

PROBLEMS OF COMMUNICATION

OUR article, "Two Levels of Reply" (MANAS, May 3), was really about the age-old effort of human beings to reconcile the two levels of their life, and a brief addition to the record of that effort. The body of the discussion was devoted to explanation of why so many MANAS articles are concerned with the problems of war and peace. Acknowledging that the central issue of human life is not "survival," but pursuit of the fundamental meaning of human existence, the article suggested that the issues of war and peace now have an urgency which compels those who think about them to examine the fundamental assumptions upon which human undertakings are based. For this reason, if for no other, the article proposed, the discussion of the threat of war must be continued.

What are the "two levels of human life"? They have been spoken of in many ways. "Sacred" and "profane" is a familiar differentiation. Spinoza coined the expression, *sub specie aeternitatis*, to set off the eternal aspect of man's being from his participation in the affairs of the world. "Historical" and "metaphysical" are adjectives which help to make the distinction. Churches often set themselves up as mysterious points of conjunction between the heavenly and the earthly. The failure of religious institutions to succeed in this endeavor is the source of much impassioned criticism. In the history of Western civilization, the rise of scientific (more precisely, "scientistic") thinking was a bold attempt on the part of intellectual rebels to dispense entirely with the "eternal" or "metaphysical" side of existence ("existence" is probably the wrong word, but we can think of no other). Aldous Huxley's novel, *Grey Eminence*, deals with the dilemma of a man seeking balance between the two levels. Monasticism attempted an institutional solution for individuals; Communism is a similar attempt,

but for whole societies. Quietism, as a kind of religious philosophy, comes the closest to being the opposite number of Communism, in the sense that it constitutes the most far-reaching denial of meaning to this world, while Communism denies meaning to any other world. However, we ought not to limit the representatives of this extreme to the Communists, since they include all those who assert the total dominance of political philosophy. The most carefully worked-out *cultural* balance between the two levels is embodied in the Laws of Manu of ancient India—an extraordinarily complete blueprint for a theocratic society. What we speak of as "democracy" is possibly the best balance for modern times, since this form of social organization, in its civil rights aspect, reserves an area of personal freedom where each man can make his own balance or synthesis. Here, perhaps, is the essential difference between ancient times and the present—in the transfer of the responsibility for synthesis from society to the individual. And it is possible that the intellectual and moral confusion of the modern world arises mainly from the fact that the actual transfer of responsibility is inhibited by the influence of inherited forms of religious paternalism.

One of the difficulties introduced by Western (and no doubt Eastern, also) religious tradition is in the area of communication. We doubt, for example, that there are many important differences in *principle* between the view expressed in our article, "Two Levels of Reply," and what is said in a recent letter of comment from a reader, although verbally the difference seems to be great. This reader writes:

. . . I know when I'm hit . . . You have the facts, the reason, the logic, but . . . I'm sorry to be tiresome about this. You'll think I'm a fanatic, a *religieuse!* Nothing could be further from the truth. I'm a reed swaying in the wind! I rebel, I refute, . . . but deep inside there is a voice that will not be stilled, that

knows; or, to take a big word, BELIEVES. It does this in spite of myself. Even though I bluster and argue against that voice verbally, silently I'm held in the authority of that voice.

This terrible concern for the body, for safety, for certain ideologies (be it Communism or Democracy) is not enough for me. You may say I can easily talk, I have not been endangered. I only know I *hope* that I should be able to *endure*, to accept with grace what is handed to me. I can only hope. I cannot insure.

What I'm trying to say is that either I believe God, or Spirit, is all-powerful, or it is not. . . . Either one believes, or not, in "I am the resurrection and the life, and he that believeth on me, even though he die, yet shall he live"; in, "For what shall a man be profited if he shall gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?"; in, "Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof"; in (about the resurrection of the dead), "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. . . . it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body"; in, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

I really am sorry to have to keep quoting Scripture to you, but it *will* pop up. You will think I'm a sanctimonious, eye-rolling-heavenward sort of person, but it is not so. I'm a sinner of the first water, only I don't know what sin is! I'm a human, and to bring in another old saw: nothing that is human is foreign to me.

I agree with what you revolt from; the whole enterprise of your earthly existence is meaningless. But out of that meaninglessness can come hope and meaning. We must live through it. . . . I think that MANAS is concerned about the outcome of world turmoil and that you want to do something about it, whereas I feel that the concern and despair is the great value and out of that, by *the way*, will come a solution. As the poet, Lawrence, said, "Not this way, or that way, *but another way*." And Graham Greene, "It's not what you do that matters, but what you think."

From a neighborhood church bulletin there is this, quoted from a famous theologian: "We need Christ no matter what happens to our fears. We need Him whether we get dividends in addition or not. If the world drops away and there is nothing left to us save the Lord, and Him alone, we yet have all." . . .

The world is too much with us. . . .

