconscious, then, there are different levels. On a superficial level we find some of the dream symbols which Freud tells us are symbols related to sex. . . . But much deeper in this subconscious world, for Jung, are to be found images which are symbols related to the whole psychic history of the human race, and which are the source of most of the myths, of the different mythological explanations of the cosmos by primitive, and later, civilized man. Each individual carries with him, or is connected through his subconscious with, this collective memory of humanity. The extent to which he comes in contact with this world depends on the many factors of character, intelligence, etc., and the nature of his personality—whether he is the type of person who lets himself enter this inner world, or a man of action who banishes any such thoughts from his mind, when and if they present themselves to him.

Jung speaks of what he calls the archetype symbols of this collective unconscious, or

subconscious. For example, the Journey into Hell, or the Underworld, in Greek mythology which corresponds, perhaps, to Christ's Journey into the Valley of Death, and, of course, to the Hell of Dante. This is called an archetype symbol, or image, as it can be found in various forms in myths of all the different races of the earth. And the individual can experience this journey in his dreams, or during periods of mental stress or difficulty, and it may correspond to a stage in the development of the individual psyche. The myth as it appears in folklore may represent an experience in the total history of the human consciousness and subconscious, as well as in the history of the individual. Jung also point out how this myth may be a manifestation of a period in the history of the individual human psyche when the consciousness is somehow invaded, drowned in the subconscious part of our psyche. That is, the small part of our psyche that is our waking consciousness is overwhelmed, as by a flood over an island, by the great ocean that is our subconscious.

We can easily agree with our correspondent that this account of the human psyche invites both reflection and discussion. There is first the fact that such an explanation seems to increase the possibility of understanding how a man can be both a free individual and at the same time part of a collectivity, a larger psychic unity. The problem of individuality is a profound one, and any light at all on its difficulties should be eagerly welcomed.

For man to be part of a larger unity would help to explain many things, telepathy, for example. An idea communicated by thought-transference might as easily be regarded as an idea *possessed in common* as a "communicated" idea. As a matter of fact, how many of our thoughts are uniquely our own, and how many rise from the collective unconscious as more or less common property?

The feeling of a collective unconscious may even be the Big Intuition back of the dogmas of racists and totalitarians. Given a limited truth, they stretch it into a separatist political manifesto.

It follows, then, that the "organic State" is a mechanical version of collectivist mysticism. But if the totalitarians misapply the truth of psychic unity, this does not make that unity unreal; it only perverts it.

Then there is the question of our "freedom." Is it lost by our being part of one another? Perhaps our theories of individuality have been all too simply conceived. Why should not the moral individuality of the single man be a growth and a development from within the matrix of the collective psyche? Some, perhaps, when the challenge of dissent comes to them, are still-born as free individuals, although their life as a cell in the racial or national psyche continues as before. Further, it is certain, however we explain it, that some men are emotionally and mentally incapable of thinking and feeling other than the great majority think and feel. The control exercised by the "mother psyche" is too strong for them, and they cannot even imagine a life apart from the rest. Then there are the odd misfits and eccentrics who seek conformity in rebellion, who haunt the lunatic fringes of revolutionary or radical movements, not through allegiance to the principles these movements represent, but to satisfy some current of partisanship which enters and dominates their actions.

How shall we come to grips with "ourselves," should this relative "individuality" approximate the actual character of self-hood? The man who feels the power of a mass emotion sweep through him, impelling him to action like a tidal wave—will he be able to admit to himself that he, in the measure of his submission to the wave, is *no longer an individual*, but only a "cell" responding to some darkly coercive impulse from the pre-moral and primordial psychic past of the race? The man who seems helplessly enmeshed by an all-consuming passion—will he have the courage to face the fact of his own abdication from the ranks of free individuals?

On the other side of the question is another sort of unity—which might perhaps be called

"higher psychic" unity. When a Gandhi bows across a century to a Thoreau, and across a continent to a Tolstoy, a community of spirit is established, founded upon the recognition of common principles. Evidently, there is unity with freedom, and unity without it, and all the astonishingly complex combinations which grow from partial expressions of the two extremes. Here, perhaps, in this wilderness of artfully mixed reality and delusion, lies the true arena of the human struggle, the authentic course of human evolution.

