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# RELIGION AND RELIGIONS

WHILE newspaper articles dealing with religion are seldom informative of the meaning of religious inquiry, they are reliable enough on what a great many people regard as religion. And from recent discussions in the press, it is plain that religion is an area of human concern filled with contradiction. We hardly need fresh evidence of this, yet a comparison of these accounts may give light on the kind of confusion we are experiencing.

A report in the *Christian Science Monitor* for Feb. 28 begins:

> Despite the historic doctrine of church-state separation, churches are more and more inclined to cast longing glances in the direction of the public treasury.
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> In increasing numbers they have sought and obtained state funds to promote their educational and their social-welfare activities. And these state funds have, in turn, freed church moneys to promote their sectarian religious programs.
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> During the past year, organized and massive efforts have been launched to obtain state funds for church-related institutions. These efforts have been directed chiefly at state-constitutional conventions, state legislatures, state governors, city officials, administrators of state- and federal-aid programs, and public opinion.

The article goes into detail, naming the groups contending for public funds in various states, and quoting their arguments. The counter-effort of POAU (Protestants and Other Americans United), working through a group called Americans United for Separation of Church and State, is also described. In an address before a POAU conference, Virgil M. Rogers spoke of the impact on the public schools of this broad tendency throughout the nation to seek government support for denominational religion. According to the *Monitor* report:

> He cited various examples of administrative abuse, noting that "weak public-school administrators and boards of education can destroy the compromise features which were to preserve the integrity of public control of public funds."
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> Mr. Rogers deplored the situation whereby "a carelessly managed federal-supported program could prop up for generations what may have become an anachronistic institution in an ecumenical one-world society," namely the parochial schools.
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> He would find it ironic that this should happen "at the very time in American educational history when the parochial-school concept is coming under increasing scrutiny by its patrons and leaders" who are "speaking and writing in a manner to indicate that they have growing misgivings."

Another speaker at this conference gave examples of glaring sectarian views which have been inserted in public school texts, "especially in history and the social sciences"—which becomes possible, he said, because text-book publishers find public school authorities comparatively indifferent on the subject of religion, while parochial-school buyers "are very sensitive."

The *Monitor* article also points out:

> Many probable violations of church-state separation have gone unchallenged in the courts simply because of the Supreme Court's ruling that a citizen in his status as taxpayer has insufficient interest to give him standing to sue. This has been applied to cases where he wishes to challenge the constitutionality of the use of public funds to aid religious institutions. [There is now an attempt—Flast vs Gardner—to persuade the court to modify this ruling.]

While the representatives of large denominations appealing for state aid are making their influence felt by legislators and public officials, a social scientist, Peter L. Berger, of the New York School for Social Research, has predicted that by the twenty-first century, "religious believers are likely to be found only in

small sects." As reported in the *New York Times* for Feb. 24, he described the ecumenical movement as an attempt to accommodate to the "shrinking market" for religion. Continuing this economic analogy, Prof. Berger said:

> Since the churches increasingly have to take consumer preferences into account in marketing their wares, in a secularized world this means the churches are secularizing themselves from within in order to attract consumers. Protestantism is furthest advanced. It has reached the strange state of self-liquidation [a reference to "death-of-God" theology]. . . . in a surprise-free world, I see no reversal of the process of secularization produced by industrialization. The impact is the same everywhere, regardless of culture and the local religion The traditional religions are likely to survive in small enclaves and pockets and perhaps there will be pockets of Asian religion in America too.

Prof. Berger believes that this decline of religion is more advanced in Europe than in the United States, but he expects it soon to become quite apparent here. "I think," he said, "people will become so bored with what religious groups have to offer that they will look elsewhere."

Curiously, according to the *Times* report, this analyst of religious trends, recently president of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, is an active layman in the Lutheran church. His view that the fortunes of religion are inexorably determined by economic forces may be supported by the data of social science, but it also raises the question of whether such religion can have any claim to "spiritual" significance. What he says resembles a detail in the doctrines of historical materialism.

