

THE BIRTH OF AN EPOCH

IT is a matter of some interest that the most easily recognizable evidence of the dignity of man shows the human being resisting the overwhelming might of external circumstances. This is a dignity which everyone must acknowledge. For example, there is a letter written to General Franco by an inmate of the Central Prison of Burgos, in Spain. Franco had told a French journalist that "there are no political prisoners in Spain, only prisoners convicted of common crimes—robbery, murder, plundering, etc." After this statement appeared in the press, three men serving life sentences at Burgos wrote to Franco. Following is the letter of Eduardo Villegas Vega, a socialist and member of the clandestine labor union, Union General de Trabajadores:

Central Prison of Burgos
June 25, 1958

His Excellency,
Chief of the Spanish State
Madrid

Dear Sir:

Eduardo Villegas Vega, age 59, married, native and resident of Madrid, son of Saturnino and Eulalia, at present serving a sentence in this Central Prison of Burgos, humbly and with the greatest respect to Your Excellency's person and position,

SUBMITS:

That he has received news of some statements that Your Excellency is said to have made to a French journalist, in which it is stated that all of those indicted since the termination of the Civil War which scourged our country were the authors of heinous crimes, since no one has been persecuted for political ideas. Such statements, if they were made, most deeply wound my dignity as a man who all his life has esteemed his honorable name more highly than life itself, damage my personal and professional reputation and sully the name of my family, the humblest of the humble, but which is second to none in honesty. For all of this I say to you: Sir: I have been charged, judged and condemned twice; case No. 144,205 tried and sentenced in Madrid on January 15, 1940, and No. 136,011 in a Court Martial held in

Ocana (Toledo) on January 9, 1948, and never, your Excellency, has anyone ever accused me of any crime, either before or since. It is for that reason that I—with all humility—

ENTREAT:

Sir: You who can dispose of my life, my liberty, even my modest worldly belongings, do not let the sole moral patrimony that remains be snatched away from me: my dignity. In the name of all that you most long for in this life and the next, save my name from disgrace, though you order my death! I do not deny having worked against what you represent, and if for that I have to pay with my life, I will not complain. But with all the strength of my being I ask that you rectify those statements and prevent an humble family which is humble but as honorable as any from falling into ignominy.

Thank you in anticipation, Sir. May God protect you for many years.

EDUARDO VILLEGAS VEGA

While Vega's letter, along with the other two, was sent to General Franco with the permission of the Director of Burgos Prison, the answer the writers received was an order that they be confined to punishment cells. The three men thereupon went on a hunger strike and all the other political prisoners at Burgos, 500 in all, demonstrated by refusing to attend any of the "more or less recreational" events afforded by the prison. These prisoners have appealed to the United Nations for justice. (Eduardo Vega's letter is reprinted from the Sept. 15 *Iberica*, a magazine published in New York in behalf of republican Spain.)

A letter like this one makes the reader recall *The Great Prisoners*, Isidore Abramowitz' anthology of literature written in prison. This is a large book of nearly 900 pages, filled with the testaments of the great, from Socrates to Francisco Ferrer and Bartolomeo Vanzetti. Ferrer was executed by the Spanish government in 1909 on the charge of having headed the July Revolution in Barcelona. His trial resembled that of Alfred Dreyfus, and Anatole

France wrote at the time: "Everybody knows full well that Ferrer's sole crime consists in this: he founded schools." Ferrer spent his last hours writing about the education of children. His manuscript ends: "I cannot continue, they are taking my life."

When Vanzetti was brought before his judges and asked, in the conventional formula, if he had anything to say why sentence of death should not be passed upon him, he replied:

"You see it is seven years that we are in jail. What we have suffered during these seven years no human tongue can say, and yet you see before you, not trembling, you see me looking you in your eyes and straight, not blushing, not changing color, not ashamed or in fear."

At another time, speaking for Sacco and himself, Vanzetti said:

If it had not been for these things, I might have lived out my life talking at street corners to scolding men. I might have died, unmarked, unknown, a failure. Now we are not a failure. This is our career and our triumph. Never in our full life could we hope to do such work for tolerance, for justice, for man's understanding of man as now we do by accident. Our words—our lives—our pains—nothing! The taking of our lives—lives of a good shoemaker and a poor fish-peddler—all! That last moment belongs to us—that agony is our triumph.

Man *in extremis*—in apprehension, how like a god! Why should the nobility of human beings make its deepest impression upon us just before we put them to death? What sort of lesson is there in this?

