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OUR VIRTUE HAS A LIMIT

MUCH of the serious thinking and writing being done today arises from hardly concealed ethical longing. Precipitated in part by the anxieties with which men confront the anti-human odds of preparation for nuclear war, this longing probably has its origin in long-neglected deeps of human character. Yet we are by no means sure about such feelings. Ours is an epoch of history in which the prevailing doctrine has been that human beings are more or less "neutral," in terms of moral tendency, and that "nature" provides only the raw material for cultural development. On the basis of this view, men seek rationalist solutions for human problems. By such means the "good" is identified by theoretical formulations based upon studies of human need and of the requirements of social welfare. Social intelligence is held to be the highest court of appeal.

But if the products of social intelligence prove unsatisfactory, certain decisions have to be made. What if the big ideological debate is proceeding in neglect of certain self-existent human realities that ought to have absolute priority in making definitions of human good?

Now the effect of asking this question varies, often greatly, according to factors which play a part in shaping the human condition at a particular moment of history. We have put it abstractly, but by changing the words we could make the question either a "challenge" issued by spokesmen for religion, a scientific indictment of theoretical disdain for empirically assembled "facts," a call to Revolution, or, finally, an ardent Humanist manifesto.

Depending upon the temper of the age, and the way you ask the question, you may get carried off by the Inquisition, be arrested by the Secret Police, or given the Nobel Prize and have your manuscript accepted by Doubleday. Or people may simply ignore you.

Obviously, the truth-content suggested by your question is only one of the issues involved. There is the *relevance* of its truth-content to be weighed; and also the matter of its implications for both the political and the psychological status quo. Will anyone's ox be gored?

What we are trying to get at, here, is the possibility of a "truth" which in itself touches at least by implication all these subordinate but crucially important modifying issues.

We need of course a preliminary skirmish—a kind of apology, perhaps—in behalf of the free employment of a word like "truth." Our age is only now becoming accustomed to the return to value-charged terms. In defense, then, of talking about truth we propose that men always use this word, or a word of similar meaning, when they try to do primary thinking. For human beings, truth is a life-or-death word. Its use can be justified only in terms of an underived or self-existent human value. Hunger for truth, whatever it is, is given in experience as a prime quality of the nature of man. It is at once the condition, the *raison d'être*, and the *sine qua non of* all rational discourse. To object to it is simply silly. What is not silly is to seek explanation for the reluctance of many men to use the word, since this reluctance is apparently an undergirding of its meaning. Truth, as an openly proclaimed human end, has been unpopular mainly because getting it is arduous, often painful, and surrounded by error and deception. A large part of the apparatus of scientific method has been developed to reduce these hazards by limiting the objective, and to protect human beings from their susceptibility to fraud.

It is probably correct to say that the worst deceptions suffered by mankind have been

religious deceptions. Religious truth is upper case Truth—life-or-death, damnation-or-salvation Truth. If a fearful or insecure man believes you possess this kind of certainty, and might be persuaded to share it with him, he will do practically anything for you. He may even give you his human dignity as a seeker after truth. He takes the ticket to paradise and accepts damnation as a man, but he tells his friends he has the best of both worlds.

Now the champions of science—or the angry reformers who thought they could use science to put things right—decided to outlaw religious truth—that is, the life-or-death element in it—by branding it as totally unreal. You might say that the reformers got carried away and decided also to get rid of all feeling-charged words as sources of possible infection. They pursued their campaign with high missionary zeal and in the process developed a lot of modestly neutral terms to hide their enthusiasm, or to show it in ostensibly unemotional forms. In time we accumulated a lot of this-world values which were the fruit of the exercise of the scientific and scientific-social intelligence, but we seldom called them "truths." Here, the important thing to recognize is that the ideas about these values have operated in human decision in the same way as the ideas men used to call truths. The entire vocabulary of modern social and intellectual responsibility grew as an act of devotion to these ideas. If you honored them, you didn't even say "man," you said "organism," which was a sign that you weren't going to let any bad habits corrupt your thought-processes. Well, we got all these pennants flying, as busy as Tibetan prayer wheels, and turned over to our social intelligence the originally given, malleable, morally neutral stuff of human nature to work on for the common good.

The results, as we look at them today, are bewilderingly mixed. The experiment was of course about as far as you can get from an undertaking pursued under controlled conditions. You just can't kill all the *kulaks;* there are too many of them. Politicians and Conservatives don't convert to your methodology, and common folk have gone to the ball game. Too many people are still flying the old flags. So, if you argue that social intelligence working with neutral human stuff has not really had a fair chance, you can't be proved wrong. But meanwhile it *can* be shown that a lot of thoughtful people are tiring of the whole proposition. They tell you not to be so stubborn as to fail to take account of the fact that the human situation does not allow nice, sterile, controlled conditions for experiment with human beings. The human situation, they are beginning to say, bears a closer resemblance to a Greek drama than to a scientific laboratory. You want to be scientific, admit that! And if you claim that all the facts aren't in, they say *Pooh.*

Let us look briefly at another set of problems—those associated with the emergence of the enormous, and enormously powerful, nation-state. Being concerned with the good of man, our look at political forms should be in terms of this ideal, the going formulation of which was originated in the eighteenth century. The most important thing about this statement of ideal human good was its concern with the rights of *all* men. The Constitution of the United States did not attempt to set Americans above other men, it did not declare them different and a better breed. The liberties and rights it proposed to secure for the citizens of the United States were said to belong to them because they were *men,* not because of where they lived, or because of their heredity.