Another article in the *Christian Science Monitor* (Feb. 27) draws on a recent panel discussion of "new" religion and the underground churches, held at Union Theological Seminary. The chairman, David A. Edman, who is ecumenical chaplain at Rochester Institute of Technology, contributed an article to the *Reader's Digest* in which he said that the religious ferment which many people find disturbing "forms the best proof of religion's vitality." "Innovation and experimentation" characterized the meeting at Union Theological Seminary:

> In a worship service preceding the discussion, jazz artist Duke Ellington gave a non-orthodox mini-sermon. Robert Edwin, avant-garde composer, sang a guitar-accompanied pæan of praise, "Spread it far and wide: God is alive today." And girl seminary students, clad in black leotards, gave a modern dance interpretation of a confessional.
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> Speaking before an audience of Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Jews, the panel included such well-known religious rebels as the Rev. Malcolm Boyd, Episcopal author of the best-selling "Are You Running with Me Jesus?"; The Rev. William Sloane Coffin, Jr., Yale University chaplain under indictment for counseling draft-law evasion; Dr. William Hamilton of New College, Sarasota, Florida, one of the architects of the "death of God" theology; and Rabbi Richard L. Rubenstein of the University of Pittsburgh.
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> Some of their observations:
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> It is normal that the church should put unrest in the human heart and not just consolation.
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> While religion in the past has usually become known through the printed word, in the future many people will be prepared by sensitivities of the electronic age, emphasized by McLuhanism. . . .
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> Old walls are crumbling and some practices are destined to disappear. The Rev. Mr. Boyd, for instance, said he is just as likely to celebrate communion "on Tuesday night in someone's living room" as on Sunday in a church.

Asked whether "sensitive young men" should go into the conventional ministry today, the Rev. Coffin said that dedicated pastors "could still make their way in traditional churches despite their political and social beliefs." Canon Edman thought that, in the midst of the confusion, change, and radicalism in religion, a "lively reckless faith" would assure that the merely fashionable will perish, "while what is of God will endure."

Is there a common denominator of all these views? Well, except for Prof. Berger, who might qualify as a Lutheran Oswald Spengler, these people sound like conscientious theatrical

producers and stage-managers. The religious leaders who concentrate on getting federal and state funds to support their enterprises are producers of a sort, while the "radicals," although eager for change, seem very much involved in managing and directing the changes now taking place—and, in the case of this panel discussion, in interpreting the "action" to the laity. Some members of the clergy, of course, have abdicated the priestly role, but when this happens they lose both platform and audience, since what one man says about religion can claim attention only from the power of his thought, while the organs of public expression are interested mainly in utterances which give shape to institutions.

It is in this situation that the rebels, the movers and shakers in religion, find justification for remaining in religious institutions, and thereby perpetuating them. "The people," it is said, identify religion with religious organizations, so that the man who wants to bring enlightenment to the people must work within them, even though he feels personally emancipated from their forms and observances. And since these observances are in some way connected with the assumptions which distinguish one denomination from all the rest, tacit acceptance of the observances is likely to be a barrier to questioning their doctrinal roots. The observances are also symbols of the emotional allegiance felt by believers, so that the balance between thought and feeling is established in advance, by the rule of tradition, for the members of a particular sect. Note that the novelty advocated by the Rev. Mr. Boyd did not involve questioning the mystical cannibalism of the rite of communion, but only its practice in unconventional surroundings.

What are the essentials of religion? They involve the great questions which human beings have asked since the beginning of time. What is a man? What is the purpose of life? What is the world, and man's relation to it? What is truth? How is it gained? How does a man who has found the truth behave? Is there a life before birth? What happens after death? What are the principles which should guide moral decision? How do good and evil originate? What are the uses and meanings of pain and sorrow? How should a man approach the problem of ultimate reality? By what norms should human growth be measured? How does the idea of "authority" bear on all these questions?

Religious traditions are made up of inherited stipulations concerning the answers to these questions. The believer in a particular religious tradition tends to think that either his form of belief gives the right answers, or no answers exist. By this means, religious truth becomes dependent upon consensus, which leads to the politicalization of religion, since an organization which depends for its existence on the agreement of believers will do what it can to create that agreement.

Yet none of these phenomena of the sociology of religion adds to the certainty of any of the proposed answers to basic questions. The main accomplishment of the history of religion in the West—including long centuries of bloody religious wars—has been to cause a great many intelligent men to declare most of the questions irrelevant or meaningless and the search for answers a waste of time.

