

## THE CHAINS OF PROMETHEUS

IT was the role of Dr. Sigmund Freud to awaken Western man to the idea that he is a chained Prometheus. Freud did not put the matter this way, but it seems reasonable to do so, since Freud began in the tradition of science a process of self-discovery which modern man could not abandon, even if he wanted to. Freud showed that human behavior is largely determined by the way in which people feel about themselves, and he provided an initial topography of the inner psychological terrain of human beings.

Freud's method was empirical. That is, his intention was to base his theories on clinical experience. Ostensibly, at least, he had no preconceptions. While current writers may be able to show that a background of Jewish mysticism affected Freud in his thinking about the role of therapy, he formed his explicit premises about the nature of man from what seemed to him the data gained from personal observation.

The drama of man's thinking about himself has been radically altered as a result of Freud's work. Fifty or sixty years ago, scientific thinking about man was primarily biological. There was a long overlap, of course, between biological thinking and psychological thinking, but it now seems clear that the influence of biological thinking has for the most part lost its ascendancy. That is, the tendency to think of man as an *organism* has been replaced by the tendency to think of him as a *psyche*. This change in emphasis seems due mostly to Freud. There may have been other factors at work—even, possibly, evolutionary factors of which we are unaware—but Freud's influence is major and unmistakable.

Freud's ideas had in common with the earlier biological thinking the assumption that the processes of human behavior are basically mechanistic. That is, both the biologists and Dr. Freud sought for explanations of what men do—and what they think—in terms of what "happens" to them. The

"self," for Freud, was a palimpsest of impressions from without. His pursuit of the self was rather a reinterpretation of experience than a search for "essences." The idea of essences had no scientific standing in his time, and has very little today. It is possible that the new interest in mysticism will eventually find a workable conjunction with the psychoanalytical tradition—as has already happened, for example, in the writings of the French psychiatrist, Hubert Benoit—but, so far, the extensions of the Freudian movement are generally characterized by a refinement of the topographic work begun by the great Viennese physician, without any noticeable flights into metaphysics and mysticism.

It is the object of analytical therapy to help the patient to gain control over his own life. This is sometimes called "ego mastery." On this subject, Dr. Joseph C. Solomon, a San Francisco psychiatrist, has written (in the *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, October, 1958):

. . . ego mastery. . . is derived from the change that takes place when perceptual thinking is replaced by conceptual thinking.

I shall explain by giving an example from the study of child development. For example, if a toddler is happily pulling a pull toy and the toy gets caught in the leg of a chair, he is confronted with a sudden frustration. His motion comes to an abrupt stop, he feels the tug in the string and his pleasurable activity suddenly ends. As a purely perceptual phenomenon it represents a deprivation and even a threat. But when he appreciates conceptually what has happened, he can recognize that the situation can be remedied. By the acquisition of language the situation is given a name. The toy is "stuck." This helps to give the whole pattern both a structure and a meaning. The next phase, of course, is to get the toy "unstuck."

In therapeutic work many of our patients do not go far beyond the perceptual type of thinking. They pull on their problems like the toddler with the pull-toy and never learn to conceptualize their difficulties. At this point I should like to make a clear

differentiation between intellectualization and true conceptualization of one's conflict. Intellectualizing would be similar to the toddler philosophizing about pull-toys that suddenly stop moving rather than understanding basic concepts.

It is an interesting phenomenon in therapy to observe the reactions of a patient who surprises or even startles himself by his own revelations. In the same manner a change of attitude sometimes takes place in the patient when the therapist is able to put into words the things for which the patient never knew that any words exist. Giving a name to something that the patient has felt to be thoroughly nameless is often a way-station towards being understood and finally to ego mastery. The imparting of "meaning" to a given set of symptoms places the seemingly uncontrollable forces under some measure of ego control.

The change from perceptual thinking to conceptual thinking is equivalent to the movement from the unreasonable to the reasonable. . . . This change of perceptual thinking to conceptual thinking is of such a profound nature that one gets the feeling that a complete physiological alteration has taken place. It is as though the conceptual thought processes are routed through higher cortical levels. Psychologically the shift from perceptual to conceptual thinking appears to be the same as the shift from the unconscious to the conscious.

Two comments on the foregoing seem in order. First, the process of recovery, which is here the act of learning to deal with *causes*, depends upon the capacity and desire of the patient to understand the causes which are involved. Many of the ills of our time are no doubt attributable to causes which the thoughtful psychotherapist can discern, and with the collaboration of the patient expose to view. But it seems equally certain that there must be subtler ills which have not yet been given generalized characterization—of which, on the whole, psychological medicine is ignorant. In such cases, the externalization of the trouble will depend more on the sufferer than upon the therapist.