One thing that we can be sure of is the overriding reality of basic moral values—the ideas of justice, of right and wrong, of freedom and dependability. These are the constants of human aspiration, connecting past with present and present with future, and making great literature speak to all men in a common tongue. Yet in our attempts to apply the principle of justice, to define right and wrong, to create the conditions of freedom, and to practice loyalty and faithfulness, we spread the germs of confusion and conflict. Sometimes it seems that the worst wars of all are those which are supposed to have principles behind them—the wars of religion and the wars of ideology. No man is so intolerant, so unresponsive to the appeal of impartiality, as the religious fanatic, for he is ruled by a partisan emotion and can have no traffic with impartiality without completely surrendering his cause. The fanatic who serves his god with blindly devoted enthusiasm has his idea of "unity," but it is a unity which leaves out all those who do not agree with him. So, of this man, we might suppose that he is forging for himself a fiercely partisan identity, cutting himself off from a large part of the world. Here, perhaps, is his punishment, a self-made isolation from all except the psychic currents which animate angry partisans everywhere.

Quite conceivably, the psychic universe in which men dwell as thinking and feeling beings is entirely made up of such currents of varying strength and moral quality. They flow through us

and away from us, either reinforced or lessened in energy. A Gandhi, for example, accepts a current of Thoreau, and sends it forth intensified and in new focus to thrill and inspire, not a handful in New England, but millions and millions of human beings, all over the world.

So we live and affect our fellows in a universe of psychic interdependence. Some set examples and spread themes of subservience, fear, and defeat, while others release ideas which may become nuclear centers of self-reliance and moral independence in other men.

Our common psychic inheritance, of which Jung speaks, then, may be subject to addition and subtraction, and to gradual transformation through psychic evolution. We might think of the universal psyche of mankind—the Oversoul, Emerson called it—as representing the human genius of the past. It affords guidance and protection, even as the instincts of the animal draw each organism into patterns of behavior which represent the accumulated wisdom of its species. But as *human* evolution has a different objective from mere physical survival—since man's development is a project in self-conscious freedom—the past has no rigid instructions to offer to the individual. What is the actual content of the myths, of Persephone's descent into Hades, of Christ's sojourn in the Valley of Death? If the precise meanings of these symbol tales were to be set forth with deadly finality, they would give no real instruction at all, but only a kind of imitation teaching for imitation men.

More than one wise scholar has recognized the incalculable importance of fantasy and myth in education. The myth sets a goal for the imagination to work upon; or it establishes a process of striving which, if understood and adopted, will in time reveal the goal. The instruction from the past, from the depths of the common psyche, then, represents the wisdom of the psychic organism, and, being reliable, in the same way that instinct is reliable, it never overreaches or invades the creative instant of the

present, where man must always choose for himself.

The lesson to be learned from the human tendency to oscillate between blind belief and flat negation seems to differ very little from that proposed by the Delphic Oracle: "Man, know thyself!" In both cases it is a lesson concerned with the dignity of man. The mere believer holds his own powers of understanding at a discount, turning to an outside authority for the certainty he longs to attain, while the skeptic defines the possibilities of knowledge in terms of his present ignorance.

The idea that great truths may be hidden in the human psyche, and in the larger, collective psyche represented by myth and legend, is, undeniably, a far-reaching assumption to entertain. Yet if we are prepared to admit that man, along with the other orders of nature, is an entirely *natural* being, then the recurring intuitions of moral greatness and human potentiality are to be accepted as evidence of psychic reality in man, and as significant in respect to man's nature as any other sort of evidence that may be collected in the field of evolutionary studies.

The real issue, in such questions, is whether or not we are obliged to regard *psychic* realities and the phenomena of consciousness as involving some kind of supernaturalism. To insist that they do, it seems to us, is to become victim of the perversions of orthodox religion. Why should we assume that so-called "spiritual" phenomena in any way demonstrate the claims of the supernaturalists? And, on the other hand, why should we impoverish the resources of scientific explanation by refusing to admit that patterning and purposive intelligence may be a completely natural expression of higher forces in the universe?

The very expression, "higher forces," of course, may seem to us like a supernatural reference, but should it? If we can feel sure that the resistance of the disciplined mind to such concepts is really a resistance to the irrationalism

of dogmatic method, then, possibly, we may be able to formulate an unprejudiced approach to religious ideas.

Actually, the assumption of higher forces—forces which operate creatively in the medium of consciousness, forces which are ethical in energy and direction—may be the best possible protection for the spirit of scientific inquiry. Meanwhile, to starve the higher intuitions of men by seeing them with denials of their spiritual nature may be exactly what is needed to keep them vulnerable to religious superstition.