At the same time, study of the sociology of religion can lead the inquirer to the threshold of another sort of investigation, even though it provides no answers of itself. For example, there are great cycles of hungering after religious or transcendental truth. And there are times when a certain richness of content in the fruits of the search for truth is unmistakable. In one of his technical studies (*Rome and China*, University of California Press), Frederick J. Teggart described such an epoch:

> I may point to the great religious movements associated with the names of Zoroaster in Persia, Laotzu and Confucius in China, Mahavira (founder of Jainism) and Gautama Buddha in India, the prophets Ezekiel and Second Isaiah, Thales in Ionia, and Pythagoras in southern Italy. All these great personages belong to the sixth century B.C., and their

> appearance certainly constitutes a class of events. Yet though the correspondence of these events has frequently been observed, no serious effort has ever been made, so far as I have been able to discover, to treat the appearances of these great teachers—within a brief compass of time—as a problem which called for systematic investigation. But without this knowledge how are we to envisage or comprehend the workings of the human spirit? The history of human achievement, indeed, displays variations of advance and subsidence. How are the outstanding advances of men at different times and places to be accounted for?

This project would also be a part of the sociology of religion, yet an enterprise that comes closer to being a truly religious inquiry, since it looks to better comprehension of "the workings of the human spirit." One thing that soon becomes apparent in the actual study of great religious founders is that they were not really "organization men" at all. They addressed themselves to human beings, not to the stage-managers of religious organizations. They dealt directly with the great questions. If the answers remain obscure, the obscurity grows out of the basic difficulty of the questions, and the limitations of human understanding, not from neglect or institutional indifference and complacency.

There can hardly be argument about the fact that there is an enormous difference between religious ideas as originally taught by great teachers and reformers and what happens to those ideas under the management of organization men. The difference is the difference between high and inspiring communication to individuals and communication modified by the techniques of organization and social control. One begins to see where Mr. McLuhan got the idea that "the medium is the message."

There are differences of another import among religious teachers, which need to be understood. There is the declarative utterance of Krishna, in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, in contrast to the questioning, skeptical approach of a Socrates, who surely may be recognized as a spiritual teacher. Yet, paradoxically, a suggestion of gnostic certainty pervades much of Socrates' thought, despite his insistence on rational analysis, while Krishna, for all his unequivocal affirmations, makes clear that final truth is contained in untaught and unteachable mysteries.

Then, in the cosmopolitan society of Alexandria in the third century—a culture not unlike that of the present—a little-known teacher, Ammonius Saccas, drew attention to the elements of religious teaching common to all the known religions of that time. As the church historian, Mosheim, wrote:

> Conceiving that not only the philosophers of Greece, but also all those of the different barbarian nations, were perfectly in unison with each other with regard to every essential point, he [Ammonius] made it his business so to expound the thousand tenets of all these various sects as to show that they had all originated from one and the same source, and tended all to one and the same end. . . . He adopted the doctrines that were received in Egypt concerning the Universe and the Deity considered as constituting one great whole, concerning the eternity of the world . . . and established a system of moral discipline which allowed people in general to live according to the laws of their country and the dictates of nature, but required the wise to exalt their mind by contemplation.

The teachings of the Buddha, divided into the Greater and the Lesser Vehicles, illustrate this same distinction between a general "system of moral discipline" and the obligations and opportunities of those who are determined to seek in themselves the highest truth. And in his sermons the Buddha was often silent on matters which he felt could not be adequately expressed in words. There are many phases of these variations in what might be called primary religious communication. The interplay between reason and intuitive conviction is also a variable factor. This is well described by a nineteenth-century writer, A. M. Fairbarn, in a comment on Plato:

> Plato's arguments of immortality, isolated, modernized, may be feeble, even valueless, but allowed to stand where and as he himself puts them, they have an altogether different worth. The ratiocinative parts of the *Phaedo* thrown into syllogisms may be easily demolished by a hostile

> logician, but in the dialogue as a whole there is a subtle spirit and cumulative force which logic can neither seize nor answer.