Yet even though a doctor may remain ignorant of the "truth" of the matter, he is nevertheless sensitive to the symptoms of self-deception. If a child knows when his parent is giving an evasive answer to a question, and realizes that it is not the right answer, the therapist is at least as acute. With

little difficulty he distinguishes between what Dr. Solomon calls "intellectualization and true conceptualization of one's conflict."

One might say that psychoanalysis is itself a kind of externalization of fundamental thought processes, which may be taken as a somewhat crude representation of the dialogue which proceeds continually in the growing human being. Analysis, then, is only for those who are truly unable to continue the dialogue for themselves. In them the process has broken down, and they need help. The wide reliance on analysis, today, among the intellectual classes is itself a terrible confession of failure, illustrative of the fragmented sense of self which pervades modern thought.

This happens to be an age in which much if not most of our knowledge depends upon the revelations of pathology. The sick mind, like the sick body, may be thought of as revealing itself in "sections." The mind, like the body, has mechanisms and parts, and when the whole suffers from extreme malfunction, the identity of the parts becomes definable, and their individual working, through distortion and exaggeration, may be sharply outlined by an observer. In these circumstances, the mechanistic hypothesis continues to be fruitful. Holistic theories remain intuitive and vague, while diagnosis settles skilfully on the particular cause that can be shown to relate to a particular effect.

We are a long way from a "unified field theory" in psychology. Meanwhile, the study of human nature in the light of the techniques and case histories of psychotherapy remains a source of continual discovery, feeding, as it were, the riches of its material into the truly philosophical intellects of our time.

It is in connection with problems having to do with, so to say, the "upper half" of man's nature that this process is most clearly apparent. In the Freudian analysis, this portion of our being is made up of two major components, the *superego* and the *ego-ideal*. The superego is an internalized contrivance of external authority. The stern "father image" is a type of the superego. From the superego come all the "orders" of the environment of custom and the

authoritarian disciplines imposed by tradition and family life. Opposed, in a sense, to the superego is the ego-ideal—a more inwardly conceived criterion of the self, or rather, of the self which one longs to become.

The content or source of the ego-ideal is naturally more obscure than the familiar mandates of the superego. For some, it seems quite evidently to be a subtler acquisition from the environment, linked with the processes of fantasy, but there is nothing to prevent the speculation that this ideal conception of the self has a primal spiritual origin, that it filters down to the region of awareness by a process of conversion into familiar symbols or images, and is thus susceptible of a mechanistic interpretation. Studies of mystical religion have shown a basic family resemblance among the reports of subjective experience, and while varying theological vocabularies may impose their differences, the essential content of mystical philosophy is strikingly similar wherever it is encountered.

So it is far from settled that we have definitive knowledge concerning the origin of aspiring thoughts about the self. The closing passage of an informal paper on the ego-ideal by Dr. Robert N. Wilson, of the Harvard University Training Program for Social Scientists in Medicine, is illuminating evidence of the kind of thinking being pursued by men engaged in extending and refining the Freudian tradition. Dr. Wilson asks:

How may the ideal be described as a component of personality, how is it formed in detail, and what does it imply about the total individual integration of desire? What is the optimal separation between the self-that-is and the ego-ideal, and how may the person be aided in approaching an optimum of tension between the two? To what degree should the goals of therapy be directed toward reconciling the patient to an extant self embedded in a given social matrix, and to what degree should they aim at realization of an ideal conception? What ideal models are offered by the culture to individuals of varied age, sex, and social class identifications; which of these models are approved and rewarded, and how? Do the pluralistic values of a democratic society condone a broader spectrum of models than are available in other governmental arrangements?

The ideal of self is a repository of individual aspiration and social value. If it is less tangible than many other facets of human behavior, it is no less vital to understanding of that behavior. One might reverse Freud's metaphor of the iceberg, in which he claimed much of the personality is submerged and out of ordinary sight, and compare the ego-ideal to the mountain peaks shrouded in fog and clouds. Here, too, in man's transcendent aspirations as in his unconscious depths, much will remain inaccessible and hidden to direct observation. Yet the easy foothills of the mundane self on daily display may be as slight a portion of the whole person as is the barely protruding ice-cap of the polar sea.

When Dr. Wilson speaks of "ideal models" of the self, when he asks about the extent to which the ideal should be maintained as a practical goal, and when he questions concerning the variety of ideals of the self afforded by contemporary democratic society, he opens up the subject to the widest sort of discussion.

Ancient religion was concerned with very little else. Surely Plato's Dialogues are principally devoted to an ideal of human behavior, predicated upon a conception of the noëtic quality of the human soul. Confucius' writings focus upon the man of measure, sagacity, and magnanimity. The more transcendental religious philosophy of India, most clearly stated, perhaps, in the *Upanishads*, is an unceasing quest after knowledge of the Self as the root of all knowledge and all reality. The *Bhagavad-Gita* synthesizes the ideal of the man of reflection and the man of action, ranging from the life of daily duty to the most sublime conceptions of mystical union with the ineffable One.

