

OUR HUMAN PLIGHT

I: ESCHATOLOGY FOR ALL IN THE NUCLEAR AGE

EXTINCTION stares civilized man in the face, and civilized man looks in another direction. He prefers to ignore the colossal forces he has unleashed in the world, imagining that they will then pass him by, much as a young child will expect to hide from another by putting its hands over its eyes.

Eschatology, the theological study of ultimate things, of the Day of Judgment and the end of the world, takes on a new and vital connotation as a secular issue of the first importance in the Nuclear Age. What will our earth be like in the coming years—the gutted, scorched, sterile cemetery of mankind, the tomb and grimly appropriate tombstone of life's sorriest failure? Or will it be a world where human beings have brought under some kind of rational control the cosmic energy which now they release so recklessly? Whatever the outcome of this mighty drama, we each will have played a role in it. The choice lies before us and *we each will choose*, though it be by our indifference.

Only a few years ago, the picture of their nation threatening catastrophic, global war while continuing to cause atomic fall-out all over the world, twisting generations both living and unborn, would have seemed to Americans the fantastic exaggeration of a second-rate, science-fiction plot. Yet today we are guilty of precisely these *crimes against life*. And everyone takes it as a matter of course. What defense can we make but to plead insanity?

Our scientists and government officials talk blandly about continuing nuclear tests in order to develop a "clean bomb" with less radioactive fall-out. Think of it. A *humane bomb* at last! Connected with all weapons of mass destruction there is a filth which no amount of scientific

tinkering can wash away. It isn't atoms we are blasting, but human lives.

If man does succeed in saving himself and his world from this threat, the future historian must come to write something like this: "During the second half of the twentieth century, in a reversal unprecedented in human history, good judgment began to prevail in international affairs, and the great nations checked their drift toward thermonuclear war, laying aside their age-old reliance upon armed might as the ultimate factor in national policy." Somehow, this does not sound like history.

Is it something to be shrugged off when 9,235 scientists of all nations in a petition to the United Nations declare that the radioactivity from nuclear testing represents grave danger for all the world, and that "an urgent renunciation of atomic weapons becomes absolutely imperative"?

I am neither a scientist nor an authority on foreign affairs. I speak as a plain citizen. My qualifications are that I have a concern for the welfare of man. Trained experts have their place, and it may be an important one, but morality is another matter altogether. You do not major in principle or get a degree in human values at any college I've heard of.

It is a monstrous thing for any nation to poison the air, water, soil, human beings, animals and plants of the entire earth, even to threatening the genetic integrity of unborn generations; and all this in order to blast or threaten to blast into oblivion the other half of the globe. Let us not oversimplify a complex matter. Our atomic tests and war preparations must stop, not as a result of any propaganda pressures or out of political expediency, but because men sense that there is something inherently wrong in them. Admittedly, this is asking a great deal, perhaps too much. But

whoever does not *stand on principle, lies*—lies to himself and to anything truly higher than himself in which he claims belief. There are subtleties here involving the most basic nature of man—what he is and what he may be. We would do well to ponder them.

In all the previous catastrophes which can be laid to man's irresponsibility it has at least been possible for succeeding generations to pick up the scattered pieces and resume the game. This is no longer true. Man would not be the first creature to fail nature's tests for biological survival, though he would hold the distinction of being the first to bring down vast quantities of other life in his own ruin.

The day of honoring the Unknown Soldier is nearly past; survivors of the next war will commemorate the Unknown City. No epitaphs for mankind will be written posthumously. Let us venture some now: "Men believed mankind was not worth saving. Their judgment now is vindicated." "None to weep, none to weep for." "Here lies Humanity. Though not wise enough to live together, it proved foolish enough to perish as one."

You cannot lay all the blame for wars upon impersonal and inexorable forces. Man with his folly and his greed brings them upon himself. The ground of battlefields is of human clay.

Has all of human history been moving surely but unperceived toward the day when man shall blast himself into oblivion? Yet there are so few outcries against our common peril. Could it be that obscurely and obliquely we are aware that the eternal laws of cause and effect continue to operate, and that no fate for man, even that of total extinction, is so terrible but that he would richly deserve it? In a conversation on this subject, a friend recently remarked that somewhere in his development man must have taken a wrong turn. I told him I did not think so, that from the beginning man has had this potentiality in him, and that so long as man remained what he was, this frightful predicament

waited only upon the wherewithal of technology and the opportunity of diplomacy.

There come to mind two symbolic patterns which point up the fateful direction of human events in our time and suggest that *hubris* and *Nemesis* are not confined to Greek drama. One is a news item which reads in part: ". . . a new Navy jet fighter, flying at supersonic speed, shot itself down by running into cannon shells it had fired seconds before. . . . The fantastic accident occurred . . . while a test pilot was testing new 20mm cannons over the Atlantic Ocean near Long Island." What reader did not somehow sense a larger significance which this incident implied?