These are qualities of authentic religious inquiry which are commonly overlooked by the most earnest of organization men in religious institutions. The institutional framework of conventional religion interferes with the asking of serious questions, and the "feeling" aspect of religion obscures the fact that religion remains superficial unless continuous inner search is made the foundation of growth. Religion is many things, but one thing it is not is emotional "adjustment" to a conventional consensus.

Nor is religion served by a stage-managed exposure to the sensory stimulations of "the electronic age." If, in our politico-economic theory, we confuse a multiplicity of things to buy and sell with social health and progress, we might as easily confuse temporary emotional euphoria with religious truth. Involvement with sensuous imagery was uniformly held by ancient philosophers to be a major obstacle to enlightenment, but this view of the "spectacle" aspect of religion can hardly be adopted by men who prefer the excitements of a picture gallery, whether inner or outer, to the reflective silences of the spiritual life.

Doubt, it has been said, is the beginning of wisdom. And in an age so overwhelmed with misconception and shallow substitutes for authentic religion, and at the same time, so filled with religious longing, the discipline of doubt may be the only approach to religious truth. What are the affirmations which are not diminished by honest doubt? What are the discoveries which cannot be rendered empty by imitation and rubricizing repetition?

Can men pursue this sort of religious inquiry in groups? The answer, it seems, is both yes and no. If the group assumes any of the responsibilities of the individual, what truth it possesses, if any, will soon be lost in consensus compromises. Yet men are able to strike fire from each other's minds. Dialogue began as the educational form of high religion.

# *REVIEW*
## THE CLARITY OF JAMES BALDWIN

THE underground press performs various services, some of them very dubious, but occasionally it prints material of unparalleled excellence which might not be able to find expression anywhere else. For example, the Feb. 28-29 Los Angeles *Free Press* contains an article on Stokely Carmichael by James Baldwin and an interview with Baldwin by *Free Press* representatives. (The *Free Press* is an "underground" paper only in terms of its content, since it has a newstand circulation in the Los Angeles area of more than 50,000 and is very much in evidence on the streets.)

Baldwin gets his power as a writer from relentless honesty. His perceptions are existential rather than moralistic; he does not go on at length about what people "ought" to do, but isolates unmistakable realities which point to what people who claim to be human beings have no choice but to attempt doing. For all his ardor, Baldwin writes with restraint. This restraint sharpens his insight while disarming the reader who expects partisan argument from a writer who happens to be black. His abilities as an artist and his past as a Harlem-born Negro make him able to remove the scales of blindness from the literate, reading population of the United States. He begins his article on Stokely Carmichael:

> I first met Stokely Carmichael in The Deep South, when he was just another non-violent kid marching and talking and getting his head whipped. This time now seems as far behind us as the Flood, and if those suffering, gallant, betrayed boys and girls who were then using their bodies in an attempt to save a heedless nation have since concluded that the nation is not worth saving, no American alive has the right to be surprised—to put the matter as mildly as it can possibly be put. Actually, Americans are not at all surprised; they exhibit all the vindictiveness of the guilty; whatever happened to those boys and girls, and what happened to the Civil Rights movement, is an indictment, of America and Americans, and an enduring monument, which we will not outlive, to the breathtaking cowardice of this sovereign people.
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> Naturally, the current in which we all were struggling threw Stokely and I together from time to time—it threw many people together, including, finally, Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. America sometimes resembles, at least from the point of view of the black man, an exceedingly monotonous minstrel show; the same dances, same music, same jokes. One has done (or been) the show so long that one can do it in one's sleep. So it was not in the least surprising for me to encounter the American surprise (one more time) when Stokely—as Americans allow themselves the luxury of supposing—coined the phrase Black Power. He didn't coin it. He simply dug it up again from where it's been lying since the first slaves hit the gang-plank. I have never known a Negro in all my life who was not obsessed with Black Power. Those representatives of White Power who are not too hopelessly brain-washed or eviscerated will understand that the only way for a black man in America not to be obsessed with the problem of how to control his destiny and protect his house, his women and his children, is for that black man to become in his own mind the something less than a man which this Republic, alas, has always considered him to be. And when a black man, whose destiny and identity has always been controlled by others, decides, and states, that he will control his own destiny and rejects the identity given him by others, he is talking revolution. In point of sober fact, he cannot possibly be talking anything else, and nothing is more revelatory of the American hypocrisy than their swift perception of this fact. The "white backlash" is meaningless twentieth-century jargon designed at once to hide and to justify the fact that most white Americans are still unable to believe that the black man is a man—in the same way that we speak of "a credibility gap" because we are too cowardly to face the fact that our leaders have been lying to us for years. Perhaps we suspect that we deserve the contempt with which we allow ourselves to be treated.