The social system of ancient India, devised by Manu, was apparently an attempt to codify four major gradations in the idea of the self, typified in the four castes. It could be argued that here was a deliberate effort to suit the spectrum of "ideal models" of the self to varying human potentialities. That, in the end, the caste system turned out to be an abortive regime of stratified levels of status and a confirmation of petty egotisms, in no way reduces the psychological possibilities involved in the conception. The fault may have been largely in the politicalization of an idea that had a functional value

only at the psychological level. When Dr. Wilson asks, "What is the optimal separation between the self-that-is and the ego-ideal, and how may the person be aided in approaching an optimum of tension between the two?", an Eastern reader might say that he is offering *carte blanche* to the designer of a caste system. In the religious philosophy of India, the Laws of Manu were believed to provide precisely that "optimal separation" between the man-as-he-is and the full performance of the duties of his caste. Only in later history, let us note, did caste become simply a matter of birth. The true caste of a man was determined by his inner condition, by his stage on the paligenetic ladder of being.

The difference between ancient religious thinking on such subjects and modern speculations about them is that the ancient ideas were embodied in religious revelation, while the thinking of the psychotherapists is founded upon experience in clinic and consultation room. In the one case, the optimal separation is an arrangement by the deity, in the other, a flight of wondering by a human being raises the question as to what it may be. The need for a continuing distance between a man and his ideal is argued at length by Dr. Wilson, who discusses the emotional hazards implicit in this relationship. As he says, "The ideal of self, while encompassing attractive elements of worthwhile goals and admirable personal qualities, is obviously prey to distortion." He continues:

It [the ideal of self] may be so highly unrealistic as to constitute an irretrievable flight from the mundane world, an overreaching with crippling implications for the self-that-is. Freud rightly remarked the stultifying effect of superego prohibitions, of an internalized ideal so impossibly rigid that it inflicts self-punishment and deprecation as a routine penalty for almost any action. Later theorists, notably Horney, have emphasized the seductive properties of an ideal torn loose from any moorings in the real world, a phantom of self that is an invitation to neurotic disaster. Seen either way, then, as a knout-wielding Cossack of the soul or a tempting dream of incredible self-perfection, this unrealized but persistent element in the personality has been psychoanalytically conceived in primarily negative terms.

The need for the ideal, however, is seen as more important than these objections:

Despite these negative evaluations of the ego-ideal, it is clear that some concept of the unrealized self is here to stay both because of its avowed significance in the personality and because it involves positive elements of goal-seeking through imaginative portrayal of future states and actions. One may propose a model of the ego-ideal which will stress conscious, self-fulfilling qualities rather than unconscious, punishing, or self-defeating qualities. Such a model should be theoretically distinguished from the superego; it is a searching for enriched selfhood rather than a bondage to an inarticulate childhood norm. . . . The central issue is not whether the ego ideal manifests "pure" psychological health or responds solely to rational dictates, but whether this nascent aspect of the self is harmonious with the present organization of the personality. Criteria of harmony should embrace not only the degree of fit between the ideal and the current array of dispositions, but also the extent to which the ideal activates a fulfilling effort. Paradoxically, the created self can function only as it remains unrealized; perhaps better, the ideal must be transformed and heightened as it is approached if the individual is to avoid a static complacency.

Dr. Wilson outlines a project for the wisest of educators. Who will master-mind this exceedingly subtle relationship between a man and his ideals, that the flow of growth may be even and continuous?

The question is only rhetorical, since the quoted discussion is a raising of issues and possibilities rather than a call for some kind of calibration of the means and ends of human life. But what seems to emerge from these considerations is the idea that what was once the prerogative of Deity—the design of this scale, the establishment of ends, and the designation of appropriate labors toward their realization—has now to become the conscious undertaking of Man. And, as we read the myth, this means a wondrous loosening of the chains of Prometheus. When this is accomplished, Zeus will no longer be the stage-manager of human affairs.