While it is difficult to break away from any conventional definition of "truth," or "reality," we ought to be able to see that these terms represent areas where "convention" has no utility at all. The truth-seeker needs to start out with the realization that his only convention must be to reject all conventions—that this, in fact, is the meaning behind the symbolism of the great hero myths, and the meaning behind the aspiring dreams of his heart.

## *Letter from* **SWEDEN**

GOTHENBURG.—My last letter dealt with ways that have been adopted to increase production, in order to raise the living standard in Sweden. It might interest MANAS readers to know how we work. We have formed enterprise committees or "boards of enterprise" in which both the employers and the workers cooperate and participate in the job to be done. The composition of the boards of enterprise is as follows: the workers are represented by three members if the company employs 100, with five members if there are more than 200 employees, and with seven if the enterprise involves many more people. The functionaries (salaried workers, including executive personnel) have two representatives if the workers have four; three, if the workers have five, six, or seven representatives. Finally, the employer selects those he wants to represent him. He, as a rule, acts as the chairman at the quarterly general meetings. The records of the proceedings of these meetings are distributed among the workers. (It should be remembered that the enterprise committees are not controlled by law, but by agreement between employer and worker organizations.)

Sweden has a population of about seven million. Of this total, three and a half million support the rest—the old, the ill, and the women and children. High production, therefore, is necessary to assure that the needs of everyone are met. Today, the children of Sweden may go to school until they reach the age of sixteen or eighteen years, without cost to the parents. Free meals are served at school, and free books are supplied.

The national income in Sweden in 1950 was 25 milliards crowns (4.5 billion dollars). Of course, one may borrow capital to build up industry. The Marshall Plan has helped in this way in Sweden, and the writer, as a working man, would like to thank Americans for this. But borrowing is a bad policy, because the money must be paid back some day. We have paid it back, and we don't think we shall have to borrow more, unless something extraordinary happens.

The Swedes once called their country *Folkhome*—a big family which buys and sells things. We look on our national income as a family's income, subject to a

family's expenses. Thirty per cent (or seven milliards) of our income is used to build new homes and factories (this is considered too little by some people). Social welfare takes two and a half milliards (or 11 per cent). The war department takes one and a half milliards crowns, and the administration of our country involves the same amount. The remaining ten milliards are divided among the rest of the people.

As to the future, there is the fact that dependent children will increase by 100,000 during the next ten years; and the aged by more than 200,000 within fifteen years. Swedish workers now have two weeks' vacation with full wages; within two years the vacation will be three weeks. There are also school and sick-benefit reforms to be enacted.

Today, the old-age pensions are paid by income taxes, but, looking at the situation technically, there ought to be a reserve of thirty milliards crowns to meet this expense. Because of unemployment and depression during the early 1920's and in the 30's, people could not settle down and marry, but in 1936-38 business was better, so that more children are now of school age. The old-age pensioners are also members of large families, so that the working portion of the Swedish population has a heavy load to carry just now.

We know that the defense program will cost us heavily, and we intend to defend ourselves, no matter where the attack comes from—if it comes. This will take money, and that is why we have started the boards of enterprise—so that we may better plan the jobs to be done and make them more profitable.

In the study circles, we learn from the ground up the work of the enterprise committees. Then we confer in larger bodies, going further into the problems and analyzing things which remain unclear to many. It is as a result of some of these conferences that this information regarding enterprise committees comes to you.

SWEDISH CORRESPONDENT

## *REVIEW* IN AND OUT OF ROME

WITH deference to whatever genuine sincerity exists among the sectarians of every faith, it has long been both our opinion and our hope that a few more generations will see the end of revelational dogma. However many last-ditch stands the religious authoritarians contrive, it seems to us that the gradual rejection of "materialistic" or "mechanistic" determinism by an increasing number of leading minds will finally undermine the appeal of conventional religion. For a sizable number of those presently catalogued as of orthodox faith have undoubtedly chosen theology as the lesser of two evils; theology has at least insisted on the reality of the human soul and the indestructibility of some kind of self, through immortality. Now if our leaders in thought continue to abandon all-denying skepticism, and grant, as they often do, some measure of validity to metaphysical ideas, then the Church will soon lose its major attraction—while at the same time its undesirable devisive tendencies become ever more apparent.