The second symbolic pattern I would call to your attention is Mary Shelley's story, *Frankenstein*, which tells of the ingenious and ambitious, but basically irresponsible experimenter who manages to create a superficially human monster which eventually destroys him. This is much more than a mere tale of horror. No previous age is so able as ours to appreciate the validity of its grim symbolism.

II: SOME WHO STOOD UP TO BE COUNTED

A hundred years ago the great moral challenge facing our countrymen was slavery. Those who found slavery unconscionable were obliged by law to support this institution in which they did not believe, even to the extent of helping to capture runaway slaves and return them to their masters. It remained for one man, John Brown, by his personal exploits to lift the cause of abolition from the realm of words.

This is not necessarily to sanction Brown's methods, which were often violent and ill-advised, but to call attention to his following the leadings of his conscience against what he believed to be wrong, going out almost single-handedly to do battle against virtually the whole nation. (For the classic brief account of this see Thoreau's address, *A Plea For Captain John Brown*.) During his campaigns he was generally regarded as an insane fanatic. At last he was captured, judged guilty of

treason and hanged. Only then did something of Brown's significance come to be realized within his countrymen. He soon became in many eyes a great martyr to the cause of abolition, and not long after Northern soldiers were marching South to the tune of

John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave

But his soul goes marching on.

Today of course *anyone* can call John Brown a hero and laud his courage. No one will object, for Brown is safely embalmed in the history books. Because it seems cheap, men think to buy their way to worthiness by giving a pat on the back to the brave men of the past. But it is a bad bargain. Honor is never sold at discount. The point is to find and embrace sound thought and action while it still has vital meaning, and not to wait until some authority labels it respectable. Must we forever see mankind's champions in hindsight, waiting like sheep for others to find them for us?

Erecting statues is the shabby homage that lesser men pay to greater. Whoever truly pays his respects to heroes does it not with memorials to them or speeches about them, but by taking up boldly the momentous issues of his own time.

It is said that ours is an age which has no heroes because it cannot believe in them. But whoever declares that *all* men have feet of clay makes the fatal error of creating others in his own image.

We were beginning to think that heroism these days was about as scarce and earthbound as the dodo, when seemingly out of nowhere four men in a tiny ketch, the *Golden Rule*, set sail for the nuclear testing zone in the Pacific to call the attention of the world to the insanity of continued atomic testing and preparation for war. Not since the days of John Brown has America been privileged to witness such a dramatic, creative confrontation of the state by concerned individuals ready to risk their lives for human dignity.

This so-called Christian country is hearing an eloquent silent sermon by the men of the *Golden Rule*. And the subject, in acts, not in words, is "turning the other cheek." These men, moved by the horror implicit in our nuclear policies, say in effect to our government: "Don't you see what you're doing to mankind? Then we will *make* you see. The human beings you wrong with your tests are to you statistical and remote. Now strike *us* with your blasts and realize what this is all about." But the government will not accept this challenge, for obvious reasons, and instead devises special regulations that make this "turning of the other cheek" *illegal*, and straightway jail the crew. There is an endeavor which takes a dozen Scriptural teachings and breathes into them the breath of life, and the government can do no better than proclaim it a *crime!* Who but a fool or hypocrite could continue to denounce "atheistic Communism" while himself thus acting the role of the devil?

With the voyage of the *Golden Rule* a new character strode out onto the world stage—a character with whom those in the audience could identify what was best in themselves. David again confronts Goliath, and the world watches intently, for it is David and it is Goliath. This episode of the *Golden Rule* is destined to go down in history as one of the significant events of our time. It is already a legend in the making, the meaning and appeal of which have their roots deep in man's nature. Such an act of voluntary sacrifice is archetypal symbolism of mystery and awe, perhaps better sensed intuitively than explained rationally.

Even today, in spite of all the erosions of our freedoms, it must be possible for men of integrity to call to account the unprincipled state. The streamroller called "government" convinces millions to prostrate themselves in its path, then crushes them to an indistinguishable pulp. But let only a few citizens of character stand up before it, daring the operators to run them down, and the whole huge machine will lumber to a creaking halt

in confusion and embarrassment at being called back to the principles upon which our nation was founded. Or so we must dare to hope.

Wisdom is that necessary attribute of good government quite beyond any Constitutional guarantee.

Where citizens deeply believe their government to be pursuing unwise policies, it should be not merely their privilege, but their civic duty, to let their objections be heard. And when were protesting voices more urgently needed than now? Consider the dangerous schizophrenia of our country's official attitudes: On the one hand we have felt it appropriate to add to our Pledge to the Flag the information that this is a nation "under God," and as part of our postal cancellations we are urged to "Pray for Peace." While on the other hand our leaders threaten Russia with "massive retaliation" and boast of their diplomacy which takes this country to the "brink of war." What do these contradictions suggest, if not an alarmingly psychotic state of mind? Nor must we forget that whoever is not disturbed at the sight of rampant insanity thereby raises the question of whether *he* is rational. Our country seems so afflicted with its narrow, militant nationalism, however, that any larger, more objective view is instantly branded "subversive." But the business of wisdom is still the ultimate wellbeing of all mankind.