This isn't "argument," but articulation of historical and psychological realities. The article continues at length; its subject is the laws of human community and the necessities of being human. The interview with Baldwin has similar qualities, although it is more concerned with Baldwin personally. Asked whether he had escaped the ghetto in the United States, he said:

> No black ever has, no black man ever will. In a sense, as long as people are in the ghetto, I don't want to escape from it. Where would I go? The price of

> escaping from the ghetto and remaining in America is prohibitive—you've got to become what? some artificial creation who can speak neither to white or black.

Since Baldwin came to Hollywood to work on a film version of the life of Malcolm X, the *Free Press* asked if he had known Malcolm. He said he had, and then the reporter asked if he had known Malcolm well. Baldwin replied:

> It's difficult, because now he's dead. If you had asked me when he was alive if I knew him well, I probably would have said yes. When a man is dead, you wonder how well you knew him, no matter how well you loved him. There was so much more in Malcolm than Malcolm knew to tell. There was so much more in him than he ever lived to express.

The worst thing about racism is that it cuts people off from recognizing the human deeps in others. Baldwin is at his best in exposing this flaw, and showing what it leads to. When a *Free Press* interviewer asked if Malcolm X hated white people, Baldwin said:

> No. Malcolm was, first of all, far too proud to hate anybody—and he understood something about this country and our dilemma here which carried him past that. You said in the beginning that our problem is white against black—but I think in fact that our problem is much deeper than that. In the first place, I'm not sure that any white man in this country is really able to prove that he's white. That's a myth. And Negro is a legal term. That's another myth, really. The trouble in this country is that brothers are tearing each other to pieces, and have been doing so for generations. The problem in this country is that they have never decided what they are; in a sense it can be said that no white man in this country ever left Europe ~ that's why you still have St. Patrick's Day. It's a country which is frequented by racism, which is built on guilt and panic. Everybody knows, really, what happened to the Indians. Everybody lies about it, but everybody knows. And everybody knows what happens to black men in this country. Everybody lies about it, but everybody knows. And what the American effort is, and always has been, is to hide this away; they don't want to see it. That's why Negroes can't live in your neighborhood; that's why Negroes can't do this and can't do that; that's why Negroes are all rapists. That's why Negroes all want to marry white women. All you have to do is examine the nature of the myths white people have created about Negroes and you'll understand exactly what happened. Every single taboo, every single prohibition is a confession. It's a confession of guilt. And until the people of this country get over that, there's very little hope for any of us.

The time may come when the people of the United States recognize their enormous debt to the lucid intelligence of the black Americans of the twentieth century. A few years ago a *Nation* writer said that American Negroes are now entering the "consciousness of the forum." This seems a good way to put what has been happening. They are emerging from the underground existence to which the slave trade condemned them, and are declaring their identity. Richard Wright did this intuitively with his consummate art. There is not an artificial or pretentious line in *Black Boy*. The book is a piece of living sculpture. Ralph Ellison is a more self-conscious writer; he takes you into his mind in a way that Wright could not. Ellison's essays, in *Shadow and Act*, remove barrier after barrier between the races. Of Baldwin, it may seem strange to say that one of the most important ingredients in his writing is his common sense. He always pulls up short when he feels himself growing tendentious. He may use rhetorical exaggerations, but you always know what he means. Because he is famous, people who ordinarily object to common sense remain subdued in his presence. Of course, his common sense is usually illuminated by so much awareness that it seems like a great discovery.