For all those who regard themselves as "free-thinkers," the book *I Was a Monk*, the autobiography of John Tettemer (Knopf, 1951), will have especial interest. John Tettemer was unusual in that he entered the Passionist Catholic Order with no "over-reactive" orientations against "sin," and left it without any great "over-reactive" bitterness, and we may hope that his adventures in religious self-discovery will serve as a prototype for many in the years to come. There have been many rabid Catholics who have subsequently become just as rabid enemies of both faith and Church, but, since understanding never accompanies rabidity, the cause of freedom of mind derives little benefit from these new allies.

John Tettemer, formerly Father Ildefonso, makes it plain that he has no quarrel with the sincere members of the Order, nor is he without understanding for those who remain in one or

another of the many other Catholic orders. Partly, perhaps, because he tried to penetrate to the core of the reflective religious life, and because he was unambitious and sincere, Tettemer finally emerged with a religious faith so broad and deep that he found himself progressively disentangled from all confining creeds and rituals. Even as a boy he inclined to meditation and solitude. He was not trying to "get away" from anything; urged by some deep prompting, he wished to discover, even as Buddha once wished to discover, the mysteries of the hidden Self.

Here is the account of Tettemer's early progression towards the Passionists, and we agree with him that psychologists may well reflect upon this sort of testimony:

I am aware that what I term a *search for reality* some modern psychologists may label *flight* from reality, a seeking to fly to the peace and state of total irresponsibility experienced within the mother womb. I am not interested in defending, only in relating as dearly as I am able the stages I went through during this period. Let me only interject that modern psychology is very young, and youthfully limited to the short-range, materialistic view of life. When it has had time and experience to grasp the whole range of the experiences of human consciousness, it will probably come into a larger view of life, just as the scientist, so limited in the nineteenth century by his concepts of matter, now has larger horizons and hence envisions a world totally different from the small world he was able to conceive but a few decades ago.

Contrary to representing the flight from reality, may not this urge experienced by men to retire from the intense activity churning within and round about them, in order to find a more satisfying sense of reality, be instead the progressive urge of life toward a higher state, rather than a retrograde flight back to a former state? Can the instinct of the worm, to cease its crawling on the earth, feeding on leaves, and to wrap itself in a new womb from which it will be reborn a new creature of beauty feeding on the nectar of flowers in a glorious free world above the earth—can this instinct be considered "a flight from reality"? Is it not rather nature's way of bringing about a miraculous transformation of the lowly grub into the heavenly winged creature that excites our imagination

and even our poetry as it finds for itself the freedom of the upper regions?

May there not equally be a stage in man's life where instinct, nature within him, urges a rest from the ceaseless activity of the earth, of the endless circling of senses and mind? May not nature work its miracle within man too, during an apparent stage of inactivity, bringing about the birth of a new creature, liberated from the worries, the entanglements, the smallnesses of its immature grublike earth life, into the glorious freedom of a new world?

Presenting first the *best* of what might be said of the Passionist monks, Tetterer comments: "In the Passionist Order the religious community flourishes because the members are utterly united in a common high purpose, toward which the individual self is enthusiastically dedicated, submerging petty, personal seekings in a passion for something outside itself."

Certainly no Catholic apologist could ask a more flattering *raison d'être* for monastic orders. Why, then, did Tetterer leave, to the profound regret of his fellow monks and the even more profound annoyance of higher officials in the Church? As Father Ildefonso, Tetterer, after having risen to a position of some importance among the Passionists, was stricken by an illness requiring his retirement to a Swiss mountain retreat. There he could neither read nor discuss and, left alone with his thinking, he continued his original solitary pilgrimage of the mind and soul, interrupted, as it were, by his years of specific monastic duties. The beliefs of the Catholic faith began to seem but imaginative paintings of reality, totally incapable of *representing* reality—as ineffectual as any other religious "doctrines." As he puts it:

This was my first loss of faith: faith in the power of the human mind to know Truth about the Ultimate. Far from being disillusioned or depressed by such a discovery at this juncture of my life, I felt a release, an uplifting joy. I was coming into a great new, unknown world out of the small world pictured by my mind, with all its unsolved difficulties, contrivances, and contradictions. I felt thrilled by thoughts of the vastness of a real world as distinct and other from my old thought-world. I did not feel I had lost anything

irreplaceable, rather that I had gained a new life; as if a new faculty of knowing had been born out of the travail of the mind.