Possibly, the answer is that the moral apathy of the great mass of mankind must gain a balance, somehow. It is a kind of humanistic vicarious atonement. Were it not for these martyrs, we should forget how to be human at all. There is something to be said about a culture which imposes martyrdom on its dissenters in the name of order. Such a culture has no internal discipline for the purposes of precipitating the qualities of inward dignity and moral strength. It knows no means of producing genuine individuals—people in whom the moral tensions have been brought to self-conscious awareness. We are like a great herd of sub-humans,

getting our morality, our nobility, even our criminality, vicariously.

A certain noticeable temper of the mind and the feelings must exist for human dignity to manifest in individuals, independent of the pressures of circumstances and the crimes of man against man. A rare species of imagination is necessary for a man to create the form and substance of the Promethean life, when there is no Zeus to pursue and persecute him. The great writer, perhaps, is a type of the Promethean spirit. Melville's *Moby Dick* somehow contains the drama of a man's urge to find nobility. Melville took the arduous and bloody trade of whaling and made it into an awful drama of a man's soul. It happens to be a drama of failure—of a man consumed by his evil genius. But what we have to learn is that there is no hope of human dignity without the presence, somewhere, of the makings of awful drama in a man's life. The inability to recognize this profound reality of human existence is the great and fatal weakness of all secularist philosophies. If there is no drama in a man's life as he finds it, the man of dignity seeks it out. The tensions of moral perception demand this quest. The design of human life finds its archetypal expression in the lives of saviors, great prophets, and reformers. Jesus had his hours of reckoning with fate in the Garden of Gethsemane, Buddha his ordeal with Mara under the Bo Tree.

If we take Buddha as the ideal type of mankind—and there are many reasons for doing so—we may say that his life is distinguished by the fact that the experiences which are pressed upon other men by circumstances, he created for himself. There is a sense in which his career was entirely subjective, that is, a work of his imagination. It is true that he found the raw materials of his life in the world about him, but the same raw materials are available to every man. The point we are trying to make is that, whatever circumstances might do to a man, Buddha recreated that situation inwardly, in his effort to understand. His life began in utter neutrality—in a carefully planned material utopia by means of which his kingly father hoped to fend off the self-sacrificing destiny prophesied for the Prince Siddhartha. The youth's environment was a cunning

creation, wholly devoid of tensions. But the young prince frustrated his father's intent. He went the full circle of human experience, to the very end, which was, for him, enlightenment.

To read Abramowitz' *Great Prisoners* through is to reach a kind of dead end of disgust for organized human society. The pattern is always the same. The quality of moral greatness is accursed among "respectable" people. They fear it, hide from it, and punish it severely whenever they are able. Moral greatness is honored only after it has been denatured, dehorned. That pillar of society, Judge Webster Thayer, was heard to say, during the festivities of a football game, "Did you see what I did to those anarchistic bastards the other day?" He spoke of Sacco and Vanzetti.

For several generations, men who believed in freedom thought they could design the kind of a society in which there would be no Judge Thayers. Yet when Emma Goldman asked Lenin to release the anarchists he was keeping in Soviet prisons, he said they were "bandits," not revolutionaries. There is no system by which it is possible to guarantee human dignity. There is no politics of the awakening to individual responsibility. You cannot define the good life for human beings in mass or collectivist terms. As Halbert Dunn suggested: "The principle of individual liberty," says the Marxist, "prevents the solution of the problems of society." Turned about, this is the same as saying: "The solution of the problems of society abolishes the dignity of man." The Marxists execute this design deliberately, while the acquisitive societies founded upon "Competition" accomplish the same thing by a casual erosion, wearing away the dignity of man between the upper and the nether millstones of industry and by the abrasive arts of distribution.

We cannot change this situation by purging our societies of the Judge Thayers and others of his persuasion. There are too many of them. And there are too many who would be the same, if raised to a position of power or authority. It is obvious that these people don't know any better. It is obvious that their lives are impoverished of any idealism, any conception of private, individual responsibility, and that they are incapable of honoring these qualities in

others. No one ever told them anything about the dignity of man, or how it manifests. Consequently, they take pride, like Judge Thayer, instead of shame, in what they do.

This is a commentary upon culture, not upon a certain number—although a very large number—of individuals. It is a commentary on education and on parents—on all of us. The elements of moral struggle are in every man, but our culture tells us nothing about that. A man becomes a full human being only by precipitating into his life the crisis of a moral struggle peculiar to his own character, his own endowments and vision. Our culture tells us nothing about that. There are those, of course, who manage to find the substance of a real life without any help from the culture. But these are extraordinary people, and they are very few. A *pattern* of culture which invites everyone to seek his own moral awakening is what is needed, and this is precisely what we have not got. A perception of this emptiness, of the sterile indifference to the moral life, is revealed in the current and somewhat noisy resistance to "conformity," but nonconformity is easily turned into a superficial rebellion. Conformity is bad only as it discourages moral awakening. It may be extremely useful in other ways.