The voice of enlightened conscience, barely audible in most of us, in the men of the *Golden Rule* cried out, and they heeded that cry, thereby heartening and strengthening this voice in men of good will everywhere. In any generation you can number on your fingers and toes all those who are willing to stand up and be counted. These are such men. Perhaps more of our fate than we realize hangs upon the response of men to the challenge of the *Golden Rule*.

III: THE MISSING INGREDIENT: COMMITMENT

It has been said that a man is just as large as the thing that makes him angry. Some are

aroused to indignation by someone's accidentally stepping on their toes; others are stirred at the sight of a world sliding toward disaster. How anyone can see man's plight today and not be horrified by it I do not know. But when someone who *does* see the horror buttonholes such a person and spells out the atrocity for him, then that person's indifference and apathy become his choice. He thereby condemns himself and stands revealed as an *enemy of man*.

I am aware I am using strong language. I would use stronger if I knew how, because it is impossible to overstate the gravity of this matter. Mere words cannot convey it. We know it, if we know it, as a concern arising from the depths of our mind and heart.

It is not enough to see the predicament and then throw up one's hands in despair. We are called upon to participate in a revolution, not one of arms and politics but one of ideas and values; and the revolutionary is a person who *revolts*, not one who merely *is revolted*. There is something missing in the picture of the disillusioned person relaxing in comfortable cynicism. And what is missing is *commitment*, the deliberate enlisting of one's efforts in the righteous cause. Exactly what direction these efforts will take only the person involved can learn.

This recognition of the need for commitment appears occasionally where one might least expect it. On August 20, 1945, after the destruction of Hiroshima, the editors of *Life* magazine wrote: "Our sole safeguard against the very real danger of a reversion to barbarism is the kind of morality which compels the individual conscience, be the group right or wrong. The individual conscience against the atomic bomb? Yes, there is no other way."

"But my participation would be a drop in the bucket," you say. Exactly! What is a bucketful of water but a sufficient number of drops? Probably the rank and file of our countrymen will not be roused from their perennial lethargy. But surely there are enough persons who *think* about man

and *care* about man who can and will rouse each other to the common peril. What some feel in the extreme others must sense to a degree, for they are men, too. When thoughtful men such as Albert Schweitzer, Linus Pauling, Lewis Mumford, Bertrand Russell, Paul Tillich and Norman Cousins, all of proved responsibility and intelligence and character in their respective fields, enlist their energies in this cause, it should only further convince us of its vital importance.

Every nation, every vested interest group, today, has its articulate spokesmen, but who speaks for *man*. The shameful thing is that it should be *necessary* to plead the cause of man. Nor is even this enough. Whoever does speak for man in this crisis will not do so from an armchair. Reading, thinking, talking about the plight of man fall short of the mark. We leave our ideals on the printed page and tuck them away on the shelf out of sight whenever they begin to present a personal challenge.

I for one am becoming convinced that were I to remain silent and passive in the face of this impending calamity, I could no longer live with myself; for I would feel and be an accomplice in the assassination of mankind.

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Richard Groff

REVIEW

A GOOD INTRODUCTION TO ZEN

OF all the intellectual examinations of Zen—and writers can't help intellectualizing by way of explanation, no matter what the Zen disciples say—we recommend William E. Barrett's prefatory discussion to the Anchor volume, *Zen Buddhism*. This book is made up of selections from the writings of D. T. Suzuki, and Barrett, as editor, contrives to demonstrate that the historical lineage of Zen has great psychological importance.

His introduction, "Zen for the West," is so clear that we rather wish it were possible to print the whole twenty pages. As for review, the best service we can perform for our readers is to quote from Mr. Barrett at length:

Zen Buddhism presents a surface so bizarre and irrational, yet so colorful and striking, that some Westerners who approach it for the first time fail to make sense of it, while others, attracted by this surface, take it up in a purely frivolous and superficial spirit. Either response would be unfortunate. The fact is that Zen, as Dr. Suzuki demonstrates, is an essential expression of Buddhism, and Buddhism is one of the most tremendous spiritual achievements in human history—an achievement which we Westerners probably have not yet fully grasped. We have to remember how recent it is that we have sought out any knowledge of the East. Only a century separates us from Schopenhauer, the first Western philosopher who attempted a sympathetic interpretation of Buddhism, a brilliant and sensational misunderstanding on the basis of meagre translations. Since then great strides have been made in Oriental studies, but a curiously paradoxical provincialism still haunts the West: the civilization which has battered its way into every corner of the globe has been very tardy in examining its own prejudices by the wisdom of the non-Western peoples. Even today when the slogan "One World!" is an incessant theme of Sunday journalism and television, we tend to interpret it in a purely Western sense to mean merely that the whole planet is now bound together in the net of modern technology and communications. That the phrase may imply a necessity for coming to terms with our Eastern opposite and brother, seems to pass publicly

unnoticed. There are many signs, however, that this tide must turn.