It was for this reason that the American Revolution had so many friends in Europe. It was for this reason that Thomas Paine and some others went to France to do what they could to help with her Revolution, after American independence had been won. There were of course a lot of other motives at work in the eighteenth-century revolution; every popular movement involves a partly contradictory mixture of human hopes and intentions, but it does no violence to historical fact

to point out that the promise of individual freedom gave the common people a vision and a reason for devotion and sacrifice that they had not had before—an opportunity to become participating subjects in their own social order; and while the Americans may have enjoyed this kind of life in practice—which made them determine to keep it—the Constitution provided their *de facto* freedom with the *de jure* sanction of a social compact.

Looking back to that day from this, there is a sense in which the mood of Americans has changed from feeling like sowers to feeling like reapers. We are not really doing great things any more; rather we are the people who have *done* them. We are the righteous inheritors, no more the daring creators and innovators. Our freedom, like so many of the goods in our lives, is thought of as some kind of commodity which we uniquely produce, with special value because *we* produce it by a capacity which is our birthright.

Now commodities, unlike the goods of the spirit, are diminished by being shared. So it is that we fear for our standard of living when overseas competitors reach out for markets with low prices that undersell American manufacturers. Our freedom, by which we mean our prosperity, is threatened by people who can make goods and sell them on the world market more cheaply than we can. We are troubled, also, by the unprejudiced eye turned by the leaders of the underdeveloped nations toward theories of political economy which do not closely resemble our own. That formerly tribal societies, or tribal societies daring to experiment with new social structures, have not the same attitude as we do toward having and holding private property is disturbing, and we say these people have not been raised, as we have, in the atmosphere of freedom. In consequence of such discouraging trends, Americans are coming to feel isolated in a world of stubbornly "un-American" people, instead of enjoying their old status of free pioneers in a world of men who are all potentially free.

In *Etc.* for September, Anatol Rapoport examines a question bearing on this development:

> . . . how many of us ask what it would mean to "win the Cold War"? Would it mean to cow the communists into submission so that they stay forever within their pale, without voice or influence in the rest of the world? Would it mean to convert the communists into Republicans and Democrats into Christians and Jews, into martini drinkers and golfers? Would it mean turning the world into an extended U.S.A.—something of the sort Elmer Gantry's mother wished when she said she wished the entire United States would be a pleasing semblance of Kansas?

Mr. Rapoport has another passage which sketches the transition of American attitudes from the early days of the Republic to the prevailing mood of the present:

> Much as the word has been abused, there is such a thing as Americanism, and it stems from an idea which was revolutionary in its time, namely, the idea of natural rights. According to this idea there exists an entity called the individual. Of this entity, Rousseau noted that although man is born free, he is everywhere in chains.
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> The implication was from Rousseau's point of view—that man loses his god-given liberty because of "unnatural"—and therefore bad—social arrangements. The cure for this evil, then, appears to be the destruction of the social arrangements which have enslaved man. What then? Can man live without social arrangements? Obviously not. But man can see to it—Rousseau thought and later Jefferson also thought—that the social arrangements are agreements, freely entered into by free individuals. In this way a good society is viewed as a loose federation of autonomous, and, in principle, self-sufficient individuals, who have established ties with each other to facilitate their individual "pursuit of happiness."
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> It is a beautiful idea and fits beautifully in a society of farmers who are owners of mortgage-free farms. We are no longer a society of farmers. But the original idea still persists with us as a central core—understandably so, because it was so powerfully reinforced by our historical experience. Not only did we start as a nation of farmers, but also as a nation of pioneers. The conquest of the frontier required just such self-reliant individuals who believed it was time to move on when one saw the

> smoke from the neighbor's chimney. Then came industrialization and the age of invention, and the idea still worked. Initiative, ingenuity, organizational talent, ruthlessness—all of these qualities made for success in the rapidly expanding industrial economy.
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> Coupled with class mobility, individual business success and its concomitant growth of productivity seemed the answer to the age-old question: How can man live in society and still be happy? This answer is found on every page of the *Reader's Digest.*
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> To be happy, find some gimmick which will enable you to amass wealth, or influence, or the admiration of others who aspire to do the same thing. You don't have to be rich to be happy—so much is admitted by the *Reader's Digest.* But you do have to be successful as an individual. You have to prove to yourself and to others that there was something in you which was uniquely yours and that you have nurtured it until it paid off—preferably against odds, because then you reinforce the belief in God, and also the belief that anyone can do it.
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> This is the conventional extensional meaning of democracy in the United States. Everything else is superimposed upon it: social responsibility, civic virtue, philanthropy—yes, also mutual help—the barn-raising tradition.
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> The American is far from anti-social. He would like to think of others as his Brothers. But he does believe that he becomes a person to be reckoned with by his own efforts and that this is his primary duty. And then, after this duty is taken care of, *then* he may generously give of himself to others or to society at large. In the American conception, this giving is a virtue, not a duty.