Thus began a long retracing of steps, not exactly in "disillusionment," but simply in further growth in self-reliance of thought. He did not turn his back upon all of the *symbols* of the Church but found himself irresistibly drawn to reinterpret them. He became, however, a blunt critic of what Paul Blanshard has called the inevitable "political" tendencies of an authoritarian power claiming extra-cosmic endorsement:

The unholy wedlock of divine inspiration and human knowledge and the organizing of it in a body of doctrine, an orthodoxy that is proffered as sacred, are the greatest crime committed against God and His gentle Son, and led to numberless other crimes and brutalities perpetrated in their names. This I now feel is the most unfortunate aspect of all religions, and especially of Catholic Christianity. This tendency and effort of the human mind to condense the inspiration and revelation of a great seer—even of the Son of God if you will—into the narrow limits of human understanding are the source of all the ungodly divisions among the Christian churches, and of the hatreds and murders that have derived therefrom.

We invite readers to peruse *I Was a Monk* at leisure, not merely in the hope of weaning Catholics or other Christians from their mother-faiths, but mostly for the sympathy and understanding afforded in this book for the *valid core* of religious aspiration.

Thomas Merton's *The Seven Story Mountain* (now available in a Pocket edition) offers an interesting contrast to Tetterer, for Merton's "pilgrimage" is in the opposite direction. A passage from *The Seven Story Mountain*, revealing the sources of Merton's drive towards conversion, is in sharp contrast to *I Was a Monk*, showing the traditional preoccupation with self and sin. The first "revelation" came to Merton in this way:

I was overwhelmed with a sudden and profound insight into the misery and corruption of my own soul, and I was pierced deeply with a light that made me realize something of the condition I was, in, and I

was filled with horror at what I saw, and my whole being rose up in revolt against what was within me, and my soul desired escape and liberation and freedom from all this with an intensity and an urgency unlike anything I had ever known before. And now I think for the first time in my whole life I really began to pray—praying not with my lips and with my intellect and my imagination, but praying out of the very roots of my life and of my being, and praying to the God I had never known, to reach down towards me out of His darkness and to help me to get free of the thousand terrible things that held my will in their slavery.

While Tetterer reflected upon the immaturity of mass prayer and the barren ritual of public genuflection, Merton, although feeling "agonizing embarrassment and self-consciousness" in praying publicly, finally surrendered. "I prayed. After that I sat outside, in the sun, on a wall and tasted the joy of my own inner peace. . . ."

Though it is dangerous to sum up so weighty a subject without betraying a bias of one's own, we wonder if the comparison between Tetterer and Merton does not indicate how much more "personal" was the latter's journey *into* religion than the former's journey *away* from it? Because Tetterer was never particularly concerned with his private individual salvation, religion became simply a stepping-stone to further enlightenment. Merton's writings, on the other hand, give us the impression of a man content to live in an ecstatic trance, finding his chief source for happiness in his discovery of how to prolong it.



## *COMMENTARY*

### THE GOAL OF RELIGION

FROM articles in this issue one gets the impression that "the truth" is a very slippery customer—so hard to get hold of, in fact, that it may not exist at all. For if sectarians err in insisting on dead-letter interpretations of their Scriptures, and if even the convictions of impartial, sensible men are subject to change, how can anyone say that he has "the truth"?

It seems likely that a really intelligent man will never be caught making a claim of this sort. He may say, "It seems to me," or admit that he "has not been able to escape the conclusion that . . .," but he can hardly attempt to traffic in truth as though it could be passed around like money. Conceivably, it is the way in which a man talks *about* truth, much more than what he says he believes, that shows whether or not he is on the right track.

But admitting all this, there remains the unmistakable power of certain religious doctrines to impress us with the feeling that the power of truth is in them. To have it, yet never to "claim" it—this seems almost a rule of wise men in relation to truth.

We recall a Buddhist Scripture in which the teacher asserts elaborate metaphysical doctrines concerning hierarchies of spiritual entities said to people the cosmos; and then, after affirming these doctrines, proceeds to declare them mere illusions. For anyone habituated to religious revelation, this method of dealing with philosophical ideas must appear confusing, if not abusive of the faith of the disciples or followers. Yet, having once read this scripture, it is impossible to forget its method. What conceivable value can there be in maintaining that a teaching is both true and not true?

The *method*, we think, and not the subject-matter of this Buddhist discourse, contains its real instruction. No "teaching," it implies, when fixed upon dogmatically, continues to embody truth.

The constant and invariable realities in life have to do with the motives of men, with the intensity of their longing for self-discovery, and with their capacity to see beyond the relativities of any "doctrine," into the living processes of which all doctrines can be no more than reflections. A man has knowledge only when he no longer needs to be warned against illusions. This is the only real security, and every true religion, regardless of its doctrinal content, is intent upon conveying the practical meaning of this goal.