## *REVIEW*

### CHRISTIAN SELF CRITICISM

IN recent years there have been some notable efforts on the part of distinguished Christian writers (Toynbee, Butterfield, Tillich, Ross) to introduce new elements into Christian thought. The most famous of these "reformers," and, doubtless, the most moderate, is Arnold Toynbee, whose studies of history have been obviously animated by religious intentions. While Toynbee's writings have been welcomed by Christians, who take joy in so impressive a reinforcement from the ranks of scholarship, there is a side of Toynbee's work which cannot help but undermine one of the bastions of orthodox Christian belief—the idea that Christianity stands alone as the "true" religion. It is not that Toynbee does not himself value the Christian revelation above all others. His writings make plain that he is an enlightened partisan of Christianity. But a certain sagacity makes him recognize the moral contradiction in the practice on the part of Christians—who claim a teaching of universal love—of scornful disregard of the deep religious convictions of people of other faiths. Perhaps his training as a scholar has also bred in him a respect for the principle of impartiality, for it is a theme running through his works that Christians ought at least to become *less* partisan, and he employs the method of comparative religion to persuade his co-religionists of this need.

In a recent volume, *Christianity among the Religions of the World* (Scribner's, 1957), Dr. Toynbee devotes his last chapter to counsels to Christian believers, among which the charge to free themselves of their "exclusive-mindedness" is a major theme. This attitude, which he finds rooted in the sin of "pride," he calls "a congenital feature which is part of Christianity's and also a part of Islam's heritage from Judaism." Both religions are involved in a tension of conflicting beliefs: "Just as the vision of God as being love is a heritage from Judaism, so is the other vision of God as being a jealous God, the god of my tribe

as against the gentiles *outside* my tribe or my church or whatever my community may be." In commenting on this latter aspect of Christian belief, Toynbee writes with the perspective of an historian:

. . . the historian, surveying the present scene with his eyes looking over his shoulder into the past, would say that in the past this arrogant, intolerant vein in Christianity has in fact led—and, you might even say, has rightly led—to the rejection of Christianity. In the seventeenth century, Christianity was rejected first by the Japanese, then by the Chinese, and finally by the intellectual leaders of the Western World in Western Christendom itself, and in every case for the same reason. The same Christian arrogance, if Christians fail to purge it out of Christianity now, will lead to the rejection of Christianity in the future. If Christianity is presented to people in that traditional arrogant spirit, it will be rejected in the name of the sacredness of human personalities—a truth to which the whole human race is awakening under the influence of modern Western civilization, which originally learned that truth from the Christianity which modern man has been rejecting. Christian arrogance is un-Christian and anti-Christian, and here we seem to be confronted once again with the unresolved conflict—inherited by Christianity and Islam from Judaism—between two visions of the nature of God, two visions which, I believe, are mutually incompatible.

What, then, should be the attitude of contrite Christians toward the other higher religions and their followers? I think that it is possible for us, while holding that our own convictions are true and right, to recognize that, in some measure, all the higher religions are also revelations of what is true and right.

A little less than three months ago (Feb. 11), MANAS printed in *Frontiers* an article by a California housewife, Mrs. R. E. Texier, of Menlo Park, in which Christian emphasis on Old Testament teachings is criticized, and some thoughtful words are offered concerning the philosophical appeal of Eastern religions. One could say that this letter is a good illustration of a natural response to what Toynbee calls "Christian arrogance," bringing into question, also, Christian emphasis on "sin and cruel death." Possibly, if the Christian tradition had through past centuries been more susceptible to the leaven of other religions,

and less confident of its own freedom from shortcomings, the most cultivated and intelligent members of Western society would not have felt obliged to embrace the free-thinking half-religions in preference to their inherited faith.

We now have, however, a spirited reply to Mrs. Texier, which may be appropriately printed here. This correspondent writes:

I wish I had time to offer a detailed reply to the letter by Mrs. R. E. Texier in the Feb. 11 MANAS, but I must make at least a few comments. Let me try to make it quite clear first that I am a Christian and a church member and that I do not consider these facts as synonymous; they are even sometimes a source of tension.

First, not only did Jesus *not* preach the doctrine of "an eye for an eye," as Mrs. Texier admits; but he preached *against* it. To put the matter as Mrs. Texier does is like saying that Gandhi was not a supporter of imperialism!

In the same context, Jesus did say that child shall turn against father, etc. He said further that there would be wars and rumors of wars. He said, most pointedly, that he brought "not peace but a sword." All this by way of emphasizing the radicalness of his mission. He did not advocate that others should stir up trouble; he did not even glory in the fact that he was a troublemaker, but he recognized and acknowledged that these would be some of the consequences of his teaching—that the love of God was so important, for instance, that one might have to choose between that love and the lesser ties of family. Suppose you are a member of a family whose outlook is white supremacist—what do you do when a race riot breaks out? Do you go the "way of the flesh," affirming your family loyalty? Or do you seize this moment to affirm your loyalty to something higher, even if it means turning against your own flesh and blood? This, it seems to me, is the kind of question Jesus was asking. Otherwise it doesn't fit with his basically self-giving, loving character.