The world is indeed too much with us, the question being, how are we going to pry it loose! We shall not object at all to the promise of immortality which this contributor repeats in its Christian version. We submit, rather, that, thus far in Christian history, the promise has not been sufficiently persuasive. Now either men, except for the small portion of the "saved," are bad, because they will not listen, or the promise was not enunciated with enough clarity. We do not believe in either of these alternatives, yet they help to set the problem. Much of the difficulty, it seems to us, comes from the customary conception of Jesus as the Saviour.

If the great aim is to get out of the world and get to Heaven, then why did Jesus set such a contradictory example? If it is wrong to become involved in the world and its problems, then why did *He* become so involved? The usual answer, and doubtless the correct one, is that he came to help mankind to understand its involvements and by understanding to transcend them. This much seems clear. It is also reasonable to think that problems cannot be comprehended unless we become involved in them, to some degree. So now we have a reason for our own involvement and a reason for the involvement of Jesus. We are here to *work out* our own salvation, and he was here to help. How does a conscious intelligence help another conscious intelligence? By identifying with him. So the incarnation was an identification of a whole intelligence with a partial intelligence.

This brings us to the first crucial question about Christian belief. *Who was Jesus?* This is a fair question since Christians are by no means agreed upon the answer. For the purposes of this discussion we are willing to take for our answer a passage in an article in the *Hibbert Journal* for April, 1937, by Col. T. B. Luard. In this article, entitled, "Why I Do Not Go To Church," the author says:

I am one of many Christians who find themselves unable to accept the worship of Jesus as a

satisfying and reasonable expression of Christian faith. It is now evident that the whole fabric of Catholic doctrine is based, not on history, but on inner experience interpreted in the light of the eschatological and mystical beliefs of the Hellenistic age. . . . There is no place for "once for all" in the cosmos as we see it today—no perfect creation once for all, carrying in its train Man's Fall and consequent need of an oblation offered once for all, no unique and final revelation of God, and no faith once for all committed to the Saints. . . . To those who believe in the immanence of God the Incarnation is a process which began with the dawn of life on earth, and revelation is the accumulated spiritual experience of mankind; but neither are yet complete. . . .

"One, indeed, is the Way of Truth, but into it, as into a flowing river pour streams from everywhere." [Clement of Alexandria.] It is becoming increasingly clear that when the elements of myth and magic, of astrology and number symbolism are traced to their sources, and fundamental fallacies in cosmology laid to rest, when the mists of Gnostic phantasy have cleared, when the framework of Messianism has been broken and the ecclesiastical superstructure removed—in a word, when the local and transitory elements of historical contingency have been taken into account—certain genuine intuitions, certain recurring experiences are revealed as the sources of Christianity. And these experiences, each with a long history of evolution from obscure origins in the remote past, are glimpses into the nature of the real, gleams of spiritual consciousness that found expression in the faith of the pagans, Jews and Christians alike—and nowhere so coherently as in the religion of Plotinus—though only in Christianity did it take shape in an organized body strong enough to hold its own in the dark centuries that followed. "The people that walked in darkness saw a great Light"—that "true Light which lighteth every man coming into the world"; and whether it appeared as the Messianic call to brotherly love in anticipation of the Kingdom of God nigh at hand, or as the Hellenic vision of the One Who is the source, goal, and fulfillment of those who strive after goodness, truth and beauty in the eternal world of spirit "Yonder"; as the pagan Mystery of death unto sin and a new birth unto Righteousness, the Hermetic ascent of the soul on its upward Way to its eternal Home, or as the Pauline discovery that in a world of change the letter is death, but free spirit creative; was it not the same growing Light of faith—a consciousness, slowly becoming articulate, of a part in the universal Life that transcends the life of the body? For this diverse

experience was more than vision. Followed up into life it led to a sense of new vitality and power which, whether it was described as "the grace of God," or "the God within," as "gnosis" or being "in Christ," was surely the same initiation into the life of spirit, the same incipient realisation of the eternal Creator Self Incarnate in the universe, the Way, the Truth and the Life.

We needed this long quotation as a means of showing how we share with our reader-correspondent her enthusiasm for a high faith and for what the "famous theologian" spoke of as the need of "Christ." If we can be permitted Col. Luard's view that "the Incarnation is a process which began with the dawn of life on earth," and is still going on, then the idea of the Christ can be understood as representing the awakening spiritual potentiality of all human beings, and we are able to make some sense out of the world and its problems. On this basis, the coming into existence of a world and its problems provides a field for the growth of human beings into full self-consciousness. It is a field of psychic or psychospiritual evolution, more or less as Plotinus proposed, and not a prison of wickedness from which, with the help of Divine intervention, we may be permitted to escape.