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

BEFORE the historic incidents involving the dismissal of Pasadena School Superintendent Willard Goslin fade into ancient history, we might call attention to a report on what actually happened. Prepared by the National Commission for Defense of Democracy through Education, the report was issued last year under the title, *The Pasadena Story*. (Copies are still obtainable from the Committee at 1529 W. Lewis, Phoenix, Ariz.)

*The Pasadena Story* is not really a local tale; the National Commission undertook exhaustive research on Goslin's dismissal because, as the Report says, it seemed apparent that the same "forces and factors that injured a superior school system" in this California city were active throughout the United States. The Report might be sub-titled, "How Politics Enters and Ends Educational Progress," for attacks on the "Americanism" of public school teachers, inspired by anti-communist hysteria or even by occasional political unorthodoxy on the part of the teachers, often provide for the discharge of irrational emotions under the guise of a crusade.

The National Commission for Defense of Democracy through Education is an outgrowth of and sponsored by the National Education Association, concerning which an informative word prefaces *The Pasadena Story*:

The National Education Association, with its affiliated organizations, represents more than eight hundred thousand American teachers and, therefore, *is* in a position to speak for the teaching profession of the United States.

In 1941 the National Education Association organized the National Commission for the Defense of Democracy through Education and assigned to it specific responsibilities, among which are: (a) to bring to the general public a fuller understanding of the importance of a better education for all of our people if our American democracy and way of life are to be maintained; (b) to defend teachers, schools, and the cause of education against unjust attacks and to

investigate charges involving teachers, schools, educational methods and procedures, justly, fearlessly, and in the public interest; (c) to work for educational conditions essential for the perpetuation of our democracy.

The Commission found that, as in politics, those who shouted "un-American" the loudest were frequently the parties most guilty of undermining the processes of Democracy. Dr. Goslin, for instance, whatever his personal failings, was uncompromisingly dedicated to the democratic approach to school administration. He felt that a Board of Trustees selected largely on the basis of social prestige and wealth was far less qualified to decide education policies than the teachers and administrators of a community school system. Goslin "took seriously the obligation that every school system has for improving its school services." Principals were asked to lead discussions in their own buildings on the educational needs of the city, and the results were combined in a single report for the guidance of the Superintendent. The teachers participating in this program undertook the additional work voluntarily, and with an enthusiasm and a sense of obligation fitting to their status as community servants. Dr. Goslin carried the attempt to democratize the administration of the school system further by encouraging the formation of various committees of teachers and principals for the purpose of "planning policies and procedures." In the opinion of the Defense Committee, the "crime" for which Goslin was punished—though under the ridiculous charge of "Communist sympathy"—was "his refusal to give special consideration to the small controlling group (of trustees) and his practice of carrying all problems to the people." He was trying to translate devotion to Democracy from mere lip-service into actual practice. It soon became apparent that the controlling interests of Pasadena were not actually ready for Democracy. While teachers and principals strove to set a tone of rational inquiry and evaluation, *political* opponents of Dr. Goslin's new emphasis upon the importance of teachers'

opinions resorted to name-calling. The Commission sums up as follows:

The community must learn the art of amicable discussion as a means of compromising differences of opinion and making necessary changes. Name calling and suspicion of ulterior motives are no substitute for this. Every forward-looking community has a responsibility for alertness in recognition of the use of such propaganda devices as misrepresentation, unsupported charges, and attempts to discredit individuals or groups. These devices never furnish a solution for problems involved in living and working together constructively. Objective consideration and mature thinking are essential for reaching sound solutions to community problems in a democratic society. For these the local community *must* assume the responsibility.

The school controversy was a very costly experience for Pasadena. Its national prestige as a superior school community suffered materially. Animosities were developed which it may take a generation to dissipate. Fear and distrust were widely disseminated. The people's confidence in their schools was shaken. Teacher morale was impaired. The fine enthusiasm for in-service training and the improvement of teaching skill which was engendered by teacher participation in planning policies and programs disappeared. Relations between the Board of Education and the public were strained and may continue to be for some time to come.

The progress of education in Pasadena is not yet a lost cause. The case of Superintendent Goslin may be either an incident marking only a temporary setback to be followed by a renewed advance, or it may be the decisive blow that sends the community back to mediocrity or worse. The outcome depends upon the courage, intelligence, and initiative of the majority of the citizens of the community. The greatest foes to a renewed advance will not be persons or groups; they will be inertia, confusing propaganda, distrust, fear, selfishness, and pressure of other interests.