It becomes obvious that in this problem we have the explanation of the beginnings of all the aristocratic tyrannies of history. An attempt is made to direct human beings into channels of activity which suit the moral awareness of the individuals involved. The idea was that moral attitudes appropriate to each were defined in the duties of caste or class. Virtue was the virtue of a particular group. As a matter of fact, it is almost impossible to avoid a system of this sort, so long as the problems of human beings are conceived at a *social* level. Even the Russian revolution, which sought an ultimate levelling of class, produced the elite of the Bolsheviki, which later degenerated into the Party bureaucracy. The endeavor to deal with human differences in moral awareness as a social reality invariably produces some kind of caste system. The only reason why it has not done so, in formal terms, in the United States, is that the political system of this country has made the ignoring of human

differences into a principle and has exploited this principle with slogans and propaganda. This is better, perhaps, than encrusting the differences with official status, which leads to rapid corruption, but it leaves great abysses in the understanding of what is necessary for the good society.

So far as the devices of men are concerned, there are only two means of affecting the behavior of people: Compulsory regulation and education. To maintain society as a going concern, compulsory regulation must take on all the failures of education. Increasing regulation by the government, therefore, is likely to be evidence of the failure of education.

Education, however, means much more than what happens in the schools and colleges of the nation. Education includes both the institutional and the non-institutional nurture of the young.

It begins, of course, in the family. Children are sensitive to the moral perceptions of their parents. When parents make no effort to elicit the moral issues which life affords to them, the children grow up in an atmosphere of indifference to the moral struggle: "Morality," for these children, is little more than an imitation of the current version of "respectability." This is the way we produce General Francos and Judge Thayers. Such people never even break the skin of the fruit of the tree of good and evil.

It is difficult to illustrate a discussion of this sort. It is difficult for the reason that the "good" illustrations are all familiar, and the familiar illustrations have become a part of the stage-settings of some system of conventional morality. The point is, there ought to be no system of conventional morality at all, but only people who are striving to awaken moral perception in themselves. There are many values, of course, in convention and custom. They reflect a consensus of moral perception, but they cannot embody the living reality of a moral life. The living reality of a moral life lies in immediate perception of the good. Custom is a form of imitation. It borrows the moral perception of the past. We do not need to abandon either custom or convention, but only the pretense or delusion that men are moral through the observance of custom and convention.

The ideal "social" situation for fostering human dignity is the opposite of the social situation in which Socrates drank the hemlock and in which Sacco and Vanzetti were electrocuted. The ideal social situation can hardly resemble a situation which tends to make us recognize human dignity only when it is about to be martyred by a brutish population filled with the self-righteousness of its conventions and customs. The ideal social situation hardly exists even in literature. But if we take the Buddha as an example of a man who came to full human dignity, we may say that the ideal social situation would be that in which individuals are encouraged to find the elements of the moral struggle in their own lives. How do you create such a social situation?

Manifestly, this is not a political problem, involving the uses of compulsory regulation. The techniques of compulsory regulation are the enemy of moral awakening. They have a role in human society only after moral awakening has failed. Moral awakening is an educational problem. But what sort of educational problem? It is an educational problem only in the sense that it begins as a philosophical problem, and after that becomes an educational problem.

The preservation of human dignity rests upon deepening realization of the meaning of human life. We have not had much serious consideration of the meaning of human life, for a long time, in the United States. Actually, the major portion of our national energies has for years been devoted to learning how to destroy human life. Awareness of the elements of human dignity cannot survive in such an atmosphere.

Periodically, when the loss of respect for human dignity becomes extreme in a society, revolution takes place. Revolution, in our experience, is a response to an extreme situation. It was so with the French Revolution, and so with the Russian Revolution—less so, perhaps, with the American Revolution. The American Revolution was more of a deliberate undertaking by men of inherent dignity than a wild outbreak of outraged human nature.

But it is always a defense of human dignity which brings on revolution. Revolution attempts to erase the infamy of a particular form of oppression of

man. It assumes that when the oppression is ended, dignity will appear. This assumption creates the conventional morality of the new society. The assumptions of the Communist revolution are well known; they are recorded in the Communist Manifesto of 1848 and in numerous other documents. But the dignity of man, alas, did not appear, after the Communist Revolution; or if it appeared, it did not long remain. Instead, it suffered new oppressions.