If the creative Gods—Brahma, Prometheus, Christ (in Gnostic Christianity and agreeably to Justin Martyr, Christ is an Æon, an expression of the Logos)—could have worked out the problems of the world without bringing the world into being, they would surely have done so, if only to avoid all the pain, suffering, and dusty death to which birth condemns all who are born on earth. But Brahm, sole meditating in the night, could not conquer the world without first creating it—"thinking" it into existence. The universal evolutionary process, with the promise of a larger awareness, not merely for men, but for the totality of being, could not proceed without the existence of worlds and suns and galaxies. So the world comes into being in order to be understood. This is a tolerable teleology, a "will of God" that does not outrage the moral instincts of mankind.

We come back, therefore, to the thesis of "Two Levels of Reply"—the idea that we can't really get out of the world without understanding the world and to understand the world is to understand and try to solve its problems. We may have a home awaiting us in Nirvana, Moksha or Heaven; the preoccupations of material experience may be irrelevant to final spiritual emancipation; but unless men learn to free themselves from the grip of their illusions, here, how can they be sure of being free from illusions *there*? Earth is a materialized heaven, matter the shadow of spirit, body the reflection of soul. Nihilism on earth—and war is nihilism, today—will mean nihilism in heaven, too; or, to be sensible about it, no heaven at all.

Gandhi said something of extraordinary wisdom when he declared: To the starving man, God always appears in the form of bread. Something similar might be said of a world torn and wracked by war and the threat of war—to the people of this world, God must appear in the form of peace. For a conclusion, we take a text from another Saviour, Krishna, who, in the fourth discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, declares to his disciple:

In whatever way men approach me, in that way do I assist them; but whatever the path taken by mankind, that path is mine.

Letter from **ENGLAND**

STAPLECROSS, SUSSEX.—During the Battle of London I lived in the Temple, at the heart of the city, until, one night, a vast bomb, suspended on a parachute, landed on the roof and resulted in most of the occupants being carried out on stretchers. I had a bad glass gash myself that left me permanently disfigured.

But this is an aside, for my theme is the present-day problem of delinquent youth. Now during the period just referred to I had as nearby neighbour one of the porters of the Temple, who occupied a flat with his wife and small son. Both were finally dug out of the rubble to which Harcourt Buildings were reduced without major injury. What effect would such an experience be likely to have on a small boy of seven? One might surmise a legacy of anxiety, of terror of aircraft, gunfire and the whistle of descending bombs. In this case, at least, one would have been entirely wrong. That small boy, wearing a toy tin hat, with a belt round his middle and a whistle in his mouth, liked nothing better than to play "air-raids," galloping about the Temple lawns amid the scattered debris and under the shadow of the anchored balloon swimming at its moorings overhead. A vignette of the recent bitter past? Something more than that, I think. For that small boy, lively and intelligent, as he came to adolescence, gave his parents a very great deal of trouble, as his father himself told me. So, today, when young people of both sexes are giving a great deal of trouble to the law-abiding community, one wonders how much of this anti-social behaviour stems in some way from the disruptive years of the war.

A few days ago the manager of a cinema in Stevenage, a new town with an industrial base, closed his cinema to all teen-agers. He did so because he found that after every performance seats were slashed and damaged in other ways. He now issues "passports" to members of youth

clubs who undertake not to indulge in vandalism, and he has been much criticised for doing this. Were the seat-slashers thwarted? No. They promptly moved on to nearby Crawley New Town and did their best to wreck the cinema there. Could juvenile behavior be worse? It could. The Vicar of Worth, a small town, now prohibits children from entering the ancient church of that place without adults, on the ground that hymn books and other things have been strewn over the floor and altar candles have been lighted and left. One could go on citing many more cases of vicious vandalism—particularly damage to railway carriages, one recent exploit involving the taking out of service of a string of coaches with broken windows, and slashed upholstery and smashed electric lights.

A recently published Report on Children and Young Persons, issued by the Home Office, attempts an analysis of present-day juvenile behavior. Some of the findings are significant. In 1958 the biggest contribution to juvenile delinquency occurred among the 14 to 17, and 17 to 21 age categories. The committee making this report finds it difficult to believe that most of the problem since 1938 is entirely due to War disruption—to air raids, evacuation, the break-up of family life. I quote from the report: "It is true that the generation with the largest rise (in delinquency) is still the one likely to have been most affected by the war, but the war alone can hardly account for the sudden large rise at the older age, nor for that in the 14 to 17 age group. Fifteen years after the end of the War, far from improving, the situation is more serious than it has ever been."

What instinctual need is satisfied by this form of large-scale vandalism? Says the report:

While life has in many ways become easier and more secure, the whole future of mankind may seem frighteningly uncertain. Everyday life may be less of a struggle, boredom and lack of challenge more of a danger, but the fundamental insecurity remains with little the individual can do about it . . . It is not always so clearly recognised what a complete change

there has been in social and personal relationships (between classes, between the sexes and between individuals) and also in the basic assumptions which regulate behaviour. These major changes in the cultural background may well have replaced the disturbances of war as factors which contribute in themselves to instability within the family. In such a climate it is no wonder that many young people are bewildered or that some parents become uncertain what standards they should insist on or what ideals they should put before their children.