As supplementary to the National Commission's report, we recommend a short editorial in the July 16 *Christian Century*, "Is Your Child the Legion's Target?" Commenting upon an American Legion denunciation of the National Education Association on the ground that it constitutes "one of the strongest forces

today in propagandizing for Socialist America," The *Christian Century* observes:

The National Education Association is not a champion of socialism. It is the great voluntary organization of half a million American teachers, and its one cause is the championship of the public schools. A report given to the educators by the defense commission of the N.E.A. noted that the number, variety and violence of the attacks on public education have greatly increased in the last year. It pointed out that smearing the public schools has been made into a "lucrative racket" by some well financed practitioners of the "big lie." The article and the national commander's defense of it as the position of the Legion raises the question whether the Legion has become a tool of these forces. If it has, what does it mean to do with our children? Who stands to benefit from attacks on public schools?

We may conclude that it is impossible to separate political issues from educational issues at the present time, but the crucial battle can be held to revolve around the *methods* adopted by the advocates of opposing viewpoints rather than the differing convictions or opinions held. Democracy is primarily a method, not a doctrine, or dogma, and we may be grateful to the *Christian Century* for recognizing this, while demonstrating, also, that the constructive spirit of Christianity does not reside in authoritarian teaching, but rather in faith in the capacity of all human beings to arrive individually at a higher truth.

## *FRONTIERS*

### The Same Old Question

FOR a generation, at least, it has been the custom of freethinking critics of religion to make caustic remarks about the large number of religious "sects" in the United States. "Why can't the Christians all get together and practice the Sermon on the Mount?"—is a familiar question. What is not so familiar is an honest effort on the part of these critics to find an answer themselves. Evidently, the question is for the most part asked rhetorically, with the intention of conveying the idea that Christian sectarians are either hypocritical or blind to the implications of Christ's teaching of brotherhood.

The question, however, remains. Some recent correspondence in the *Christian Century* suggests the beginnings of an answer. In the issue of Aug. 20, a Baptist writes to explain his view of Christian "unity":

There are millions of conscientious Christians who, rightly or wrongly, consider the joining of a church union movement a betrayal of the Lord Jesus. . . . What the unionizers seemingly cannot get through their heads is the doctrine of Christian responsibility whereby each Christian is duty-bound before God to believe and worship as he understands God wants him to. It is both unchristian and un-American to ridicule or use any means of coercion to force Christians to compromise their convictions.

Then, in the *CC* for Aug. 13, a "Christian layman" expresses his opposition to the proposal "that some Jews study in Christian colleges and some Christians do the same in Jewish colleges." Any such step, he feels, would be "very harmful":

Our name correctly implies that Jesus Christ is our Savior of the world; that the New Testament contains the truth and to some extent supersedes the Old Testament. For Jews to come into our colleges or churches on a basis of equality vitiates Christianity, and any Christian entering Jewish colleges or synagogues on an equality with Jews will do great harm in his ministrations to Christians.

The pat comment on such sentiments—often a little too "pat"—is, "How medieval!" Here, in the twentieth century, we have people who let mere matters of doctrine keep them from joining in one grand Christian or religious unity! The pat comment neglects, however, to note that a serious concern with

doctrine may have been one of the things that was good about medieval times, while the modern disdain for doctrine is one of the weaknesses of the present. Although it may be true that the religious doctrines which the great majority of Christians feel free to ignore are both uninteresting and intellectually if not morally insupportable, it does not follow from this that the practice of religion without any doctrine at all is a great advance over the past. Quite possibly, the breakdown of doctrine—the failure, that is, of most churchgoers to take seriously the doctrines to which they nominally adhere—marks the disintegration of religion rather than its progress.

The disintegration, of course, may be a good thing. It may be a step of *human* progress for Presbyterians to lose interest in Divine Predestination, whether to heaven or hell, and for Baptists to cease to argue about total immersion. The decline of belief in doctrine may represent a triumph of common sense and the humane spirit over inherited superstition, but it can hardly indicate progress in religion. Progress in religion, as we understand it, would mean a sifting of doctrines and the development of a body of ideas concerning the great questions of life, in the hope of greater understanding of ourselves and the universe around us. Religion once had this role. On the questions of where the world came from, where it is going, what happens to man after death, and why there is suffering and evil in the world, religion once provided answers which men took seriously. Some men still take them seriously, as witness the letters in the *Christian Century* written to oppose any "watering-down" of doctrine. For most Christians, however, excepting, of course, the Catholics, for whom there are answers precisely codified on practically every question, religion is no longer expected to afford instruction in cosmology and the mysteries of after-life. The one idea which has survived all the onslaughts of "modernism" in Christianity is the idea of "love," and love, unless carefully defined, easily degenerates into sentimentality.