I consider it a great stroke of personal good fortune to have stumbled (and quite by chance) upon the writings of D. T. Suzuki years ago. I emphasize the word "personal" here because I am not a professional Orientalist and my interest in Suzuki's writings has been what it is simply because these writings shed light upon problems in my own life—one proof that Zen does have a much needed message for Westerners.

Mr. Barrett's decision to confine his selections on Zen entirely to Dr. Suzuki seems to rest on Suzuki's conviction that Zen has been developing ever since the time of Buddha, twenty-five hundred years ago, "and is still alive and growing." Before turning to evidence of Zen-like inclinations in both the scientific and the religious thought of the day, Mr. Barrett explains why he thinks Western psychology is impoverished:

What we call the Western tradition is formed by two major influences, Hebraic and Greek, and both these influences are profoundly dualistic in spirit. That is, they divide reality into two parts and set one part off against the other. The Hebrew makes his division on religious and moral grounds: God absolutely transcends the world, is absolutely separate from it; hence there follow the dualisms of God and creature, the Law and the erring members, spirit and flesh. The Greek, on the other hand, divides reality along intellectual lines. Plato, who virtually founded Western philosophy single-handed—Whitehead has remarked that 2500 years of Western philosophy is but a series of footnotes to Plato—absolutely cleaves reality into the world of the intellect and the world of the senses. The great achievement of the Greeks was to define the ideal of rationality for man; but in doing so, Plato and Aristotle not only made reason the highest and most valued function, they also went so far as to make it the very center of our personal identity. The Orientals never succumbed to this latter error favoring intuition over reason, they grasped intuitively a center of the personality which held in unity the warring opposites of reason and unreason, intellect and senses, morality and nature. So far as we are Westerners, we inherit these dualisms, they are part of us: an irrationally nagging conscience from the Hebrews, an excessively dividing rational mind from the Greeks. Yet the experience of modern

culture, in most diverse fields, makes them less and less acceptable.

It is hardly fair to Suzuki, of course, to devote our entire space to Mr. Barrett's introduction. The main body of this 95-cent Anchor book (294 pages) is drawn from Suzuki's writings between 1949 and 1955. Chapters taken from *Studies in Zen* (Philosophical Library) may be more familiar than his earlier work, but as a "first reader" on the subject, Mr. Barrett's compilation seems beyond criticism. The book includes Dr. Suzuki's discussion of "The Meaning of Zen Buddhism," with chapters on Zen's historical background, Zen techniques, and Zen in relation to Naturalism, Existentialism and Pragmatism.

In the opening chapter, "The Sense of Zen," we find explanation of the Zen objection to the conventionally employed intellect. First of all, both science and religion have the same basic problem: How is it possible for the religionist to tell where genuine inspiration leaves off and aberration begins? And does not the scientist have constantly to redefine his conception of "true objectivity"? As the psychologist observes, the central problem of human relationships is to transcend the egocentric predicament sufficiently to give ourselves in love. And it is, of course, the basic problem of egocentrism which Buddha sought to solve. But the egocentrism objected to by Buddhists is not the equivalent of the Christian idea of "original sin," for, as a Buddhist might say, there is *that in man* which is capable of perceiving at a higher level of consciousness; the fact of "egocentrism" is not a legitimate reason for despair; it is only a "fact." Suzuki's four-sentence summary of the situation, as the Buddhist sees it, is clarifying: "We are too ego-centred. The ego-shell in which we live is the hardest thing to outgrow. We seem to carry it all the time from childhood up to the time we finally pass away. We are, however, given many chances to break through this shell."

It is also Suzuki's task to show that the disciple of Zen does not *scorn* intellect, nor abandon entirely intellectual formulations. But the intellect can do little more than pose the problem of egocentrism in its many guises, and subsequently point out the errors of oversimplified solutions. The real solution is entirely individual:

In the first place, Zen proposes its solution by directly appealing to facts of personal experience and not to book-knowledge. The nature of one's own being where apparently rages the struggle between the finite and the infinite is to be grasped by a higher faculty than the intellect. For Zen says it is the latter that first made us raise the question which it could not answer by itself, and that therefore it is to be put aside to make room for something higher and more enlightening. For the intellect has a peculiarly disquieting quality in it. Though it raises questions enough to disturb the serenity of the mind, it is too frequently unable to give satisfactory answers to them. It upsets the blissful peace of ignorance and yet it does not restore the former state of things by offering something else. Because it points out ignorance, it is often considered illuminating, whereas the fact is that it disturbs, not necessarily always bringing light on its path. It is not final, it waits for something higher than itself for the solution of all the questions it will raise regardless of consequences. If it were able to bring a new order into the disturbance and settle it once for all, there would have been no need for philosophy after it had been first systematized by a great thinker, by an Aristotle or by a Hegel. But the history of thought proves that each new structure raised by a man of extraordinary intellect is sure to be pulled down by the succeeding ones. This constant pulling down and building up is all right as far as philosophy itself is concerned; for the inherent nature of the intellect, as I take it, demands it and we cannot put a stop to the progress of philosophical inquiries any more than to our breathing. But when it comes to the question of life itself we cannot wait for the ultimate solution to be offered by the intellect, even if it could do so.

All in all, *Zen Buddhism* seems to us an excellent volume. Like Professor E. A. Burtt, in *The Compassionate Buddha*, Mr. Barrett has managed to write with a wonderful simplicity about matters which are anything but simple.

COMMENTARY ENDS AND MEANS

IF we get the drift, the idea presented in this week's Frontiers is that human beings ought to be able to think of themselves as Reality walking around, doing things, and gaining light, instead of as accidental invaders who just happened to spring up—like a breed of fungus or mold—on the surface of an otherwise "natural" planet.

The idea is that the essential reality—"spiritual," "material," or whatever—is *meaning*, and human beings are embodiments of meaning, who deal in meaning, live only through meaning.

It is a philosophically intolerable and ridiculous notion that the world began with brute, mindless matter, with great shoals of opacity and unmeaning, and that in this hostile environment little bits of "meaning" began to appear, and finally grew up to be men—creatures with only the most precarious hold on the "real" stuff of existence, the lock-jawed and bounding electrons of which everything is said to be constructed. According to this theory, we are born, look out for a few brief years on an alien expanse of matter, write some poetry, sound some chords, and then slip back into the darkness of non-existence, leaving behind only the slightly changed motion of the few atoms we had something to do with during life.

The world may be hard to understand; we may be ignorant of many of its laws; the frustrations arising from some profound incompleteness in our nature may cast us down: yet these things can be suffered without the ignominy of denying our primary nature. If there is meaning in the world—and the whole human experience declares that there is—then mind existed before matter, indeed shaped and gave matter its form and breathed into it the life which is forever acting toward some end. All that is exhibits some kind of attraction, betrays its love or affinity for an end. Man, who has ends, has also the destiny of conceiving and continually redefining the idea of ends. Man is preoccupied

with the concept of meaning itself. Ultimately, he is a philosophical entity, a being who is continually rendering lower meanings into higher ones, whose sole enduring affliction is divine discontent with short-term meanings.

It is good to think that in the beginning, we—the presence is that of Mind, in some form—were there! and that we, at the very end, shall also be there, in the presence of mind which outlasts every death and pervades every birth.

This is the content, we think, of the great antique religions, and the content, as well, of the philosophies from which are drawn all the dignities and honors which free men assign to one another without distinction and without fear. The project of freedom is the quest for meaning, and this becomes, in its crucial moment, the act of self-discovery. The world, the Logos, and the self, become one.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

"NOW WE KNOW HOW"

(With some apologies to R. P. Smith)

SINCE one of the more obvious virtues of MANAS is its modesty, there are times when the Editors must remind themselves that it is possible to carry any good thing too far. After all, personal experience is the backbone of daily life, and one's Light should not always be kept hidden under a Bushel.

Take this matter of play equipment for the children, for instance. According to brochures we have encountered, there are a few, large-soured manufacturing concerns which have made a thorough scientific study of just what will interest your child at any given age, keep him out of harm's way, and teach him Constructive Things, to boot. Especially recommended are Do-it-Yourself building plans, with blueprints plus material. Perhaps these sincere folk are doing all they can to ease the uncertainties of parenthood, but our own research, also conducted over a period of many years, has indicated that the secret has been missed. We have it; and the time has come to share with our readers.

What you do is, you build a playhouse, but you don't use anyone's plans—not even those more haphazardly provided by Children's Magazines. The playhouse you build must not be too neat, and that's that. There should be a number of flaws in the structure, for, before it can truly come into its own, dilapidated appearance will have to prevail, and who wants to wait ten years for this to happen? It's got to have Character before it will be appreciated, and, believe me, what little boys figure about character is that nothing neat has got any character in which they are even remotely interested.

So you build a playhouse. It can have anything except glass windows. A slanted roof will eventually turn out to be a good thing, a floor

is fine, but the most important architectural requirement will be to have it bend or jut out here and there. Now what some Children's Magazines recommend is that you let the little people help in the construction—by which one must surmise that they are to stand around handing you nails now and then, or sampling the paint. But so far as we can see, this "togetherness" approach is pretty well wasted. Just get the thing built, that's all, and then explain to the tykes all of the various things they can use it for, how to keep it clean, how much fun it is to build things, etc. Then after having brought your labors, both psychological and physical, to a logical conclusion, walk away and forget the whole thing for about three years.