To the older generation the teen-ager of today, of both sexes, bears no resemblance to the youth of Edwardian England. In externals, the type has undergone a sartorial revolution which makes youths and young women look like the young of a foreign land. There is a narcissistic preoccupation with bodily adornment and dress in both sexes at age levels that in the past were characterised by complete lack of interest in self-adornment. Here is a change that should interest the psychologist. And along with it has developed a passion, almost pathological, for speed, and the hire-purchase of high-powered motorcycles within the reach of youths who, a few decades ago, would not have had an earning power to aspire to more than a second-hand push-bike. Speed has come near to the point of mania.

A high proportion of the road deaths today involve the teen-age motor cyclist, generally with a girl friend on his pillion. What is the remedy? The writer has no idea. The report cited above tends towards the youth club as a social remedy. But there are youth clubs already, and some of these have had to close down because those for whose good they had been organized, went to work and completely wrecked them. Only one central truth seems to lie buried in this terrible social riddle: it is that boredom lies at the root of mischief; that and perhaps a subconscious despair for the future in a world where the political leaders of all states think in terms of mass destruction. . . . I think back to my little friend dashing about the mashed-up lawns of the Temple in his little tin hat, blowing his warning whistle. But the moral is, somehow, obscure, only the

central hard-core fact remains. It is that every so-called civilization gets the quality of youth it deserves.

ENGLISH CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW

"DOUBLE-THINK" AND THE VICIOUS CIRCLE

MANAS is always reluctant to orient commentary around a "view with alarm" report, and it is perhaps for this reason that little has been said concerning such horrors as the continual refinement of techniques for chemical and bacteriological warfare. A few current items on this subject, however, cry out to be placed in juxtaposition for our readers' consideration. First, we note in the Jan. 7 *Journal* of the American Medical Association a series of articles by officers of the military on the uses of chemicals and bacteria in war.

The first begins with the following paragraph:

The civilian population of the United States has little protection today against surprise attacks with chemical agents. It is wishful thinking to believe that these weapons will be confined to battle areas rather than civilian populations. The protection afforded by the air-raid shelters and subterranean railway tubes of London in World War II may still be effective against high explosives, and possibly with modifications these may afford some measure of protection against warned atomic attack. However, unless adequate measures are taken, to make them germproof and gasproof, they can become chambers as lethal as those of the German prison camps and the penitentiaries.

Next is an article titled, "The Physician's Role in the Defense Against Biological Weapons," then "Radiological Warfare," and finally Brig. Gen. Joseph H. McNinch's "A Look at the Future." Gen. McNinch is commanding general of the Army Research and Development Command, and in his summary he argues that all ill winds—including those bearing death-dealing agents—can somehow be ultimately turned to good. For is it not clear, McNinch reasons, that in exploring lesser-known diseases "to see if they might be suitable weapons" we may discover a good deal more about refinements of immunization? Therefore, Gen. McNinch calls upon all physicians to aid in the War Department program of research, concluding with this masterful plea:

Our colleagues in microbiology, biochemistry, toxicology, and physiology have made great progress, but these are in part or wholly medical weapons and we, the physicians of this country, must increase our interest, participation and our contributions to the research necessary to guarantee that we will have an effective defense should these weapons ever be used against us.

I have attempted to summarize not only the work that is going on and the possible direction of this work, but have commented on the relationship, participation, and responsibilities of physicians in defense against these three weapons systems. There is promise of real achievement in all three fields. I believe that medical research on problems of defense against these weapons will have a beneficial bearing on peacetime medical problems in this country and throughout the world. One of the most important aspects of research in these fields, is that the knowledge gained, by and large, will be applicable to health hazards which exist in peacetime and that the research in these three fields will not in any way be wasted—that any knowledge gained will help us solve problems in toxicology, problems in ionizing radiation, and problems in the control and treatment of infectious disease. These are important areas of medical research and medical responsibility, and I am confident that much of the research presently being conducted in these fields will be of benefit to mankind, whether or not these weapons systems are actually used in war.

In the New York *Times* for Feb. 27, Lawrence Scott, a most persistent pacifist, contributes a letter to the editor protesting germ warfare. Mr. Scott is "Project Director" of the "Vigil at Fort Detrick"—chief center for secret research in the development of biological weapons. His letter reads as follows:

For years the statesmen of the United States have been saying to the statesmen of the Soviet Union, "prove your desire for peace by deeds instead of words." But calling for "deeds instead of words" is words, not deeds.

The United States could take the initiative toward disarmament and peace by abandoning development of biological weapons. Under the Army Chemical Corps more than 2,000 civilian and military personnel are engaged in development of bacterial, viral and fungal methods of warfare. These

are primarily strategic weapons for possible use against civilians.

By abandoning plans for such atrocities and placing our resources in nonsecret research in microbiology, immunology and epidemiology the citizens could have more defense against disease.

If at the same time the United States would convert Fort Detrick to a world health center, all the people of the world would be benefited.