Now this is to some extent an unsympathetic report on the press releases of the American system. But it is justified by the fact that almost no Americans who stand squarely within the American tradition deny its basic contentions. And while no human being can be properly accounted for—his personal ideals and feelings about the rest of the world made clear by generalizations which expose, however accurately, only the external face of his culture—if these ideals remain personal, if his better feelings are never implemented by action, then this side of his character, like an unattended conscience, can make only a weak claim to recognition. At any given moment of history, a people may be better than the moral tone their institutions suggest, but if they do nothing to change those institutions, they can hardly remain better.

There used to be a natural sympathy in Americans for the peoples of other lands. We thought of them as wanting also to be free. We thought of ourselves as offering a proof that freedom is possible for all men.

Is this too rosy a picture? Is it altogether true? Well it is as true as Mr. Rapoport's account of our present-day state of mind. To speak thus of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in the United States is to make a *sympathetic* account of the press releases of the thinking and aspiring of our best men in those days. They were men who gave viable currency to their dream, and the dream powered a revolution. Not every farmer saw the vision, but apparently enough of them did. The first great documents of the American Republic bear internal evidence of being the work—the *accomplishment*—of high human purpose.

Why are these qualities not in the forefront of American thinking today? Why is the freedom of individuals identified in terms of behavior which conforms to undistinguished patterns? Why is thought publicly honored only when it finds comfort and grace in the fetters of convention?

If we understood the answers to these questions, we should probably know, also, why the people whose ways are different from our own, no longer seem quite human to us. We have let ourselves drift into a position in which the protection of our own interests—our "freedom," of course—requires us to view nearly everyone else in the world with rising suspicions. Threats are everywhere. Other men's ideas of freedom seem to us uninstructed and even perverse. This makes us fearful and angry. We can't any longer *afford* our old generosity. Our virtue has a limit. Even patience may be dangerous. Look at the Chinese!

One might argue, of course, that the old ways of "proving ourselves" along the lines described by Mr. Rapoport have become artificial—so heavily institutionalized and attenuated by government regulations and technological refinements that people find it hard to *feel* they are making their own way. The bumper strips you see, nowadays, saying, "Please, Mr. President, let me do it myself," may be an oblique method of revealing this mood. It is certain, at any rate, that much of the popular support that was gained by Senator Goldwater came from the honest frustration of people who long for scope for their self-reliance and who feel a vast nostalgia for a time when the human encounter with the natural environment was less complicated. It is hardly remarkable that people who want a simple life of toil and achievement, and can't find it anywhere around them, eventually get frustrated and mad. And if it seems un-American to get mad at Americans, you can always get mad at the Russians and then get mad at the Americans who seem less mad at the Russians than they ought to be.

Well, apart from the fact that being mad tends to seal people off from the persuasions and deliberations of rational discourse, there is the patent fact that most of the people in the world are less mad at the Russians than we are, making too large a total to get mad at, from any practical point of view.

You can say this to an angry man, but he doesn't hear you. This, one might argue, is now a fundamental problem of all the free men in the world. The truly free can hardly be heard.

In a situation like this, there is only one solution, and the initiative must be taken by those who are already free. Only the free are *able* to take the initiative. And if they don't or won't take it, they are not really free, but are the captives of some convention of freedom which makes them blind to the real thing.

Initiative in what? The free men must take the initiative in recognizing potentially free people behind the conventions which they mistake for freedom, or in terms of which they define the freedom they want, but haven't yet been able to get.

It is not necessary to adopt a convention in order to understand its attractions, its capacity to draw out the allegiance of other men. No man who declares he wants freedom and is determined to get it can be *entirely* deluded. Why should we be unwilling to try to see where and how he is right? A man whose rightness—and even righteousness—is partly conceded, partly understood, is a man whose humanity is admitted, and he may grow less dogmatic from finding *some* of his views respected. It is only when you tell him he is *all* wrong that in self-defense he insists upon being totally right. This is sheer common sense in human relations. A course in psychology might put it on a scientific basis, but we may not be able to wait for that.

The unfree spend most of their time working up reasons for refusing to understand other people. In practical terms—and "practical" is beginning to mean what you plan to do about people not worth understanding, such as using nuclear weapons on them—the refusal to understand others means redefining the qualifications for belonging to the human race.