This cycle suggests that some fundamental misconception of man's nature—of the meaning of his life—has been at work in the revolutionary movements of Western history. At any rate, the assumption that the conflict through which the dignity of man emerges is the struggle for economic equality appears to have been a false assumption. Men seem quite able to be without dignity under conditions of relative economic equality. Men whose material welfare is carefully guarded by social legislation do not seem to understand that the time has come, according to the theory, to cease from all contemptible behavior.

The dignity of man, like the dove of peace, has flown to other quarters. Meanwhile we are confined in our thinking to the conventions established by the revolutions of the past. We dislike the idea that the dignity of man rests upon subjective considerations. The man of action does not see what he can do about changing subjective considerations. He wants to get on with the campaign. He wants to win the war or the election. He wants to fight for the right in terms that he can understand and explain to others.

But for each individual man, the dignity of man is a private affair. It is something each one must forge for himself. We see this, now, as we could not have seen it in 1776, or 1848, or 1918. We see it because the forces of oppression have changed in character and origin. For the first time in history—the first time on a mass scale—we have opportunity to see that we are oppressed by ourselves. We do violence to our dignity, ourselves.

The conventional expressions of dignity, based upon past religions, past revolutions, no longer satisfy. They do not reveal the meaning of our lives.

They do not restrain us from evil behavior—preparing to blow the world apart with nuclear war heads *is* evil behavior; the fact that we feel constrained to do this by the like preparations pursued by other people does not make the behavior good, but only shows that the evil is global, not local.

Surely, we should be able to see that the habit of looking for the dignity of man in external arrangements of a certain sort is a delusion common to all mankind, in this epoch of history. Surely, we can grasp that we are united by our common delusions as much as by anything else—that is, they show that we are all working out the same, fundamental human problems.

In the past, we have fought for human dignity by trying to take control of history. But now we are obliged to admit that we cannot control history without learning to control our own lives, and that we cannot control our own lives without understanding them. The promise of this recognition may be the beginning of an entirely new epoch of history—a history in which circumstances and events exercise a new kind of constraint, the constraint to self-understanding.

REVIEW

"THE ART OF LOVING"

The awareness of human separation, without reunion by love—is the source of shame. It is at the same time the source of guilt and anxiety. The deepest need of man, then, is the need to overcome his separateness, to leave the prison of his aloneness. The *absolute* failure to achieve this aim means insanity, because the panic of complete isolation can be overcome only by such a radical withdrawal from the world outside that the feeling of separation disappears—because the world outside, from which one is separated, has disappeared.

—ERICH FROMM

ERICH FROMM'S book of this title, published by Harper in the World Perspectives series, is a recapitulation of themes from past works and an extension of their meaning. To choose such a title, we imagine, requires something akin to courage, for these words easily conjure up the how-to-make-yourself-and-your-wife-happy productions of second-rate, commercially-minded authors. But the subject itself is hardly superficial. As Dr. Fromm points out, the largest meaning of the word love includes all concepts of universal brotherhood, all rewarding parent-child relationships, and all enduring unions between man and woman.

In her introduction to *The Art of Loving*, Ruth Nanda Anshen indicates the context into which Dr. Fromm's contribution fits:

An important effort of this Series is to re-examine the contradictory meanings and applications which are given today no such terms as democracy, freedom, justice, love, peace, brotherhood and God. The purpose of such inquiries is to clear the way for the foundation of a genuine *world* history not in terms of nation or race or culture but in terms of man in relation to God, to himself, his fellow man and the universe that reach beyond immediate self-interest. For the meaning of the World Age consists in respecting man's hopes and dreams which lead to a deeper understanding of the basic values of all peoples.

Dr. Fromm's foreword suggests that loving, in its most meaningful sense, can only be an

expression of the total person—that it is an "art," not in the sense of technique, but in the sense that all great art must pass beyond technique to spontaneous expression. Dr. Fromm writes:

The reading of this book would be a disappointing experience for anyone who expects easy instruction in the art of loving. This book, on the contrary, wants to show that love is not a sentiment which can be easily indulged in by anyone, regardless of the level of maturity reached by him. It wants to convince the reader that all his attempts for love are bound to fail, unless he tries most actively to develop his total personality, so as to achieve a productive orientation, that satisfaction in individual love cannot be attained without the capacity to love one's neighbor, without true humility, courage, faith and discipline. In a culture in which these qualities are rare, the attainment of the capacity to love must remain a rare achievement.