For the past year and a half we have been appealing to our fellow citizens to take this initiative toward a sane world. More than 1,500 have now stood in the vigil at the entrance to Fort Detrick and gone back home to urge this step among their neighbors.

Any sane man from another planet, or even from another generation of this planet, would think the people of the United States a little insane not to be taking such steps away from the abyss of destruction. And maybe we are, collectively.

An article by Brock Chisholm on "Biological Warfare: Our Right to Know," which appeared in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* for May, 1960, certainly suggests the importance of writing letters such as that of Mr. Scott. Dr. Chisholm is a psychiatrist, former head of the World Health Organization, and speaks on a subject about which he knows a great deal—though not as much as he would like to, since such work as that carried on in Fort Detrick is kept largely under wraps. But Dr. Chisholm does know that, if the techniques of biological warfare are to be developed as a "last resort" measure in case of hostilities, the risk of agonizing destruction for the entire world is noticeably increased. Suppose, he says, that any country, or for that matter any sizeable group which includes a good biologist, should decide that North America needs to be taught a lesson. A mere hundred special agents could spread enough Botulinus toxin to produce fatalities in every major city ranging from 40 per cent to a possible 100 per cent of the population. But supposing only a single experiment in the effectiveness of this method of "warfare" were attempted, what would be the result?

Unless "Ruritania," or whoever had initiated the attack announced its responsibility, which would not be likely and perhaps not believed if it did, the attack would in all probability be blamed on the USSR, and such atomic weapons as could be fired from foreign bases, provided that they too had not been dusted, would be sent on their way against the presumed enemy. Retaliation from the USSR would be automatic and immediate. The results would be fatal for hundreds of millions of people all over the world, and the doom of civilization as we know it would be inevitable.

In the face of such possibilities as these, we are being assured that our military are equipped, or soon will be equipped, to defend us from any enemies, although it would seem that the most they can really hope to do is retaliate after most of us, and of them, are dead. The suggestion has even been made again recently that it might be expedient to start a "preventive war" against the Soviets. This ultimate absurdity pretends that in some way Western democratic countries could secretly decide on an attack, secretly carry out full preparations, and launch an overwhelming attack without frightening the Soviets into attacking, first.

COMMENTARY

HOW RATIONAL CAN RELIGION BE?

WE are not sure that the point of the question, *Who was Jesus?*, in this week's lead article, really comes off. Since the entire discussion hinges on this point it may be well to look at it further.

It is fairly obvious that what Col. Luard does is to place the religious idea of the incarnation in a frame of rational meaning. He converts the personal Saviour into a principle of man's being. Some may protest that this dissolves the living reality of Jesus Christ into metaphysical mist. On the contrary, it seems to us that the rationalization of the Christ-idea takes it off the blindly emotional level—the level which permits true believers so much intellectual and even moral irresponsibility once they have bravely declared their belief—and opens the way to a deeply philosophical transcendentalism, leaving behind the claims and counter-claims of all the cults and sects of history. High belief in spiritual destiny ought never to be taken as an excuse for refusing to think, upon the option of the believer.

No doubt there are "unthinkable" realities. All ultimate ideas are approachable by paradox and the incantations of allegory. What we must beware of is neglect of matters that we can and ought to think about. A personal, historical saviour who is absolutely unique does not relate to any rational process and is therefore an idea which discourages all rational investigation. The key idea of our hopes for a good life, of our quest for meaning, of our longing for fulfillment, ought not to be an idea which is alien to the fundamental processes of human growth and development.

What occurs in time must be subject to the rules of temporal existence. And "rules," whatever they are concerned with, can be studied and made the basis of action.

The ultimate reality in man may well be an essence which is beyond time and space. We can not "reason" about this. But if there is also in man a nature which can be *transformed*, then that part

of his being can be understood. And if the *Christos* is the Anointed One, he is one who has *become* purified—who has won the initiation symbolized by anointment with oil. Paul said to the Galatians (iv, 19) "I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you."

To see all men as Paul saw the Galatians is a part of the project of world peace. To believe in the prospect of this awakening for all men, as Paul did, is not to ignore the devious paths and tragic dilemmas of the human race. It is not for nothing that Gandhi has been honored by a Christian writer as the "Christ of the Indian Road."

CHILDREN

... and Ourselves

A RADICAL APPROACH TO CHILD REARING

THE above is an appropriate title for the complete story of A. S. Neill's Summerhill school in England. "Radical," indeed, in the best and purest sense of that word—but at the same time the term also applies to this book in the more conventional sense of "startling."

We have commented on Neill's writings on more than one past occasion, but, though some of the material in the present volume is a reworking from previous publications, it seems that the whole of Neill here emerges in balance and synthesis. The author himself credits the result largely to the patience of his present publisher, Harold H. Hart of New York. In our opinion Mr. Hart, in addition to patience, is apparently endowed with an even more useful virtue—the ability to understand and interpret Neill "from thousands of words from four of my earlier books."