It soon becomes plain why the unfree always insist that God is on their side. God is obviously required for so ambitious a program. . . . Or if not God, History, at least.

The present is a time of crisis, we are told. Angry men can now arm themselves with weapons that, if used, will probably work irreversible catastrophe. If this is so, then it is also a time for virtue without limit—the virtue of the free. Who else has sufficient virtue to attempt to understand men who are angry from frustration, or who have *been* angry for generations—almost centuries? And how else can ethical longings really be put to work?

We know a man who spends some of his time visiting the meetings of the groups classed as the

"radical right." In years past he has had some encounters with Communists. What is this man? Is he a "liberal"? Well, liberals don't usually behave that way. They understand all too well what is wrong with the radical right and the communists. They know what is politically correct. This man hasn't exactly changed his opinions; or, rather, he hasn't changed his values, nor lost any of his belief in human freedom. Actually, you could say his belief in freedom is increased by such experiences. At these meetings, he tries to start an intelligible dialogue. He has a terrible time. He doesn't succeed very often, and even when he is able to make a beginning, there is not much progress.

His main effort is to see the human beings behind the labels and understand their longings. He gets pretty discouraged, but he does see the human beings, and he does understand their longings. And he still thinks their opinions and immediate aims are dangerous to a free society.

What good is he doing?

Not much, except to give one illustration of a process that will one day become the universal pattern of human relations in a peaceful world.

REVIEW
REQUIEM FOR THE WILD BLUE YONDER

WILLIAM LUNDGREN'S *The Primary Cause* (Dell, 1964) is not an "explosive novel," nor is it much concerned with "the raw reality of life and death in the Strategic Air Command . . . a story of men and women who exist for the moment, and who forget tomorrow by indulging their most primitive hungers today," as the overworked phrases of the blurb proclaim. However, Lundgren's view of the stresses in the complicated psychological strata in Air Force personnel is certainly "challenging" and "powerful." It is not an indictment of the men or the military system, but rather a commentary on the end of an era of initiative in the air—itself representative of the general decline of individual responsibility in a society which functions by "operations."

The story begins with the assemblage of a crew to conduct a routine training flight across the United States, to the Bering Straits and return, non-stop, carrying simulated atomic warheads. The men are experienced fliers, again on a "mission," as they have been many times before under war conditions, but this one, unlike those flown over Germany or Korea, has reference-points so intangible that the crew reach unavailingly for a sense of purpose:

> And now at last this aircraft, Darby Zero Five, was in the hands of the eight men assigned to this mission and committed to its end. From one sunset through a night and a day and into another night, they would experience again all the familiar sound and motion of the past—eight men who knew these planes in the way old John Chisum once knew cows, only from having had so many of them in their hands . . . eight men whose combined ages totaled more than three hundred years, over half of those lifetimes spent in the Air Force . . . eight somewhat battered men with thousands of hours spent in planes not greatly different from this big B-52, their hours including combat time logged over Africa, Italy, France, and Germany, logged over the South Pacific and the Far East from Guadalcanal to the legendary "Hump," and from the deck of the *Hornet* or Iwo and Tarawa to the cities of Japan. And all their experience was rich with the contradictions of their time.
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> First they had known only peace, then war, then peace again from which they had gone back to war, the cycle accelerating finally into a single, contradicting blur in which they lived simultaneously in war and yet in peace. The contradictions lay in the world in which they lived and in the air through which they moved and in themselves—contradictions so ubiquitous and so accepted and long-standing that now, in the moment when their aircraft finally moved toward its takeoff position at the runway's end, they were all without knowing it as much at peace as they were still at war. All of them waited, however unconsciously, to feel with the old familiar fear and with the old elation too. . . .
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> The pilot of Darby Zero Five, one of the best, recalls the words of his best friend's wife when, the night before, she had tried to explain why the women of the Air Force base, as well as the men, no longer had the feeling of "belonging" to anything real or necessary:
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> Robbie was engrossed in remembering Tereza's words. "Now when you fly," she had said accusingly, "you fly with something that destroys the world, the place you go to and the place you leave. From ruin to ruin—" But that's the way it always was. From whatever ruin he may have helped to make for Tereza in Italy, he had come back to Eglin to find the ruin he had left behind.
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> He was back in the present but seeing it now from the distorting point of view Tereza's words and his own memory had given him. Strapped in his seat, sitting there just as he always had, he suddenly thought of the huge, massive shell around him grinding through the empty night above Tereza's world, a plane designed and built with its huge wings and massive fuselage, to carry the dead weight of nothingness to nothingness. "Now when you fly," she said, "you fly with something that destroys the world—" Barney and the others still called their weapons bombs, but Beau called them *The Way-Back Machines.* "We let one go," he'd say with that patient grin of his, "it puts us way back in the Middle Ages, man—" Tereza it seemed in that moment when Robbie remembered this, was right.