Dr. Fromm can hardly be classified solely as a psychologist or a psychoanalyst, for specialists in these fields are often something less than philosophers. Taking his text from Paracelsus, he also suggests that knowledge, in the sense of comprehensive understanding, is one of the requisites of love. Paracelsus wrote that "he who knows nothing, loves nothing. He who can do nothing understands nothing. He who understands nothing is worthless. But he who understands also loves, notices, sees . . . The more knowledge is inherent in a thing, the greater the love."

The man who seeks comprehensive understanding—the philosopher, in short—has to be courageous in several ways; he cannot conduct a searching inquiry into truth and please everyone; so, just as Dr. Fromm displeased some psychiatrists and a great many more religionists with his *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, in discussing "the art of loving," he challenges the crude Hebraic-Christian notion that God is some sort of powerful being. For the idea of such a being, no matter what the attributes claimed for him, opposes the intellectual and spiritual maturity requisite to the capacity for great love. Just as the child must grow away from utter dependence

upon the mother, and beyond the stage of placing his chief faith in the father, so is it necessary for the religious consciousness to grow to the point where God is seen to be *in man*—and the term God understood as purely symbolic. The child "in the stage of full maturity has freed himself from the person of mother and of father as protecting and commanding powers; he has established the motherly and fatherly principles in himself. He has become his own father and mother; he is father and mother. In the history of the human race we see—and can anticipate the same development: from the beginning of the love for God as the helpless attachment to a mother Goddess, through the obedient attachment to a fatherly God, to a mature stage where God ceases to be an outside power, where man has incorporated the principles of love and justice into himself, where he has become one with God, and eventually, to a point where he speaks of God only in a poetic, symbolic sense."

It would be possible to do a full review of each of Dr. Fromm's chapters in this provocative volume. And it is impossible, here, to focus upon any particular emphasis without neglecting others in the space of a single review. But, a last mention: One encounters, in the latter portion of Fromm's discussion of "The Theory of Love," a rephrasing of a distinction once made by Karen Horney. For the assumption that *selfishness* and *self-love* are identical needs questioning. As Dr. Fromm says:

That assumption is the very fallacy which has led to so many mistaken conclusions concerning our problem. *Selfishness and self-love, far from being identical, are actually opposites.* The selfish person does not love himself too much but too little; in fact he hates himself. This lack of fondness and care for himself, which is only one expression of his lack of productiveness, leaves him empty and frustrated. He is necessarily unhappy and anxiously concerned to snatch from life the satisfactions which he blocks himself from attaining. He seems to care too much for himself, but actually he only makes an unsuccessful attempt to cover up and compensate for his failure to care for his real self. Freud holds that the selfish person is narcissistic, as if he had

withdrawn his love from others and turned it toward his own person. *It is true that selfish persons are incapable of loving others, but they are not capable of loving themselves either.*

In extension of his thoughts in *The Sane Society*, Dr. Fromm points out the distinction between the pseudo-identity attained by "sameness" in a routinized society and the sense of "oneness" which betokens man's respect for man, in terms of the unique qualities of the individual soul. To believe that "sameness" is a step on the road to psychological security is delusive. Standardization leads away from discovery of individuality, from that kind of "self-love" (or self-respect) which makes it possible for men to value one another.

The Art of Loving would, we think, make an excellent text for a college course in ethics. Dr. Fromm provides helpful leads to other readings and for discussion.

COMMENTARY IRISH IRONY

WITH no more excuse than that it turned up on one of the pages of *The Great Prisoners* when the quotations for this week's lead article were being extracted, we reproduce from John Mitchel's *Jail Journal* the following account of religion as practiced by the British a century ago:

Through all our nineteenth-century British literature there runs a tone of polite, though distant recognition of Almighty God, as one of the Great Powers; and though not resident is actually maintained at His Court. Yet British civilization gives Him assurance of friendly relations, and "our venerable Church," and our "beautiful liturgy," are relied upon as a sort of diplomatic Concordat or Pragmatic Sanction, whereby we, occupied as we are, in grave commercial and political pursuits, carrying on our business, selling our cotton, and civilizing our heathen—bind ourselves, *to let Him alone, if He lets us alone*—if He will keep looking apart, contemplating the illustrious mare-milkers, and blameless Ethiopians, and never-minding us, we will keep up a most respectable Church for Him, and make our lower orders venerate it, and pay for it handsomely, and we will suffer no national infidelity, like the horrid French.