"Not peace but a sword" is again applicable to Mrs. Texier's remark about the Eastern religions. The peace that is traditionally sought by Hindus and Buddhists may be summed up in the phrase, "Go away and leave me in peace." It was against this kind of complacency that Jesus brought the "sword" of his commandment of love. Peace through love is the peace of God. Peace without love is treason to both God and one's fellow men. It is the tragedy of history

that the most profoundly pacifistic of religions has witnessed so much carnage in its name. But by and large it has been Christian pacifists who, time and again, have reiterated the call for peace, even at great risk to themselves. Much the same can be said of slavery. Christians did not invent it, but they were wrong in countenancing it. Yet it was Christians like Wilberforce, Woolman and Lovejoy who began the campaign against it while Lincoln preferred to turn his kindly back on it.

It is Christianity that has kept alive what little there is in the world of peace, love and kindness. Much has been betrayed in its name, but much has been built, too. Is it wholly accidental that the "peace-preoccupied" religious folk of the East countenanced the idea of untouchability until Gandhi brought the message of Jesus into Hinduism?

We have not invited Mrs. Texier to reply, since the merits of both communications are quite apparent from careful reading. However, the polemical disposition of two great world religions, Hinduism and Buddhism, as spinelessly passive, is so cavalier as to require correction. Buddhism is a kind of Protestant movement which arose within Hinduism and sponsored one of the greatest missionary movements the world has ever known. The spread of Buddhism to China, where Christians have not met with notable success, is a historic achievement honored with pride by civilized Chinese to this day. There is evidence that Buddhists traveled to the Near East and spread their religion of gentle compassion in that region. Parallel study of Buddhist and New Testament ethics is suggestive in this regard. Actually, there are those who find it not unreasonable to think of Christianity as a Buddhist schism! And in regard to the Western cliché to the effect that Buddhism manifests a longing for selfish bliss, Dr. Toynbee has this to say:

. . . we have the Christian vision of Christ deliberately divesting Himself of His divine bliss in order to bring salvation to Man. This, I think, has a parallel in the "northern" or "late" or Mahayanian Buddhist vision of the being who in that version of Buddhism is called a Bodhisattva. It is an interesting point in the history of Buddhism that, between the birth of the earlier school of Buddhism and the birth of the later school, Buddhism seems, at any rate to an

outside observer, to have changed its ideal. I have mentioned that the ideal of the earlier school of Buddhism was to liberate oneself from suffering. This was presented as the paramount aim towards which every sentient creature, human or non-human, should strive. In the later version of Buddhism that ideal has been replaced by one which seems to a Christian observer to have moved in a Christian direction. In this later Buddhism the ideal figure is not the Buddhist ascetic sage who has liberated himself from existence by fighting his way, through rough and strenuous spiritual exertions, into the peace of Nirvana. It is the bodhisattva, a being of the highest spiritual nature known to Man who has fought his way to the threshold of Nirvana, and who then, like the Buddha himself during his forty years on Earth after his Enlightenment, has deliberately refrained from entering into his rest in order to remain in this world of suffering. The bodhisattva has voluntarily postponed his self-release for ages and ages (the Buddhists and Hindus reckon in large numbers) in order to show the way of salvation to his fellow beings by helping them along the path on which he himself is refraining, out of love and compassion, from taking the last step.

Dr. Toynbee is not trying to make Buddhists out of Christians. He is only trying to make Christians out of Christians. One step in this direction, as he sees it, is to do what justice he can to the other religions of the world. It is a question, or course, whether Christianity as we have known it can survive so perilous a project. But that is Dr. Toynbee's problem, not ours.

## COMMENTARY

### NEW TEMPER IN RELIGION

IT was a common complaint, a few years ago, that when university men who were neither physicists nor chemists attempted to write from a scientific point of view, they would write in terms of the physics and chemistry they studied when *they* went to school, which had the effect of producing a marked cultural lag in their literary efforts. This complaint is no longer heard, since the revolutionary progress of the physical sciences is now well known to all—in fact, they have gone so far that persons who are not specialists in these fields seldom feel able to say much about them, today.

A similar complaint, however, might be made concerning Christians who still speak of pagan or "heathen" religions in the terms of the Western religious education of fifty years ago. The fact is that informed Christian attitudes have undergone a radical transformation and, increasingly, books about other religions are beginning to embody a spirit of genuine discovery.

We think of two books, one published in 1915, the other in 1929, which show this difference. The earlier work is Harold Legge's *Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity*, two volumes of exhaustive scholarship devoted to the pagan faiths of some two thousand years ago. The reader of Legge, while he may appreciate the monumental labors involved, cannot help but note the practically explicit position of the author, that he has not the slightest expectation of finding religious ideas which can bear serious comparison with Christian ideas. The book is an antiquarian study of the religions which weren't worth survival, once Christianity had appeared.