Mr. Lundgren covers the field; we turn from the commander's wife to the commander himself, Robbie's immediate superior and friend of so many

flying years. Colonel Ward will not, of course, give way to the unsettling mood of his flying officers. He must believe in the necessities of command. But there are moments, more of them lately, when even the word "command," with its suggestion of individual responsibility and initiative, brings a grimace of disgust:

> Jimmy's duties and responsibilities had changed over the last ten or fifteen years; now he was more an executive, more administrator of wing affairs than even manager. Jimmy, however, would have been the last to admit that this was so. The military word *commander* still carried in his mind some soldierly and pistoled overtones, implying certain traditional responsibilities like *discipline* or *leadership*. These words in their turn evoked the memories and articles of war, implying a more direct, a stronger relationship with his junior officers than, in fact, he had.
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> For he no longer planned, if he ever had, his strategy, no longer chose his targets or selected courses. He no longer directed even simulated missions now, but only monitored flights of single aircraft or of cells. The old wing or even squadron formation had become impractical. The day when all the aircraft in his wing took to the air at once would very likely be their last. And all the planning for its strategy and targeting had long ago become the assigned responsibility of headquarters above his own, the Air Division over him or the numbered Air Force over that, or higher still, Headquarters SAC itself. And each of these had in turn lost much of its old authority to the next highest level of command, final responsibility resting not even with Headquarters, USAF, in the Pentagon, but in a small, top-management committee bridging the department of Defense and other branches of national government.
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> But even up there the leadership was diffused, the command authority only tenuously held, subject to other forces and to other groups working within and on the huge, bureaucratic structure supporting, dominating, planning, directing, financing, controlling, ordering and finally accounting for each mission flown by each of the wing commander's planes. His men and their aircraft were units now in a vast and complex bookkeeping-tabulated order of battle, computer-determined and beyond the diminished authority of any colonel, or even of any general officer, to alter in any important way.

To complete our look at the principals of Mr. Lundgren's psychological drama, we may inspect the feelings of Carolyn, Robbie's wife, whose unconstructive, instinctive rebellion against the loss of meaning in her husband's career is twisting her life and that of her husband and child. "Things have gone terribly wrong," but Carolyn has neither the strength nor the intelligence to discover why. The symptoms of her plight, if not universal, are certainly widespread today, and are characteristically lacking in explanation:

> How had it happened? Carolyn asked, demanding an answer to the riddle of herself and of the people, times, and places that had made her what she was.

COMMENTARY
THE BUDDHIST METAPHYSIC

TWO or three times, now—the last in this week's Frontiers—we have said that Western inquirers into Zen often seem unaware of the transcendental metaphysics implied in all Buddhist thought. What is this structured view of the universe within which the Buddha set out to accomplish his great reform of Indian religion?

There is first the idea of an absolutely ineffable spiritual ground—omnipresent, all-pervasive, even the mention of which is virtually intellectual profanation, so that a wise Buddhist agnosticism in respect to this universal "principle" often tends to exceed its rights to the point of denying that the ground exists; and there is a sense in which it does not ex-ist—that is, "stand out"—since it is the changeless core of being which has no need of "becoming." It has been called "bare subjectivity." After all, if you say "It" is not, then people are less likely to bewilder their minds by trying to make utterly useless definitions. The denial of "self," whether individual or universal, is thus intended as a guarantee against sentimental egotism in religion, against presumptuous revelations in theology, and against the subtler temptations in philosophical speculation.

Second is the idea of Karma—the moral but also universal law which gives the world of relativities extension in space, continuity in time, and by exhibiting to all beings with reflective consciousness the connections between events which we call "cause," generates the conviction that the world of experience has a rational ground.

Finally, and third, is the idea of *meaning*; Westerners call it "evolution," but the disciple of Gautama will prefer to think of it as perfectly exemplified in a Buddha—there have been many Buddhas, according to tradition—since in this flower of human development there emerges the presence of an intelligence which knows its own identity with both atoms and stars, and with all that lies between. The mind of a Buddha knows in particular and severally the Many, yet knows them most of all in their identity with the One. He is not captive to any of the places or planes of diversity, but neither will he desert the world. Such a perfectly developed man always becomes a Teacher: what else remains for him to do?

Naturally enough, a man of this sort becomes a *type* of all the processes and attainments that are possible in nature; and he represents in thought an ideal synthesis of the reality which is changeless and the reality which is endlessly becoming. But while serving Buddhist thought in this way, the Buddha is never an object of "worship." He is still a man who labors for the same self-realization for all. To call him a "man," however, is no reduction of his stature, but rather the addition of incommensurable possibility for all human beings.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

RELIGION IN THE SCHOOLS—LEGISLATIVE QUESTIONS

MOST people who like to be liked and many business men seeking as wide a spread of patronage as possible have expediently chosen "never to discuss politics and religion." Yet these are topics of considerable significance to human beings. The Reformation and the revolutionary period which ushered in the Constitution of the United States are historically indicative of their importance, and it has become increasingly clear from the issues recently examined here that politics and religion not only need to be discussed a good deal more, but ought to be examined together.