One of the leaders of Ireland's abortive Revolution of 1848, Mitchel was taken by the British, loaded with chains and shipped off to Bermuda "as a convicted felon." He wrote his *Jail Journal* in a cell deep in the hold of the prison ship, producing what Abramowitz calls "one of those badly neglected books which can do with fewer epithets and more readers." To keep the record straight, we should add that Mitchel's love of freedom for the Irish did not extend to other races, since, after he escaped to the United States, he settled in the South and "gave the lives of two sons to the cause of slavery and the Confederacy." Slavery, he said, was unpalatable only to humanitarians and universalists!

But here was a man who entirely grasped the temper of orthodox religion in England. Fortunately, such perceptions have not been limited to Irishmen. R. H. Tawney has a delightful

note in *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* on the eminent Victorian gentleman who exploded: "Things have come to a pretty pass if religion is going to interfere with private life!"

In behalf of the British, it must be admitted that there is a certain *style* to their Concordat with God. And if an Irishman or anyone else succeeds in making them appear ridiculous, they do not suffer pique or exhibit furious embarrassment. You can say almost anything you like about the British, and enjoy the respect, even the approbation, of intelligent Britishers, if what you say makes sense.

The value of this writing by Mitchel is that it gives unmistakable shape to the orthodoxies of all the world—religion adapted to serve the purposes of business, class, the stability of the social order, and the self-interest of the elite. This is the sort of religion encountered by Reginald Reynolds in "Christians of impeccable respectability" (see *Frontiers*).

The institutions of a settled and in a sense "mature" society tend to practice these outrageous hypocrisies with an appalling calm, simply because no one is personally answerable for them, and everyone who wishes can borrow their sheltering indifference to the plain moral responsibilities of the day. Nehru put it well in the letter quoted in last week's *MANAS*: "Religion, as practiced, deals with matters rather unrelated to our normal lives, and thus adopts an ivory-tower attitude, or is allied to certain social usages which do not fit in with the present age."

An individual feels the restraint of conscience, so that he is unlikely to permit himself the gross contradictions which grow up in the matrix of institutional religion. But the opposite of conscience—the longing to shift responsibility for one's decisions to other shoulders—moves men to accept from the authority of institutions attitudes and standards which would be thought shameful without the prestige of custom, habit, and the trappings of supernaturalism, with which most orthodox religions are endowed.

Institutions are useful to the critic or reformer for the reason that they can be examined in a pitilessly impartial light without producing an uncompassionate attack on individuals. You can say of an institution what you would not wish to say of a human being, because institutions are not human beings but reflect only a part—usually the weaker part—of many human beings. People usually know better than the institutions which they allow to rule their lives. It is a service to point this out.

People are not evil, but they do fall into evil ways. A man who wants to raise the level of human life can never do it by attacking people, and he can seldom do it if he fails to attack the prevailing institutions of his time. The intentions and intelligence of a man are usually revealed by his policy in these matters.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

DOROTHY DEZOUCHE'S article, "Let Teachers *Teach*," in the September *Progressive*, should be read by everyone interested in the problems of education at elementary or high school levels. After a temporary retirement following thirty years of service in both public and private schools, Miss DeZouche returned to active teaching from a feeling of obligation; national publicity has long been given to the teacher-shortage, complete with startling facts and figures to highlight the present over-populated school situation. However, she retired for a second time after a four-months' stint, mainly because she felt that the present organization of public schools involves a teacher in so many clerical details that there is little time left for teaching.

Miss DeZouche's experience and evaluation seem worth discussion, since her dilemma may be held to be characteristic of American education and American culture in general. The trend towards scientific education—like the trend toward accepting "science" as arbiter in so many social and interpersonal relations—cannot be blamed on any particular group of "educationists," certainly. Applied social science is statistical, and any conscientious administrator devoted to the scientific method will feel that statistical evaluation—and the collecting of the data which make it possible—is imperative. However, the teaching-learning process has little to do with objective analysis.

Miss DeZouche begins by describing the multitude of chores the American teacher is asked to perform. Funds are to be collected—locker fees, fees for school photographs, fees for lost or damaged books. Permits are to be issued—to the library, nurse's office or counselor's office—and endless running reports on health data must be kept up to date, requisitions prepared for audio and visual aids, art supplies, etc., directives read and noted, and at least some of all this work must

take place during school hours. Miss DeZouche writes:

In a few weeks I was sorting questionnaires and alphabetizing lists and counting money as rapidly as my more accomplished colleagues. I was recording data and filing facts with a speed that astonished me. I was turning in reports, stacks of them, on time, along with my more gifted friends. I was getting so efficient that I scared myself.