The 1929 book is *Pagan Regeneration* by Harold R. Willoughby, published by the University of Chicago Press. Willoughby is no crypto-pagan, but a professor of New Testament Studies. Yet his work is an honest attempt to reveal the values of the mystery religions of the ancient world. His point of view is that "All religious systems deserve to be evaluated by the pragmatic test of their functional significance for human society. . . . This applies equally to Christian and to non-Christian systems, . . . ." In his Preface, Prof. Willoughby points out that "Christian apologists delighted to represent their pagan competitors in as

unfavorable a light as possible." Their aim was "to establish the point that the inadequacies of paganism were a part of the providential preparation of the world for the outburst of true revelation in Christianity itself." How thoroughly early apologists accomplished their task is illustrated by their extreme antagonism to even unorthodox Christian sects, such as the Gnostics. Until recently, no documents concerning the Gnostics were available except the attacks on them of the early Fathers. The systematic erasure of signs of the dignity and wisdom of ancient religions was a primary project of the Christians, who were determined to be the sole representatives of religious truth.

The Christian religion as a doctrine of "exclusive truth" has not helped the dominant races of the West to behave in a civilized way toward the peoples of other races and religions. The "arrogance" of which Dr. Toynbee speaks may have been modified since the days of the *Conquistadores*, but it is far from gone.

Probably the most skillful and sophisticated Christian writer of the present is Reinhold Niebuhr, of Neo-orthodox fame. The clearest, soberest, critical statement about contemporary Christian attitudes we know of occurred in a review of Niebuhr's *Nature and Destiny of Man*. The reviewer is Dr. Edwin A. Burtt, professor of philosophy at Cornell, by no means an irreligious man. In the *Humanist* for the Autumn of 1941, Dr. Burtt wrote:

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

Here is embodied thinking that pervades the reflections of many contemporary Christians. The essential spirit of justice in human beings compels such thinking.

# CHILDREN

## . . . and Ourselves

### NOTES AND QUOTATIONS

APROPOS last week's discussion of Federal support for all state education is an editorial report in the *New Republic* (Feb. 23):

A largely ignored report from the US Office of Education shows that the student loan program authorized in last year's National Defense Education Act is 10 times more popular than Congress anticipated. Under the program, college students can borrow up to \$1,000 a year for academic expenses. They do not have to begin repaying the loan until one year after they graduate, and then the terms are reasonable: 10 years to pay at 3 percent on the unpaid balance.

Congress last fall appropriated \$6 million to get this program started. The colleges have to put one dollar of their own into their loan funds for every nine federal dollars received. By the end of 1958, more than 1,200 colleges and universities had asked for \$62 million—466 of them never had a student loan program before.

The Administration has responded by proposing that Congress meet the students' demand about half-way: the President has requested that another \$24 million be appropriated for fiscal 1959 and another \$30 million for fiscal 1960.

It might be argued that both Federal support and Federal control are bound to fulfill the prophecy of their ascendancy—whether they arrive by way of legislative design or simply from the pressure of circumstances.

Two provocative paragraphs appear in the March-April issue of *Children*, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare publication. Under the heading of "Psychological Change in Adolescents," Irene Josselyn sums up some insights which are often available only in the complicated language of psychoanalysis. Under the sub-title, "Struggling for Freedom," she writes:

The adolescent feels the surge toward greater maturation and adulthood, and he is told that he has to grow up to be an adult. He is not told that he has

to remain a child. How can you become an adult if in your home you are a child? The adolescent wishes to break away from home in part to break away from his own childhood. He has to be flagrant about this because one side of him hates to give up his childhood. So he overdoes the break in order to convince himself that he wants to grow up, when actually he is giving up a sense of security for terrific uncertainty.

The adolescent also has another reason for wanting to break with the family, and that is that he wants to break with his own conscience. One of the most serious problems that we try to deal with when we are working with an adolescent is his need, in order to be an adult, to give up his childhood conscience. The origin of his conscience is primarily the relationship with his parents. If he retains the conscience that was made for him in his early childhood, he has to remain a child because it is the conscience of a child.

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A recent "small college" annual address by President Laurence M. Gould of Carleton in Minnesota comes our way by courtesy of the magazine *Sunrise*. President Gould affirms his conviction that "dead" science can ruin education in a democracy—that is, a science limited to technical achievements. "Live" science is in the hands of those whose absorption of the meaning of the liberal tradition imparts a sense of constructive direction for humanitarian purpose. Dr. Gould said:

The liberal tradition assumes a kind of unity of life. It is not an automatic unity, however; it is one that we must achieve for ourselves. We must drop the assumption that there is a necessary division between science and the other areas of learning. There need be no conflict. Science and the other humanities are parts of a larger whole. Science deals with man as he is and the other humanities with man as he ought to be.