The Congress of the United States has been unable to avoid this necessary labor. The 88th Congress, for instance, has listened to a good deal of talk regarding legislation proposing religious instruction in the public schools. Published in three parts, the hearings before the House Judiciary Committee occupy 2774 pages, and even if the quality of the debate is sometimes less than philosophical, some awareness of basic principles has gradually emerged. It becomes plain, for one thing, that from a public point of view, neither religion nor the Bill of Rights can be understood except in ideal relationship to each other.

It would take more time than we have available to cull from 2774 pages the most provocative material for review. However, a summary prepared by a young New York lawyer for Congressman John Lindsay, of New York, printed at the close of the lengthy report, is joined with the recommendations presented to the Honorable Emanuel Celler, Chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives. This lawyer, Dennis Farrar, manages to work into his memorandum some of the high points of the hearings. In particular we note these paragraphs:

> On June 25, 1962, the Supreme Court of the United States, in *Engel v. Vitale* (370 U.S. 421 (1962)), declared a short, seemingly inoffensive schoolroom prayer to be an unconstitutional establishment of religion in violation of the first amendment. The immediate response to this and two subsequent decisions as the school prayer cases, took the form of a vehement and emotional denunciation of the Court by members of the public and the introduction of approximately 175 resolutions to amend the Constitution by Members of Congress. Hearings on the proposed amendments introduced in the House, which are designed to reverse the Court's decisions, are now being conducted before the House Judiciary Committee. . . .
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> The immediate reaction to *Engel v. Vitale* was intemperate and emotional. The Court was attacked by some who accused it of driving God from the schools and denounced the Justices as Communist atheists. Others, in a more thoughtful and reflective vein, criticized the Court's legal analysis and argued that it had failed to give due weight to the traditional concept of religion in American life. While not critical of the result reached, some questioned whether the implications of the decision forbade any consideration of religion in public schools or references to a Deity on official occasions.
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> The press was divided along predictable lines. . . . The clergy was also divided, in part along denominational lines. The Roman hierarchy almost unanimously opposed the decisions. • Cardinal Spellman declared that:
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> "I am shocked and frightened that the Supreme Court has declared unconstitutional a simple and voluntary declaration of belief in God by public school children. The decision strikes at the very heart of the Godly tradition in which America's children have for so long been raised."

But as the argument proceeded, many of the protesting clergymen and a good number of the journalists in search of "editorial" content began to take a long second look at the action of the Court and their own initial reactions. An excellent example of this reflective mood is provided by the remarks of Rep. Robert Leggett (California). Commenting on the proposal that the Constitution

be amended, Mr. Leggett told how he came to change his own mind:

> As I read the Bill of Rights, it states merely that the Congress, in article I, shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.
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> Very frankly, I am quite satisfied with the provision of the bill as it is.
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> I am here to speak in favor of maintaining the Bill of Rights intact.
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> I had occasion last week to editorialize in my home district newspapers, some 40 of them, and some 7 radio stations. I had occasion to discuss the prayer decision. I think my testimony here today will be in large part paraphrasing my news letter which starts by pointing out that I editorialized a year ago when the *Abington* and *Murray* prayer decisions were rendered. At that time I chided the Court because I felt that the Court had problems enough maintaining the integrity of the Court as a result of its civil rights decision and the church and state relationship should not be disturbed.
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> While many persons would have wished that the Court refrain from deciding the prayer cases, the fact remains that it did.
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> As a result, there has been an attempt to amend the Constitution by resolutions introduced about which we are testifying here today.
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> I am Catholic and I note my fellow Catholic, Frank Becker of New York, has introduced one of these resolutions. I am frank to say that I was almost on this bandwagon a year ago but a lot of things have happened in the ensuing year that I think make it extremely impractical that we criticize the Court for this decision and get into the business of amending the Constitution.
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> As a result of the Becker amendment, I notice a number of people coming here testifying before this committee and it appears to me that, if anything, the area between church and state is an extremely gray area at the present time and has been more confounded by the testimony that has been presented than by either the Decision of the Supreme Court or any decision in our history.
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> I, frankly, don't like to see people like Gerald L. K. Smith and Carl McIntire on one side taking the position apparently of my Kiwanis Club in my home district which apparently supports the prayer decision resolution to amend the Constitution. I am legislative liaison between the American Legion of California and the Congress, and I am frank to say I am displeased to find that the American Legion has taken a position against the prayer decision and in favor of this resolution.
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> I note that you have, on the one hand, the National Council of Churches, Baptist Church, Quakers, the Jewish groups Lutherans, Presbyterians, Seventh-day Adventists, Unitarians, and United Church of Christ apparently in favor of the decision and against the resolution.
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> My own group, the Catholics, and others, such as the Episcopalians and Methodists, are evenly divided.