But Success did me in.

I knew, after the first weeks, that I could master the rituals sacred to Big Schools. But in my heart I repudiated them. To be able to distribute and collect with aplomb and to keep accounts tidy did not give me the satisfaction that had made teaching a good profession. My conscience was uneasy. It seemed to me that teachers should teach, and that glorified babysitting in the classroom constituted dishonesty. Lip-service to the importance of education, the sacredness of personality, the uniqueness of the individual, made me uncomfortable when I saw those utterances persistently betrayed by a more dominating concern: clerical duties. I should have felt more honest if we had talked about the sacredness of the filing system and the uniqueness of the printed report.

Miss DeZouche had no quarrel with the administrative personnel of her school. Her room was pleasant, she had what she considered to be a good salary, and a principal who was most friendly and cooperative; yet she simply could not discover how to save her time for the children. She might have kept on trying, but the writing of so challenging an article as "Let Teachers *Teach*" may be a greater service. She says:

The immediate waste of teaching time is not the only consequence. There is the danger, a subtle one, that after a few years, or even months, the real purpose of teaching begins to fade in teachers' minds. They may find in these tasks a certain escape from the ardors of teaching, the rigorous exactions of working with human material. It is easier to write out neat lists than it is to teach. Teachers may find themselves devising work to keep children busy, planning assignments for ease of checkability without regard to the larger needs of the pupils, to the essential rightness of the lesson. They may come to believe that the more efficiently they turn in financial reports, the better teachers they are. Administrators, selecting teachers on that basis (since "the office must

run smoothly"), may unwittingly create a new species of teacher, those with a talent for bookkeeping but none for the art of teaching. Our schools may come to be staffed by people who like figures and filing jobs more than they like children. Efficiency may, indeed if it not already has, become strangely synonymous with competence. The terms are not synonymous and to confuse them constitutes a danger to education. Schools are not big business. They are not factories. They are not offices. They should not be operated according to the methods of any of them. Schools are unique institutions, meant to perform a unique service, comparable to no other. If not permitted to do so, they may end by performing none at all. If the school becomes the convenient means for taking surveys, completing questionnaires, and collecting funds, it will do so at the expense of education.

An article in *Education Summary* for Sept. 12, by Dr. C. J. Ducasse, past president of the American Philosophical Association, approaches similar questions from the standpoint of philosophy. Writing on "Sanity in Education," Dr. Ducasse points out why education must fail if critical thinking is not engendered:

The physical apparatus of education need not be luxurious, but only functional. The outstandingly important item of educational equipment is the teacher. Health and sanity in education will not be brought about by crash programs of science courses nor, magically, by more money for more elegant schools with larger athletic stadia. Significant educational reform can result only from prior thorough-going reflection on the grounds of man's needs for education; on the several directions in which his complex nature requires that his education shall proceed; on the educational goals it is wise for educators, or for individuals, in their own cases, to strive for; and on the solid empirical facts in each case which must be taken into account if educational decisions are to be wise.

The education man needs is not education only of the intellectual, cognitive powers. He needs also physical education, moral education, education in the aesthetic and vocational arts, education in social dexterity and spiritual—or, if you will—religious education. For man is complex and so is his environment. He does indeed, as so emphasized in these days of conformity, need to learn to adjust himself to his environment; yet, he is most typically man, rather than animal, when he adjusts his environment to his ideas of what it should be—when

he makes history whether in the large or the small, and not merely adjusts himself to his epoch and place.

We take it that what Miss DeZouche rebels against is the descent upon the school of a world-wide cultural situation. This cultural dilemma is discussed perceptively by Joseph Wood Krutch in his *The Measure of Man*. In his closing chapter, Krutch considers the direction in which the society of man may be heading—toward a duplication of the unimaginative efficiency of "the world of ants." Krutch writes:

It would seem that the ultimate condition to which evolution tends is that of a dull and even hideous efficiency. And if to some it seems that human society is tending in that direction, then it is not really fantastic to suggest that the cases are parallel {those of ants and men} and that the few thousand years which are to us the history of human civilization actually constitute no more than a brief interlude of inefficiency which intrude between the time when the nervous system of the human animal reached a certain unprecedented degree of complexity and the time—now approaching—when that complexity will achieve a more stable organization and all the phenomena associated with what we call civilization will disappear.

If the true situation is anything like that, then the disappearance of man's belief in his own autonomy will signalize a decisive crisis in the course of evolution.