You may have to wait for the arrival of another generation before the seed you have sown will bear fruit. Our structure was, at first, politely observed and nominally appreciated by two little girls, yet, from the beginning, they preferred taking their dolls out under the bushes when they wanted to play house. But if you can give the plan about three years, you'll be in business. By then the roof will have warped somewhat, with the bends and juts becoming really prominent. You sure don't need a new playhouse, you just need some more children. The time is now coming when, slowly but surely, the new crop will make your playhouse the center of their back-yard activities.

What happens first is that an old ladder, looking even more tired than the playhouse, is left nearby. The Four-year-old and the Six-year-old start hoisting it around, crawling through the rungs and all, until finally somebody gets the bright idea of why not lean it on the P.H. So up it goes, precariously, and then works its way up the side, still precariously, and then: there they are on the roof—precariously. Well, the roof stage takes roughly four months. They live up there, you see. Not in the playhouse, but on it. The idea is that they are even going to sleep on it, but we won't let them pack their bags and move. Anyway, hour after hour, some days, up there on the roof they

are. From this lofty eminence they survey earthbound childhood, roll stuff down the incline (this is what *that* is for), haul things up and let them down again, and finally learn to climb up ropes to the top instead of traversing the ladder. Oh, yes, and they pull up those ropes and knock the ladder over when parents come to collect them for some nauseous thing like a nap. A real ball, all around.

The inside of the Thing, however, remains virgin territory so far as they are concerned. By some sixth sense, Four and Six are aware that the interior was originally *meant* for children to play in, though no one told them so, and this dim knowledge spoils the whole thing. However, don't give up. Like we say, it just takes time. When the last inchoate suspicions regarding adult planning have fled, when they have begun to own the top of the thing by right of eminent domain, the-next stage is about to commence. You can tell that this happy millennium is approaching when one day you notice that all your garden tools, which you decided to store in the P.H., are now under the bushes. The boys *discovered* this thing, by-damn, because who would have thought—except they—that a tool house could be made into a playhouse, eh? They have moved you out and moved themselves in, and every day the assorted junk which has been kept just any old place collects where you thought it ought to be some three years before.

Eventually the boys will develop passionate attachment to their playhouse, so that you can forget them for at least an hour or so at a time and know where to find them. But there are intermediate stages. Though more than three years old, and feebly constructed to begin with, the Thing still holds some sort of orthodox shape. No good, too common—too adult. But one day they get some help from the larger fry and push it over. Wham! Wow! Now it has character all right. When it was put back topside up (parental help was not resented here, for they were now definitely in charge and could accept menial

labor), they found that they had achieved a leaning tower effect. The roof had come partly loose and so had the floor, and it was also possible to pry off some of the shingles to see what the hell was underneath. When you go inside, moreover, you seem somewhere between mortal peril and the crazy house, for gravity promises to turn it over if enough help comes along from a gust of breeze. Now it's really beginning to be cozy.

They go in to rest, tell each other they will meet in "the house," insist that their meals are to be served there.

Think the story is over, don't you? It isn't, which makes the whole point. A new stage can always be set as the Thing disintegrates. Grandmothers hate its eyesore value, neighbors without young children, and some with, look down their noses. But who cares? It got knocked over again the other day, and the proud owners have decided that this is the best way of all. To get in you have to shinny up a rope to the upturned window sill—the door opening is now on the bottom—and let yourself down another rope to the secluded cave. Peering into the dim interior two days ago, and locating two recumbent forms, we addressed an inquiry: Which way did they like it most? "*This way*," said Four and Six in unison, as they pulled sheaves of vine trimmings from the compost pit up over their legs and suggested we leave so that they could take a nap. You see, don't you, with what percipience our plan was engineered? They are not, it is true, the same children with whom we started, but by gaddly, the Idea has come through.

FRONTIERS Logos

A LECTURE by Dr. Robert Ulich, professor of education at Harvard University, gives interesting evidence of the endeavor by a man of academic learning to supply substantial and disciplined meaning for the word "spiritual." For several generations, this term has had either a traditional or a sentimental content. That is, the meaning allowed has been theological, or it has been used in connection with "art" or the "feelings." Dr. Ulich is quite aware of this point of view:

You have then that condescending smile on the faces of certain scholars and scientists in our own time—generally the minor ones—who for several decades have arrogated to themselves the function of directing the minds of youth. "Well, all right—if you want to relax from time to time from the level of scholarship to the level of 'mysticism' in order to satisfy your not yet sufficiently mature emotional nature—well nobody can forbid you. But please don't tell us that that kind of stuff belongs inside an advanced university!"