The Hon. Leggett's reversal of position coincides with that of the National Council of Churches and of other church groups. Two of the most respected liberal religious weeklies, the *Christian Century* and the Unitarian-Universalist *Register-Leader*, have upheld the Court decision at all times and have helped to gain public approval for the principles which the Supreme Court decision declared.

FRONTIERS

Against Captivity

THE story is told of Saint Jerome that, despite his ardent commitment to the One True Faith, he found himself unable to give up his affection for the Latin classics. He liked to read Cicero, but it made him feel guilty. What need had a Christian for elegance in pagan composition? This split in his loyalties caused him to have bad dreams and in one of these nocturnal reproaches a severe voice questioned: "Jerome, what art thou?" Bravely, Jerome replied: "I am a Christian." The voice thundered back: "Thou liest. Thou art a Ciceronian!"

A better version of this struggle, perhaps, is the one suggested by Isaiah Berlin in his study of Tolstoy, called *The Hedgehog and the Fox.* Berlin's title derives from an epigram attributed to Archilochus: "The fox knows many little things; the hedgehog, he knows one big thing!" Tolstoy's art, Berlin shows, lay in his sustained effort to balance the wisdom of the hedgehog with the sagacity of the fox. Tolstoy felt that there must be one central truth; but he only *felt* it; he couldn't say it. And his observant and conscientious mind was fiiled with the smaller truths of the hour and of circumstance which nibbled away at his larger conviction. Tolstoy was faithful to both views of meaning or "reality," making his art the arena of their competition for acceptance.

Compared to Tolstoy, Jerome was a partisan. He seems also to qualify as neurotic in blaming himself for liking Cicero. If reading a cosmopolitan thinker gives you guilt-feelings, you have to ask yourself why you want to shut his views out of the universe. The guilt-feelings are probably some kind of a code of the internal dialogue, meaning that you are indeed telling some kind of a lie to yourself, although not the one you feel guilty about. There are doubtless many ways of acquiring guilt-feelings, but a very common one is to pass or jump from an unresolved state of mind to a confident righteousness, making the explanation that you just can't wait, or that the emergency demands not thought but *action.*

Such matters, of course, are often over-simplified. You can object that actual guilt, if not guilt-feelings, comes from failing to act when you ought to. And then, if you are really trying to decide what to do, you have to review all the ready-made theories of Right Action to see which one, if any, is acceptable to you. And you can go at this in a mood which determines you to find the right message to carry to the right Garcia, or with the feeling that you have only a choice between being a spectator or a participant in one more *Oxbow Incident.*

Finally, there is the question of whether, in one short lifetime, you will be able to put aside all the ready-made theories of right action and develop one that is really your own. Should you, you ask, settle for anything less?

Two books on hand for review, taken together, tend to arouse these questions. One is a new paperback (McGrawHill, $1.95) edition of Eugen Herrigel's *Zen in the Art of Archery,* to which has been added another of Herrigel's papers, "The Method of Zen." Dr. Suzuki, who writes the Introduction, calls it a "wonderful little book," and most of its readers are likely to agree. Here, certainly, is a magnificent statement of the case for an exclusively Hedgehog outlook.

Unfortunately, there is a kind of self-defeat involved in any attempt to review a book of Zen. First of all, anyone who writes a book *about* Zen undertakes a privileged act. He is obliged to say that *no* conceptualization of this subject can do it justice, since the essential meaning of Zen is beyond conceptualization, yet dares to add that *his* conceptualizations may supply useful hints. If you comment with too much freedom on the writer's exposition, you risk minor or major heresies. Obviously, the only safe way to proceed is to repeat the intellectual formulations which are provided by the Zen historical tradition; but if you do this you submit to the somewhat imperial

demands of those who write from within that tradition. We shall not do this, but suggest that the sudden and now extensive interest taken by Western thinkers in Zen is impressive evidence of the psychological verities to be discovered in the Zen approach to meaning—and evidence, also, of the neglect of this side of life in the West, to the point of spiritual starvation. Behaviorally, attitudinally, and philosophically, Zen is a doctrine of absolute self-reliance, yet since, in transcendental thinking, all intellectual formulations eventually turn self-contradictory, the idea of "the self" is itself dissolved in the "original nature"—"the selfless and egoless Ground, the nameless and formless root of the self."

Such terms may have little meaning for the Westerner, who seldom understands that they float somewhat freely in a sea of Buddhist metaphysics; and he may suppose that he is entitled to ignore the metaphysics by reason of the apparent belittling of metaphysics in such texts as the Diamond Sutra. But again, he needs to recognize that Buddhist metaphysics is a psychologically sophisticated rescension of Upanishadic metaphysics. This is a way of proposing that a searcher can hardly abandon or rise above conceptual thought until he has first exhausted its possibilities and discovered its limitations by intensive first-hand investigation. And this, indeed, is a clear implication of Herrigel's account of the Zen disciple's attempt to square the circle with his mind, until the mind, totally exhausted, acknowledges defeat and retires, carrying off its misleading and limiting abstractions.