The whole future of mankind may well depend not only on the question whether man is entirely or only in part the product of conditionings, but also on the extent to which he is treated as though he were.

FRONTIERS

All Things Common

(ACTS II, 44 AND IV, 32)

YEARS ago, when I had more time for arguments, I used to get involved periodically in that discussion about primitive Christianity and communism—the discussion in which, sooner or later, somebody says that the early Christians are disqualified as communists because they were waiting for the End of the World, anyway.

Curiously enough, it wasn't the local Marxist who wanted to disqualify the early Christians. He was quite willing to give them party cards. The man who got hot under the collar at the thought of early Christian communism was always a latter-day Christian of impeccable respectability, who had been re-assured by a theologian about those awkward passages in the Acts of the Apostles.

One was assured that—according to theologians of repute and the best New Testament scholars—the early Christians could be exonerated. They were victims of an understandable and pardonable error, because they believed that the Second Coming was due, in a spectacular manner, at any moment. Had they known that they were mistaken about the time table they would not—so the argument goes—have been so foolish and unworldly as to share out their property, the rich making a common pool with the poor. They would have been piling up treasure for moth and rust.

This argument so impressed me—for it was put by people of much greater knowledge than I possessed at the time—or since, come to think of it—that I came to accept it, reluctantly, though I had a sneaking wish that it could be disproved. It seemed that, after all, the early Christians were under a compact (based upon an illusion) to love each other in a practical way because nobody thought they would have to keep it up very long. It was like a premature deathbed repentance, which one may regret if he finds that, after all, he is not dying and has more years for doing ill.

So the Best Authorities, to my bitter disillusionment, went on to explain that (when the End of the World never came) Christians in time decided that they had started loving their neighbours altogether too precipitately. They reverted to private property and, in succeeding generations, played an important part in the structure of feudalism, capitalism, empire building and other profitable enterprises.

I find this such a dismal view of Christian history that—in spite of the factual armoury with which orthodoxy is supplied—I try to escape from its implications. One way is to consider a long succession of heresies of which there were always some which harked back to the Golden Age of the Apostles. The difficulty of this approach is, of course, that it implies a March of Time in which the regiment was invariably out of step. Well, I say, what about it? When the Christian era began, the regiment consisted of Orthodox Jews, and later of Graeco-Roman pagans. And the first Christians certainly had the impudence to suggest that these solid bodies of law-abiding citizens were out of step. Their own society was theocratic and claimed its marching orders from Christ.

The end of the world and the Second Coming still raise some difficulties, and all the more so because the Second Coming appears to have taken place at Pentecost; and no early Christian, surely, doubted the living presence of Christ in his Church. Has that belief changed? Not in theory. All that changed was the belief in the nearness of the end of the world. But today, with the prospect of the world ending any time, there has been no attempt to revert to the Christian communism of the first century, and this I find curious. If the scholars were right in attributing Christian Communism to a mistaken form of spiritual insurance, why is the stock market so busy today? Does the same cause no longer produce the same effect?

"If yuh ain't got education yuh sure have to use your brains." It is a terrible thing to disagree

with scholars about their own subject, but I think there must have been a mistake somewhere. I begin to think that the early Christians were communists *not* because they were packing up for the end of the world, but (quite irrespective of their opinions about that) simply because the Second Coming, for them, *had already taken place*. They may have been, and probably were, "other worldly"—but it is quite certain that the experience of Christ had made them *un-worldly*. A belief in the imminence of the "end of the world" will never make people good. It can, however, frighten them into not thinking about it—which is the position today, and one reason for the difficulty of persuading people to face certain stark realities. But a consciousness of the living Christ would change not only individual lives—it would re-mould the whole social pattern, as it did in the Christian groups of the first century.

So if we really want people to live better lives it is no good telling them—either as a threat or a promise—that the end of the world is coming, because that is one of the things they are determined not to think about. People have always known that they must die some day, but the thought has had little influence on behaviour—partly because it is kept out of mind most of the time. But those who have found something to live *for* and live *by* are the really creative people. I don't mean that they just have a "change of heart." That is good, but not enough. Some American once said, "A change of heart is no more redemption than hunger is dinner." The hunger of the early Christians was satisfied because they not only found new values (something to live *for*) but new power (something to live *by*).

The meaning of the Second Coming today is not the catastrophic picture given in Revelations. It is not the sequel to Armageddon but the alternative. And the thing we need to find out about those early Christians is not what scared them into being temporarily good, for fear never made *anybody* good. It is the nature of a joyous

knowledge which transformed their lives, making them want to share everything they had.

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