This, however, begins to sound as if *Summerhill—A Radical Approach to Child Rearing* (Hart Publishing Co., New York, 1960) is here to be identified chiefly as "important" or "significant." We should go no further without saying that this book is thoroughly delightful, a joy as well as an instruction. The following brief paragraphs are adequate representation of the book's attitude and tone, as Mr. Neill answers a simple question in simple terms:

What is Summerhill like? Well, for one thing, lessons are optional. Children can go to them or stay away from them—for years if they want to. There is a timetable—but only for the teachers.

The children have classes usually according to their age, but sometimes according to their interests. We have no new methods of teaching, because we do not consider that teaching in itself matters very much. Whether a school has or has not a special method for teaching long division is of no significance for long division is of no importance except to those who *want*

to learn it. And the child who *wants* to learn long division *will* learn it no matter how it is taught.

Children who come to Summerhill as kindergarteners attend lessons from the beginning of their stay; but pupils from other schools vow that they will never attend any beastly lessons again at any time. They play and cycle and get in people's way, but they fight shy of lessons. This sometimes goes on for months. The recovery time is proportionate to the hatred their last school gave them. Our record case was a girl from a convent. She loafed for three years. The average period of recovery from lesson aversion is three months.

There is a lot of learning in Summerhill. Perhaps a group of our twelve-year-olds could not compete with a class of equal age in handwriting or spelling or fractions. But in an examination requiring originality, our lot would beat the others hollow.

We have no class examinations in the school, but sometimes I set an exam for fun. The following question appeared in one such paper:

Where are the following:- Madrid, Thursday Island, yesterday, love, democracy, hate, my pocket screwdriver (alas, there was no helpful answer to that one).

This book about Summerhill is divided into seven sections: The Idea of Summerhill, Child Rearing, Sex, Religion and Morals, Children's Problems, Parents' Problems, Questions and Answers. Mr. Neill has always been rather strong medicine for the conventional parent, and he strongly resists all the more or less accepted forms of cant and hypocrisy. These, he feels, put the child on the spot, which is grossly unfair, and Neill sees no reason for not reversing the situation. In a chapter on "Lying," for example, he lays it on parents in this manner:

If your child lies, either he is afraid of you or he is copying you. Lying parents will have lying children. If you want the truth from your child, do not lie to him. This statement is not a moral one, for we all lie at times. Sometimes we lie to keep from hurting someone else's feelings, and of course we lie about ourselves when we are accused of egoism or bumptiousness. Instead of saying, "Mommy has a headache; be quiet," it is much better and more honest to shout "Stop that damned row!" But you can

only say that with impunity if your children do not fear you.

Parents lie sometimes in order to preserve their dignity. "Daddy, you could fight six men, couldn't you?" It takes some courage to reply, "No, my son, with my big stomach and my flabby muscles, I couldn't fight a midget."

How many fathers will confess to their children that they fear thunder or fear policemen? Hardly a man is big enough not to flinch from letting his children know that he was called "Snuffles" at school.

The family lie has two motives: to keep the child well-behaved, and to impress the child with parental perfection. How many fathers and teachers would answer truthfully a child's questions: *Were you ever drunk? Did you ever swear?* It is this fear of children that makes adults hypocrites.

A great number of people believe that three subjects should never be discussed by a teacher: politics, sex, and religion. Neill disagrees, though he grants that *instruction* of any sort respecting sex or religion should come from the parents. But here is one educator who is outspoken in his opposition to "religious training" as usually conceived. In Section VII, "Questions and Answers," Neill explains his point of view regarding Christianity:

Why are you opposed to religions training?

Well, among other reasons, in my years of dealing with children I have found that the most neurotic children are those who have had a rigid religious upbringing. It is a rigid religious upbringing that gives to sex an exaggerated importance. Religious instruction is damaging to the child's psyche because religious adherents, for the most part, accent the idea of original sin. Both the Jewish and Christian religions hate the flesh. Conventional Christianity all too often gives the child a feeling of dissatisfaction with self.

Do you believe in Christ?

No, we do not consciously follow Christianity, but from a broad point of view, Summerhill is about the only school in England that treats children in a way that Jesus would have approved of. Calvinist ministers in South Africa beat their children, just as Roman Catholic priests beat their children.

How should children get their first ideas about God?

Who is God? I don't know. God to me means the good in each one of us. If you try to teach a child about a being whom you yourself are vague about, you will do more harm than good.

Wouldn't you say that swearing is taking God's name in vain?

Children's swearing deals with sex and natural functions—not God. It is difficult to argue with a religious person who makes God a sacred personage and accepts the Bible as literal fact. If God were represented as a being of love and not as a being of fear, no one would think of taking His name in vain.