Somehow I do not believe the greatest threat to our future is from bombs or guided missiles. I do not think our civilization will die that way. I think it will die when we no longer care—when the spiritual forces that make us wish to be right and noble die in the hearts of men. Arnold Toynbee has pointed out that nineteen of twenty-one notable civilizations have died from within and not by conquest from without.

There were no bands playing and no flags waving when these civilizations decayed; it happened slowly, in the quiet and the dark when no one was aware. Having said all of this, I believe that our problem lies deeper than education.

Education, in other words, must at once be stimulated by and rooted in philosophical considerations. On this topic we have some comment by C. J. Ducasse. Writing for the *Harvard Education Review* for Fall, 1958, Dr. Ducasse affirms that it is only in terms of philosophy that the *meaning* of either religion or science can be extracted. He writes:

Essentially, liberal education is *liberating* education. It is not the education of men who are free, but the education that makes men free. More specifically, it is the kind of education designed to free man from his own ignorance, prejudices, and narrowness, by making him aware of them, it aims to give him a comprehensive view of the ranges of human knowledge, human achievements, and human capacities; and to develop in him an appreciative insight into the typical values for which men live. That is, liberal education is education essentially for perspective; and the value of perspective is that it brings freedom of choice of aims, and of judgment. Such freedom consists in awareness of the alternatives there are to choose between. The man who knows but one course, or sees but one aspect of things, or appreciates but a limited range of values, has no choice or but little choice as to the direction he takes. Unaware of his own blind spots and prejudices, he is held by them in an invisible jail. *The talk of liberal education is to tear down its walls.*

The modern philosopher, in Dr. Ducasse's opinion, must be willing to give a far broader definition to philosophy than has been customary during recent centuries. The questions of destiny and purpose are still paramount, and cannot be dismissed by an anti-metaphysical assumption which proclaims them somehow irrelevant to the search for truth. The great questions are still open, and it is only the peculiar blindness of an age afflicted by prejudice against traditional religion which obscures this realization. Dr. Ducasse puts it this way:

What are the fundamental questions on which the philosophy of education can throw light, and

thereby provide the broad perspective necessary for wise instead of doctrinaire or emotional evaluation of given educational practices or of proposals for the reform of our educational institutions?

One such question, and one that indeed overarches all the others, is that of the cosmic destiny of the individual and of the significance in the light of it of his life on earth. Does its brief duration comprise all there is to the life of a man? Or are those few years, as the majority of mankind has always believed, only a small part of his total life but a part that determines the nature of all the rest? Obviously, the orientation appropriate for education in the latter case might be very different from that which might recommend itself in the former.

Today, unfortunately, man's *post mortem* destiny, if any, is for us not a matter of knowledge but only of faith. That is, a variety of opinions about it exist, but none of them is definitely verifiable or confusable by us now. We may believe or disbelieve one or another of them, but we just do not really know. For on the one hand the facts alleged to show that man's consciousness survives the death of his body are few and appear possibly open to a different interpretation; while, on the other hand, the allegation sometimes met with that science has proved a life after death to be impossible turns out on examination to be based either on a definition *ad hoc* of "life" exclusively in physiological as distinguished from psychological terms, or else on the materialistically pious but hazardous speculation that since *some* psychological states have physiological causes, *no* psychological state at all is possible without some physiological cause.

It is the work of those educators, as Ducasse puts it, to show that religion is not the "indispensable basis of morality." The ethics which count are those developed while the promise for the search for truth itself enlivens the mind and stirs the conscience.

## *FRONTIER*

### "Good and Straightforward" War

IF we were all as intellectually integrated as we like to think we are, there would be little value in repeating accounts of the plight of "individuality" in the present world. To see the dehumanizing effects of dehumanized science or dehumanized politics would be to see and understand, at once and for all. But actually, we seldom maintain the clarity of a perception realized in a moment of acuteness. By gradual permeation, or perhaps by an osmosis from minds more constantly observant than our own, certain things become clearer—but even then it is the repetition of the opportunity to understand which brings the really fitting generalizations.

Meanwhile, we have developed some resistance to big generalizations which are monotonously familiar, which float around like a Pepsi-Cola ad in the sky. The big generalizations which mean the most to us are those we construct ourselves. We get the materials from here and there, gradually sensing from a variety of observations what it is that will form a lasting structure. Borrowing the big generalizations is of little benefit, as the history of both religion and politics attests.