What is bothersome to the reader—we are taking for granted, here, the exceptional merit of Herrigel's luminous study of the psychological stress and relations between the personal and the impersonal life—is the lack of any suggestion that these ordeals of self-discovery may be encountered in other frameworks of experience than the monastic setting of the Zen disciple. Since, on the hypothesis of Buddhism itself, all men are potential Buddhas, why not other forms of approach, developed in other lands by other peoples? Why could not, at least in theory, entire cultures experience sequentially the classical dilemmas which confront the Zen aspirant as he moves, or finally comes to understand that he does not "move," toward what is eternally present in himself and all else? The Bo Tree, for each of us, both is and is not the Tree under which the Buddha sat.

The other book, mentioned at the beginning, on hand for review is a new edition of Jacques Barzon's *Of Human Freedom*, first published in 1939. Mr. Barzun's work is not selected for attention with the idea that it is in some sense a Western "opposite number" of the Zen inquiry or pursuit of truth; actually, its selection is by the U.S. mails, which brought it to us on the same day. Yet there are certain parallels. In a chapter on "Reality," for example, Mr. Barzun explores and defends the pragmatic theory of knowledge by observing that the concepts we hold, far from standing for "ready-made objects in the external world," are inventions of the mind for dealing with effects that we encounter in experience. We change these concepts as we learn to make them fit our experience more closely. Today the scientific theory of knowledge is openly of this sort. Barzun continues:

> The lesser views by which we organize our own chaos are no less pragmatic, no less works of art. Some people can live only by thinking they are the Empress Josephine. They do not obtain much satisfaction, and may actually run into dangers hence we lock them up. Other people—Prime Ministers for example—imagine they are running the country, but it is a harmless idea which many conspire to support, so we do not lock them up. To a third party, say an historian, the two cases may look like equally bad thinking (That is what Brougham thought when he said, "As for Lord Liverpool, he is no more Prime Minister than I am," and went on to show that the Lord Chancellor, Eldon, really ruled England. See Walter Bagehot, *Literary Studies)*, bad art, yet the method in both is perfectly sound. Josephine and the "real" Prime Minister and his constituents have all

> made or borrowed an order that fits to the best of their ability what they see and feel. If all lives were not fashioned so, in the pragmatic faith that they are real and useful, life itself would stop. The artist, the traffic policeman, the certified public accountant, would all suddenly discover that their activities are useless and fantastic, that only the direct gratification of instincts is real, and that society is a dream from which we only awake to die.

In this passage, Mr. Barzun bares the relativity of conceptual knowledge—the kind of knowledge men manipulate to serve their own purposes, and intellectuals more consciously than most. But Mr. Barzun has no metaphysical answer book which allows him to affirm that when the illusory nature of *all* concepts is finally exposed, then awareness is permitted to rise to a higher plane of reality where, without the intermediary of definitions, being and knowing become one. So he takes the other pole of possibility and expects a relapse to unmediated physical sensation.

But in the culture he is examining—the Western world—there is intense involvement in the formulation and refinement of concepts that correspond to experience. Deep ethical feelings, noble purposes, are expressed in this way. There is a sense in which the Promethean mission is being fulfilled by these activities, while at the same time there is developing that kind of second-degree awareness of the limits of conceptualizing hinted at in the passage quoted. There is no promise of Nirvanic bliss, of course; we are, Mr. Barzun says, improving "a realm in which our minds are creatively in contact with matter and other minds," and this is a far cry from the moment of *satori.*

Still, we are not persuaded that all these complicated processes of learning and experiencing and attempts at explaining can be shunted around or short-circuited by a hard night in a monk's cell, or that we ought to want them to be. Perhaps we are still of an earthy mold, still captives of the endless flow of Renaissance enthusiasm. At any rate, we cannot welcome the idea that history has no meaning, and that the only purpose of an illusion is to try the temper of our spiritual longing. *Something is happening in the world,* and the events which fill our lives are not all equally worthless once private salvation has been won. The stately mansions need to be built and are worth building.

But you can't even build a usable hut, much less a mansion, without canons of proportion. And all housing for human beings needs to be modelled with accommodation of an incommensurable dimension in mind. There ought to be a way in which the two orders can be made tangent, here and there, and at climactic moments, without turning our universe in. Perhaps the West has a contribution in this, although presently but hardly begun.

We haven't said as much as we planned about Mr. Barzun's book, which is urbane, witty, and a rare example of the fruit of a liberal education. It is published by Lippincott at $4.95. *Of Human Freedom* is an exposition of the pragmatic philosophy, and since the author calls it "conceptualism, or the philosophy of the image-making mind, as opposed to absolute mechanisms of all kinds," it may, after all, qualify as the "opposite number" of the Zen philosophy by being an acutely perceptive catalog of the widely ranging thought-images we make.