Ellison and Baldwin are valuable in what they say of Richard Wright, whom they both loved and admired. One begins to see what is involved in the ordeal of being a black artist in white America. There are times and circumstances, in short, when the abyss between the races is just too great—when all the longing in the world cannot bridge it. There are agonies which have to wear out, which cannot be assuaged. There are injustices men cannot repair simply because they would like to. Wright's loneliness and despair had no remedy in his time.

In *North Toward Home,* Willie Morris says that Wright had as a boy lived on a tenant farm not far from Yazoo City, Miss., where Morris was born:

> Once, many years later, when I was full grown and twenty-two, I found myself in Paris; I got Wright's phone number and called him, saying I was a white Yazoo boy. "You're from Yazoo?" he asked. "Well, come on over." We went out to an Arab bar and got a little drunk together, and talked about the place we both had known. I asked him, "Will you ever come back to America?" "No," he said, "I want my children to grow up as human beings." After a time a silence fell between us, like an immense pain—or maybe it was my imagining.

Years later, in New York, when Morris was working on *Harper's,* he and Ellison became close friends. Morris tells what he learned from Ralph Ellison and another Negro writer, A1 Murray. They made him see the "extent to which the easy *abstractions,* the outsider's judgment of what one *ought* to feel, had simplified and dogmatized and hence dulled my own perceptions as an outlander in the East." Then Morris asks:

> Does it seem strange, or a naive fantasy on my part, that a Ralph Ellison and an Al Murray would have this kind of influence on me? They knew the evils of the South—as Negroes much more intimately than I ever had. They were men of militant integrity. Ellison, James Baldwin once said, "is as angry as anybody can be and still live." Yet they tried to reduce their experience, not to polemicism, but to metaphor. They were reading and understanding the work of Faulkner at Tuskegee in the 1930s when nine Eastern critics in ten were dismissing him as another Southern Gothic of the blood-and-thunder school. They tried to understand themselves in the light of their own Southern and American experience. They refused to view their own Southern past apocalyptically, as if it had all been disaster. They warned me, by word and by personal example, to beware of being "brainwashed" by a lot of accoutrements that could easily betray one's own unique consciousness as a white Southern intellectual from Yazoo City, Mississippi—accoutrements that could make an unwary Southerner a *rhetorician* rather than a writer. For a long time in my life I had been ashamed of my Mississippi origins. Yet shame was too simple and debilitating an emotion, too easy and predictable—like bitterness. It was more difficult to *understand* one's origins, to discover what was distinctive and meaningful in them. . . .

No one can appreciate the "growing-up" that must take place in America without reading the Negro writers who, so far, have been doing it for the entire population.

# *COMMENTARY*
## EDUCATION AND PEACE

READERS who enjoy Henry Anderson may want to send for the March 15 *Peace News,* which has an article by him on higher education. In one place, he makes this proposal:

> I live in California. We taxpayers in this state presently spend an average of $3,000 per year on each student who attends the university. (I will not even consider the additional $2.000 and more per head which the Federal Government contributes for weapons development and the like, since I think that it should be abolished.) If $3,000 a year were given as a stipend to students who propose to address some life-problem, a group of four, by pooling their resources, would have $12,000 a year. With a modicum of advice, they could arrange a much better education than is now available at the University of California.
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> To begin with, they could hire their own tutor. I know there are people, well-motivated, well-qualified to assist in the process of a real education, who do not require the $24,000 per year which professors at the university receive and, indeed, are repelled by the kind of compromise which one must usually make to rise to such a salary. If $3,000 per student per year were marshalled properly, it should also provide something for travel, books, periodicals, and so forth.
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> After a year or two of such exploration, a person might not he educated in the vulgar sense, because he wouldn't have a degree to practice law or dentistry or whatnot. But he would be educated as I use that term. He would have learned how to think about thorny problems in a creative way; he would have learned that it is exciting and fulfilling to think in this way. Let him then follow his bent.
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> Whatever it is, he would do it better, in all likelihood, than under present circumstances. He would be equipped with a gryroscope which would steer him away from shoals of credulity, cynicism, or complacency. Man, I hope, once they were so equipped, would go on wrestling with the existential questions of our day. Our society needs such people. And. by the way, I think that once they became available in ever-increasing numbers, our society would find a way to use them. "The system." I think, may be forgiven if it has not made a place for a resource which does not yet exist.