While Dr. Ulich's conception of "the spiritual" is made from the fabric of independent thinking, his approach to the subject bears noticeable similarity to the Platonic or Neoplatonic analysis of the ways of knowing. His lecture (given in May, 1957, at Adelphi College in Garden City, New York) had for its title, "The Cleavage between the Intellectual and the Spiritual in Modern Culture," and his development of the subject at once recalls the Neoplatonic modes of Opinion, Science, and Illumination.

Life begins, according to Dr. Ulich, with primitive "acceptance." This is the naïve reaction to experience. The man "does not think of changing reality," as Ulich says, "but accepts it as he finds it." He has opinions about what happens to him, but little or no knowledge. Dr. Ulich continues:

In the next step in our own personal evolution, we arrive at the level which I may call the *intellectual* level, or the level of system, or scholarship or aggressiveness—whatever term you may choose. . . . This is the level on which the human mind begins to use its inherent energies. Man discovers that he is

not merely embedded in, and dependent upon a material universe, but that he may become the "master" of his environment.

This, in the Platonic vocabulary, and in our own, is the stage of *science*. Then comes what Dr. Ulich calls "the level of *spirit*," to which he gives the following characterization:

We could also call it the level of intuition, whereby I do not mean some kind of wild and undisciplined daydreaming, some "flash" which may go right or wrong, but intuition in the sense of disciplined mental activity, "trained" intuition. As a matter of fact, all the great scholars, scientists, poets, painters, sculptors, architects, as well as the great prophets of mankind, have something in common: they are not only superior men in terms of intellect, but they are also masters of intuitive insight into the problems of life.

An inquiry of this sort, undertaken by a man of Dr. Ulich's standing, is the launching of a great adventure of the mind, and no doubt of something more than the mind. It may be said that there is nothing "new," here; but there is something new: a rigorous return to the Hellenic idea of illumination in an age which is fundamentally scientific and non-traditional in temper, presents certain extraordinary problems. A man who pursues this course may borrow from ancient thought, but he cannot borrow ancient certainty. He cannot rest his case on quotations from authorities. An incomparable vigor of thought is required to give a sense of intrinsic reality to the conception of the "spiritual" in nontraditional terms.

Logos, for Dr. Ulich, is the organ of the spiritual principle or substratum in life. Great thinkers who have united the intellectual and the spiritual were filled with the sense of meaning this word implies:

You could say: they lived in the *Logos*, a Greek term that originally meant "word," but that the Greeks, with their great capacity for wonder and for the asking of questions, quickly endowed with a deeper meaning.

Dr. Ulich's idea of the spiritual grows from this expanded meaning of *logos*:

What is a word? Is it merely a sound, the same as the cry or call an animal utters in order to warn of danger? No, human words are at the same time

concepts, and they have the power of significant communication because they incorporate, and are incorporated in, something universal—in an orbit of meaning. The person who thinks and can convey to others what he thinks has received a mysterious quality emerging with the emergence of the human race itself, namely the quality of participation in self-transcendent meaning. He lives in the state of brotherhood-of-consciousness. He can not only cry, and shout, and gesture in order to indicate what happens, but he can express what this or that event *means* to him, and possibly to others. He can interpret reality.

In Dr. Ulich's view, knowing and being have an ultimate common ground:

For the Greeks, that which allowed them not only to think concepts and to speak words, but to think and speak *rightly*, or in the name of universal, necessary, and encompassing truth was the Logos; the ground of knowing which was at the same time the source of being. The Christians adopted this conception and identified the Logos with the divine Principle, or with God. We read the Gospel of St. John: "In the beginning was the Word." That is a very inadequate translation. The Greek text says: "In the beginning was the Logos. And the Logos was with God and the Logos was God." And through Christ—so the Christians thought—we understand the Logos. In the Gospel of St. John you have, about the year 100 after Christ, that amalgamation which has formed our whole Western culture: namely, the meeting between the Judeo-Christian self-revelation of God and the Greek concept of the Logos. This merging went so far that our historians can rightfully argue whether Christianity is more indebted to Christ or to Plato and Aristotle. Certainly, it is a mixture which came about by the capacity of the early Christian thinkers to grasp, so to speak, the central idea of later Platonism and to identify it with their own theology. Christ as God became the supreme Idea, the incarnation of the Logos, that without which the universe would have no meaning or purpose.