The "limited generalization" may be quite a different matter. Take for example the thousands of versions of the "war is hell" theme. Some of them sound exactly the same as they did in World War I. War itself, however, has changed in significant ways since 1917. And while some of the limited generalizations concerning these changes can be illuminating or challenging, simply to repeat that war is unhumane, wasteful, etc., seldom takes us beyond the saying. But it is true—and important—to demonstrate in as many ways as possible that calculus looms larger than courage on the contemporary "battlefield"—at least, when the nations with the real know-how are having the war.

Dwight Macdonald, in *The Responsibility of Peoples*, compressed a limited generalization into the words, "tightly routinized and mechanized," to characterize the disappearance of persons from military personnel. He explained what he meant by the story of two Tibetans who had been pressed into the service of three different armies of World War II, without knowing, at any time, who they were fighting "for," or "against," or why the fors were fighting the againts. This sort of example, we submit, cannot be repeated too often,—nor the limited generalization which forms around it. Yet while its meaning for one man may be uncompromising pacifism, for another it may point simply to a wartime occupation which removes him as far as possible from the plight of the Tibetans—a situation which, in total war, everyone is nevertheless bound to share in some degree, pacifists included.

The dehumanization of war started, in one sense, with the invention of long-range artillery. The men who plotted and fired knew nothing but trajectory and target; they were miles away from the actual effects of exploding shells, and the miles away were psychic as well as physical. The men at the other end of this transaction were similarly confronted by nothing that resembled a human enemy; the shells were neither cowardly nor resourceful, nor could one's strength be pitted against them. The apotheosis of this development, prior to the dropping of the first atom bomb, was represented by long range air attacks. Not only were millions of civilians indiscriminately slaughtered along with military personnel, but the mechanisms of defense against bombing raids became largely mechanical. The Allied airmen who struck Germany and her occupied territories were less unnerved by the prospect of encountering enemy interceptor planes than they were by the certainty that a storm of anti-aircraft shells would coldly and dispassionately follow them across the sky.

In nearly all the war novels, this point is graphically made, and perhaps through this means

one of the essential "repetitions" in respect to modern war becomes indelibly impressive. David M. Camerer's *The Damned Wear Wings* speaks from what seems first-hand experience concerning the conditions encountered by American aircraft in bombing the vital oil refineries of Ploesti:

For the next forty-five minutes Johnny had lain there, sweating—sweating horribly. . . with visions of those black bursts of flak standing up there at the Group's altitude—21,000 feet—flooding the sky and crippling the ships and the men in those ships.

He thought of the enemy fighters. In his mind they seemed almost friendly in comparison to the flak—black, deadly and impersonal. An enemy pilot makes his thrust at you. But he's alive—with flesh and bone and nerves, with the same strengths and perhaps the same weaknesses as the gunner in your bomber. A guy could work up a grudging admiration for a German or Rumanian pilot. But flak. Those bastards below just pumping up those giant shells, pre-calibrated to burst at the precise altitude their radar-controlled, mechanically brained guns dictate.

The big bomber sighed and lifted as its bombs released. Bombs away! Drunk with his torture, Johnny leaned out of the waist window and looked down. Oceans of black smoke plumed up . . . up to perhaps 10,000 feet with the clouds of black sludge boiling and seething. Oil . . . that goddamned oil. There's your target, Johnny. That's what all the sweating and dying is about. Oil. Own it and you're a billionaire—destroy it and you're a hero.

Not men, but "oil" and "flak," were the dynamic forces of the struggle. The vividness of Camerer's and similar descriptions is further highlighted by the attempts of novelists to find valid traces of individual heroism in the war situation. Stanley Kauffmann, in reviewing for the *New Republic* (Jan. 26) three recent war films—*Nine Lives* (de Rochemont); *I was Monty's Double* (NTA); *The Silent Enemy* (Universal-International)—points out that these stories are "about happier days when war was war, good and straightforward, and blows were dealt and taken." *Nine Lives* is the story of a Norwegian "freedom fighter" who, stranded on the West coast of Norway in 1943, makes his way to Sweden across snow-covered mountain ranges. In fighting

natural elements rather than unnatural men, the hero finds scope for invention and courage. *The Silent Enemy* deals with the dangerous underwater raids and counter raids of the frogmen. Mr. Kauffmann concludes:

These three films remind us again of two matters. First, the days when war was a kind of sports event with grave stakes are gone forever. (How can you use frogmen now that there is radar, and who needs commandos when there are tactical nuclear missiles?) Then, as you watch these various men and their heroic efforts, you cannot entirely suppress the out-dated thought: if only this immense courage and stamina could be devoted to something creative. Naive and old-fashioned, no doubt; still one's eyes keep straying along the shelf towards James' *Moral Equivalent of War*.

Well, these reflections are not going to stop war nor the things that make for war, but they all become a part of a repetitive theme which tells us a great deal about what is happening to us, and will continue to happen, until we come closer to knowing what to fight and how to fight.