With our usual talent for over-simplification, we seem to have concluded that if dogmatic and irrational beliefs are bad, then no beliefs are good. And having adopted this view, we assume that a special blessedness attaches to determined Uncertainty, as though the condition of ignorance is the best possible fulfillment of our inner lives. This outlook the

sectarians reject as a "betrayal of the Lord Jesus," and they may be right in rejecting it, even if the beliefs they cherish are completely unsatisfactory to the rest of us.

Distrust of "beliefs," and of doctrinal beliefs in particular, has another cause besides the irrational character of religious dogma. Beliefs are almost inevitably in conflict with other beliefs. What use, men say, is there in believing anything, for we can never agree upon a single doctrine or truth. Even philosophers disagree—often as radically as sectarians—so that one might argue that the philosophers are as far from the "truth" as the believers in religion, despite their more sophisticated vocabulary. So it is concluded that philosophy, along with religion, is practically worthless.

Conceivably, this view represents only a way-station of reaction against dogmatic habits of thought. The assumption that men must agree in order to possess the truth may be justifiable only for some far-off, utopian sort of society. It seems more likely that intelligence and independence in both agreement and disagreement may be much more important than doctrinal uniformity. This, or something like it, is the conclusion of a writer in the August *Scientific Monthly*—Martin Dworkin, who discusses the "problem of disagreement" to good effect. He writes:

. . . it is often argued . . . that the persistence of many issues in the agorae of debate is attributable to nothing more than that the protagonists will never admit that they are wrong. Such an argument builds upon an implicit assumption of a universal methodology, to whose canons all must perforce adhere. It is true that the search after such an all-coercive discipline for reason has occupied thinkers since the very beginnings of philosophy—a fact which, in itself, ought to give pause to the most sincere enthusiast for any particular view. The most rigorous discipline for reason, however, cannot exhaust those more than simply intellectual requirements which are so involved in the very nature of the human being.

The most stringent principles of logic, for example, are most fruitfully conceived as invaluable instruments. When applied they may discover inconsistencies of tenet or statement, and thereby can prejudice acceptance or rejection; but they cannot necessarily ensure the alteration of conviction. . . .

That there is one philosophical method or body of doctrine before which all others must yield, and which will confront and defeat religion once and for all time, is a conception as dogmatic as any it desires to supplant in the name of free reason. The battle of philosophy against blind faith must be joined now, to be sure; but it must go on for every now in the future: for the now of every individual who will ever have to choose. If there is a creed to which men of reason may subscribe, a testament for such a humanism that is to be free of self-delusion as to its real humanity, it is the belief set down so long ago by Heraclitus: that the boundaries of the human soul cannot be reached, no matter how far one may travel in any direction.

This, perhaps, is the primary certainty—the boundless possibility of the human soul—without which every doctrine inevitably transforms into dogma, and every belief takes on the rigid insistence of sectarian creed. It follows that *philosophical* convictions, no matter how "definite," must have an incommensurable dimension—to "leave room" for the occupancy of the soul and its mysteries.

It is this truth, we think, that the sectarian resists. He is surely right in wanting to have convictions—in feeling that definite views on the nature of things are of immeasurable importance in life. But he errs in demanding finality before he has grown up to it; and he errs, also, in imagining that *any* truth is ever capable of dogmatic statement. The sectarian wants fulfillment of his heart's yearnings, but he does not want to suffer the trials of honest impartiality, nor is he ready to abandon the egotism of thinking that he and his co-religionists have been uniquely favored with a revelation not granted to other men. The sectarian, in short, clings to a religious version of the "something for nothing" philosophy.

But even in the half- or quarter-truths of the sectarians, there must be an element of living verity, for the sectarian is as much a soul as the rest of us; his very determination to *believe* is founded on a principle in nature—as much of a principle as the skeptic's repugnance for mere "beliefs." Without for a moment accepting the dogmatist's credo, we may still recognize behind his dead-letter formulation something of the hunger of the human heart for knowledge. Both dogmatists and skeptics may instruct us in the dynamics of the eternal quest.