An excellent foreword to *Summerhill* is provided by Erich Fromm, in which this psychologist, sociologist, and philosopher lucidly relates the idealism which characterizes Summerhill to a fundamental situation in contemporary culture. "Our system," writes Dr. Fromm, "needs men who *feel* free and independent but who are nevertheless willing to do what is expected of them, men who will fit into the social machine without friction, who can be guided without force, who can be led without leaders, and who can be directed without any aim except the one to make good. It is not that authority has disappeared, nor even that it has lost in strength, but that it has been transformed from the overt authority of force to the anonymous authority of persuasion and suggestion. In other words, in order to be adaptable, modern man is obliged to nourish the illusion that everything is done with his consent, even though such consent be extracted from him by subtle manipulation. His consent is obtained, as it were, behind his back, or behind his consciousness."

Dr. Fromm believes that the Summerhill way is essentially the right way, and that from its pioneer work a great deal of educational reform can take place:

Even though no school like Summerhill exists in the United States today, any parent can profit by reading this book. These chapters will challenge him to rethink his own approach to his child. He will find that Neill's way of handling children is quite different

from what most people sneeringly brush aside as "permissive." Neill's insistence on a certain balance in the child-parent relationship—*freedom without license*—is the kind of thinking that can radically change home attitudes.

The thoughtful parent will be shocked to realize the extent of pressure and power that he is unwittingly using against the child. This book should provide new meanings for the words *love, approval, freedom*.

Neill shows uncompromising respect for life and freedom and a radical negation of the use of force. Children reared by such methods will develop within themselves the qualities of reason, love, integrity, and courage, which are the goals of the Western humanistic tradition.

If it can happen once in Summerhill, it can happen everywhere—*once people are ready for it*. Indeed there are no problem children as the author says, but only "problem parents" and a "problem humanity." I believe Neill's work is a seed which will germinate. In time, his ideas will become generally recognized in a new society in which man himself and his unfolding are the supreme aim of all social effort.

FRONTIERS

Disarmament and Its Difficulties

A READER who has for years been active in the campaign for disarmament has put together a proposal for graduated unilateral disarmament which takes into account some of the practical difficulties in any such program. He writes:

Editors, MANAS: Only one thing you omitted from your March 15, "The Issue is Disarmament"—how shall we achieve it. Have we any reason to hope that disarmament conferences will be any more successful in the future than in the past? On the contrary, the experts say that as the arms race intensifies, the problem complicates, and the chances of agreement grow slimmer.

Two traditions we must abandon if the world is to escape—extreme nationalism and disarmament by diplomacy. The people of today's world can no more afford to tolerate extreme nationalism and its war-making proclivity than could the poor serf of the Middle Ages endure the uncontrolled propensity and power of his feudal lord to attack his neighbor's castle across the river. Before he could rise from his serfdom a higher authority had to enforce peace. Let today's politician who loudly insists on undiminished "sovereignty" ponder the fate of his predecessor—the feudal baron behind his castle wall. Just as the energy of gunpowder was the doom of feudalism, so will the energy of the atom determine the end of nationalism.

Now, *diplomatic conferences* for establishing World Law and a World Authority are necessary—but we do *not* need them for disarmament. Our President has the power to initiate this.

But a conference to organize World Law would have little hope of success in the atmosphere of the arms race. It would seem reasonable to start a process of disarmament first to improve the climate of the world in order to have a chance to organize a World Authority.

If ever there was need for departure from precedent, it is now. When a man is sick and the doctors and experts have failed, he is willing to try non-conventional remedies. The plan of Reciprocal Disarmament was offered (over a year ago) in the belief that it would do one of two things: either it would start the process of world disarmament before it was too late and create an opportunity for the

organization of World Law, or else it would determine that all the talk about disarmament, or some of it at least, was nothing but *hot air*. Even if it did only the latter, it would be worth all it costs. We are spending nearly 50 billion dollars every year on the *assumption* that our prospective opponents do not want to disarm. Isn't it worth spending a small fraction of this amount to determine whether there is a real basis for such assumption? If on the other hand the process of Reciprocal Disarmament does succeed, it will accomplish: (1) universal disarmament of individual nations, (2) create, midway of the process, an atmosphere of trust and good will needed for the establishment of World Law; and (3) permit help for the underprivileged of the world.

Reciprocal Disarmament departs from precedent in that it proposes to start World Disarmament by executive action. The President announces to the World a date on which the United States will destroy 2 per cent *of each class* of its important, up-to-the-minute arms, with ample opportunity for inspection. *After this is accomplished*, he invites all other nations to reciprocate. If the important ones do so, the United States again destroys another 2 per cent and so on until complete world disarmament is attained. After the process is well under way, in lieu of destruction, weapons will be turned over by all parties to a World Authority which will therefore increase in power until it is the sole possessor of all military strength. Previous to this the present balance of strength (or terror) is preserved.

It so happens that the plan of Reciprocal Disarmament also solves the problems of inspection which have wrecked previous conferences. It can satisfy both the Russian and the United States requirements. It will require at least five years to complete disarmament, during which time industry can be adjusted.