So far, in this review, we have followed Dr. Ulich rather closely. Now we should like to add an idea of our own. We should like to add, that is, a larger conception of the Logos. Without the Logos, Dr. Ulich says, "the universe would have no meaning or purpose." But what is "the Universe"? We should like to propose an uncompromising Idealism in answer to this question—that "the Universe" is

itself only the shadow—the animate shadow—of the activity of Mind or the Word. In short, the principle of comprehension is also the principle of creation. A Hindu scripture has it that the universe was peopled by the intellectual activity of *Brahma*, the manifested Logos, who thought of himself as this, that, and the other thing, and so called all forms into being. The symbolism seems exact, for all our own, "human" creations acquire their reality for us from being thought of as a part of ourselves. The things we want, the things we pursue, are all things we want in some sense to unite with, to *realize* as a part of ourselves. What we do not desire hardly exists for us, except as some sort of irrational obstacle, some darkness we cannot penetrate. Our private universe, then, is constructed of the idea of the self. It is a changing universe because we change our idea of the self.

So, perhaps, with the cosmos. What we see is the image of the desires of an intelligence like our own—at root, no doubt, a part of our own intelligence, which is essentially an *ideating* intelligence. What we wholly understand no longer has significant objectivity for us. It has become part of our apparatus of perception.

The importance of this way of looking at the manifested universe lies in its identification of the primary reality as *mind*. Western thought has for centuries been wrestling with the insoluble problem of the "origin" of mind. The difficulty has been to derive mind from matter. It was necessary to attempt this, since it had been assumed that matter is the primary reality. We have had theories by the dozen, none of them successful, to overcome this difficulty. The most brazen of the theories was that of Thomas Huxley—the theory of epiphenomenalism—in which he declared that mind is an accidental by-product of the motions of matter. He illustrated this theory by comparing mental activity to the squeaks emitted by the wheels of a locomotive (representing matter or the "real"). Then came the doctrines of the Emergent Evolutionists, who proposed a kind of cryptoteleology through which matter, by means of its elaborately complex organization, produced by evolution, eventually gave

birth to mind, as an emergent "novelty" on the heretofore purely "material" scene.

On whom shall we blame these intellectual contortions? We can probably blame them upon Aristotle and on the scholastic doctors of the Christian Church, if you want to pursue the origins of modern materialism back that far. In Aristotle's thinking, the original "matter" was a kind of abstraction, arrived at by regressing the dualism of matter and form to the "first" form, which had to be constructed of some utterly neutral stuff. When the Church took over the Aristotelian philosophy, it substituted the mind of God as the source of all forms (God took the place of the Platonic Ideas, implicit in Aristotle's system), and progressively subtracted all independent energy and intelligence from matter. Not Nature, but God, was the creative force in the world. Henry Adams renders the germane passage of Christian teaching from Thomas Aquinas:

"God is the first model of all things. One may also say that, among His creatures some serve as types or models for others"; but generation means sequence, not cause. The only true cause is God. Creation is His sole act, in which no second cause can share. "Creation is more perfect and loftier than generation, because it aims at producing the whole substance of the being, though it starts from absolute nothing."

It was by this means that matter became inert, spiritless stuff—a kind of "absolute nothing," theologically, but plain old matter for people with eyes in their head. When the scientific movement set out to take the initiative away from religion in giving an account of the universe, this was the sort of "matter" it started out with, and this, more or less, was the sort of matter that remained until the discovery of radioactivity in 1897 and the resulting transformation of theories of matter into theories of energy.

In the meantime, the laws of physical motion were made to do service for the will and mind of God. There were these laws, there was dead, inert matter, and very little else, to account for all natural phenomena, in nineteenth-century scientific theory. All that is changed, now, but we have inherited the habits of mind created by this point of view. There is

still the conviction that a thing isn't "real" unless you can seat it on some appropriate material foundation. In the words of Dr. Ulich: "A considerable number of scientists identified all that transcended the quantitative and measurable part of knowledge as vague, unnecessary, and as something which, because not verifiable in laboratory terms, could not interest the intellectually self-respecting mind."

The issue of this discussion is the need to regain a sense of autonomy for mind, or the Logos—Logos being both the light of mind universally and the light of mind in each one of us. We need to stop thinking that we see and understand by a borrowed light—a light borrowed from "matter."

A great deal of thinking, no doubt, will have to go on before we can look at this suggestion impartially. The history of the West has made it inevitable that "progressive" thinkers should link any form of Idealism with political reaction and theological obscurantism. For centuries, materialism has been the watch-word of revolutionary movements. It is fair to say, however, that whatever the good—whatever the emancipating energy—gained from materialism in the past, it offers us nothing to go on in the present and in the future. Actually, the struggle against materialism is only another form of the struggle against "God"—the God who absorbed all the creative potencies of Nature and who was made separate from the world—from the indwelling *Logos*—by theologians and priests who were the "engineers of consent" in their day. We may take Dr. Ulich's article, perhaps, as evidence that the West is getting ready to recover from the disastrous intellectual and moral consequences of this centuries-old struggle with the concepts of anthropomorphic religion. In any event, he has taken a great stride toward freedom of mind in philosophy by proposing a meaning for the word "spiritual" which leans not at all on any theological crutch, but stands forthrightly upon a foundation of ancient Hellenic philosophy joined with independent, modern reflection.