While Reciprocal Disarmament may thus shatter tradition in international dealing, nevertheless it is solidly based on man's age-long experience. There comes a time in all affairs when action is imperative. For this we have leaders. A good leader will take plenty of expert advice but finally he must have the courage to act. He may make some mistakes but these will be small compared to the consequences of the delay which he has avoided.

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The ray of hope one clings to, while considering such proposals, is found in a few words of Blaise Pascal. "Man is but a reed, the most feeble thing in nature; but he is a *thinking* reed." In this case, nothing will help us except our capacity to *think*. In the past, the great openings of history have had some help from irrational forces. The freedom gained from Britain by the American colonies was won as much by distance and the endless expanse of the new continent as by the valor of American arms. The liberation of India—nonviolently—was served by the strong emotions of nationalism and the grave distractions of the second world war. The project of disarmament, today, is surrounded by no such accidental encouragements. Nationalism, instead of being for disarmament, is against it. Technology has rendered natural isolation inconceivable. The only break with war and military tradition that seems possible is a self-conscious and deliberate break, born of social and moral intelligence. This is going to be difficult.

We have, in short, to *think*, if we are to accept the persuasions to disarm.

The first thing that should occur to the advocates of disarmament is that they have no hope of being able to fool anybody. It won't work, and further, deception is a tool of war, not peace-making. They had better admit, therefore, that they have no strong feelings of infallibility concerning the outcome of the program. They cannot even be sure of how *they* will behave under the novel emotional stresses that may be presented. They will have to confess the possibility of angry roots of unreason in themselves, and go on to point out the difference between this sort of personal violence—admitted as a weakness—and the planned cold-blooded violence of the military policy of a great nation.

The argument about disarmament is not simply a contest of partisans, one side loaded with pacifist virtue, the other side weighed down by the sins and bigotry of tradition. It represents a common human problem. At root it is a moral

problem. The major issues all turn on the need of human beings to be able to think that *after* they do whatever they do about solving the problem—unilaterally disarming or fighting a nuclear war—they, or those who remain alive, will have a margin of opportunity to pursue their chosen way of life. Factually and circumstantially, the definition of this way of life may be quite obscure, but psychologically and emotionally it is not obscure at all.

Factually and circumstantially, the condition of the world—and, in particular, of the United States—after a nuclear war may be so shattered that "way of" will no longer have any meaning at all, the bare, tenuous thread of life itself being the sole interest of human beings, and not even an "interest," really, but only a naked instinct. The gamut of the possibilities in the event of war have been thoroughly explored by the science-fiction writers and the prospects are both unattractive and basically non-political. War is at the very minimum a starkly reductionist solution to the modern dilemma. It resolves by dissolving the issues and taking mankind back, not to "the beginning," but to the shambles that will remain after almost absolute failure. What honor to "patriotism" in such circumstances?

It seems important that men acquire a thorough-going realization of this almost certain outcome of a nuclear war.

On the other hand, the pacifist alternative has certain built-in difficulties. Underneath the almost bland reasoning of the step-by-step proposals for abolition of armaments and abrogation of national sovereignty lies a great and indispensable assumption about *people*. The assumption is that the dark, irrational fears and angry suspicions that have fed the war-makers weapons and men to use them for thousands of years, will somehow go away. The assumption is that with the bright light of a rational national policy, regeneration will somehow take place. Maybe so. It is certainly so that these emotional sources of conflict have been nullified within the boundaries of quite large

national states. Men do not, we may conclude, have to become saints in order to stop fighting within the confines of a settled social order. So the problem, then, is to create such an order which includes *everybody*. This is the argument of the world-government advocates, and it seems eminently sound. But before you can have a legitimate world political community, you have to have an acknowledged world community of interest.

"Community of interest" is not a mere phrase. It does not result from legislation. Community of interest creates legislation. The community of interest is a cultural phenomenon. It is organic, not contractual. It grows from the fellowship of man at countless levels of communication and the more immediate human relationships. For men like ourselves, it arises from the interchanges of literature, the arts, music, industry, science, invention, goods and services. It comes from understanding how men are the same and, when they are different, how and why they are different.

Civilization is the achievement of the thinking reed. By means of rational understanding of differences, men discover how to work together for what they have and wish to obtain in common. In a world filled with differences, unity is expressed by law. This is so in the sciences, and it is so in the world of men. But before the world of men can be united by law, there must be a *cultural* comprehension of the differences which the law is to harmonize and relate.

Where do you start, in a project of this sort? You start with the *substance* of the problem: the nature of man. It is no accident that the ideological differences which now maintain the world in rival armed camps are at root differences in theory about the nature of man. It is no accident that the major emotional antagonisms which now divide men and nations can be traced to the works of authors who, as philosophers and historians, offered conclusions about the nature of man. As F. J. Teggart said in 1942:

The essential difficulties of the modern world are difficulties in thought. Are we to permit intellectual bondage to views put forward in the nineteenth century by Fichte, Darwin, and Marx? The future of civilization turns on our ability to face the difficulties in thought which confront us.