In what would this education consist? Searching investigation of the moral, existential questions which are troubling all serious students in the present—questions which most formal education systematically neglects.

A word about *Peace News:* this pacifist weekly has survived for years because it provides a full fare of well-written news, cultural comment, and articles such as Henry Anderson's, and because interested people support it through hard times. Single copies (in America) are 25 cents, a year's subscription is $10. The English address is 5 Caledonian Road, King's Cross, London NI. Subscriptions in North America may be sent to Peace News C/o AFSC, 160 North 15th St., Philadelphia, Pa. In a recent letter of appeal for help, Hugh Brock wrote:

> What do Lewes Prison and the Gandhian Training Center in Varanasi have in common? *Peace News* gets to both places. And in Lewes Prison is Michael Randle who would have liked to write this appeal to you. I have been asked to write in his stead. Both of us are members of *Peace News* Board and realized at the beginning of last year that we would be responsible with our colleagues both inside and outside the office for raising around £10,000 to balance the paper's budget. . . .

In short, good things like *Peace News* can't make their own way . . . yet. They need help. A society with health in it would see that such a paper flourished, but then, of course, it wouldn't have to talk so much about "peace," which would have become the rule instead of the exception. Meanwhile, *Peace News* works unceasingly for peace.

We should add that a number of peace papers have begun to appear in the United States. One of them, the *New Patriot* (Glad Day Press, 308 Stewart Ave., Ithaca, N.Y. 14850, $4 for 40 issues), gave in its Feb. 28 issue an account of the two thousand clergy, laymen and students (Concerned about Vietnam) who went to Washington to hold a memorial service at Arlington National Cemetery, but were restricted by the Army to a silent vigil. Afterward, in a local

church, Martin Luther King told how the war is "playing havoc" with the nation, and on the following day the Rev. Malcolm Boyd (named in this week's lead) "mused about violence and war to a guitar background." . . . Also in *New Patriot* is announcement of a new film, *Vietnam: How Did We Get In? How Can We Get Out?* which portrays David Schoenbrun, a reporter who has eye-witnessed Vietnamese history since 1945, addressing a chapter of "Business Executives Move." (Rental fee is $50, American Documentary Films, 144 Bleecker St., New York, N.Y. 10012.) . . . Such papers bring awareness of the deep penetration of the anti-war ferment.

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From Mexico, we have a letter which says:

> If your readers have files of MANAS to give away, the University of Morelas library, in Cuernavaca, Morelas, welcomes serious books in English, in philosophy, history, agriculture, etc.

# CHILDREN
## . . . and Ourselves

CHILDREN'S WRITING

THE current *Review* (#17) of Verde Valley School, in Arizona, has an editorial by Sue Heringman which dramatizes "growing up." The writer endeavors to set down what she believes "we all share in silence." Her expression embodies a clarity that seems rare—not to say unique—except in members of the coming generation:

> Growing up we become preoccupied with seeking the lesser things in life—its comforts, its luxuries, its machinery of detail—even before we know what the experience of living really is. When we stop from our frantic haste, the crucial questions of who, what, and why, lurking in our stream of consciousness, overflow and overwhelm us. What are we supposed to do? Why are we here? Who are we? We ask the questions to which there are no answers: yet finding none we continue to ask again and again. . . . We wrestle with our undiscovered souls and are perpetually tortured by our self-alienation. In an ironic twist of creation we experience the human agony of not knowing who we are. Our separate selves become lost in the chaos of civilized life and we become strangers unto both ourselves and each other. . . .
>
> By adolescence we have met ourselves in the consciousness of our life-roots but we have not accepted ourselves. Yet the awareness of being challenges us. The romantic haze of our uniqueness is dissipated in fear of actually facing our differentness. . . . We realize we do not know anyone. Everyone is a stranger, terrifying and unknown. And because we are caught in self-hatred we say we hate all people. Because we cannot trust ourselves we do not trust those around us. Everything becomes unreal, hysterical, a joke. . . . Yet each morning we open our eyes and push the horror back into the region of dark dreams and wonder at this life with its tenacity to remain. . . .
>
> With that wonder, the cycle swings around again and suddenly life is beautiful. The terror vanishes from the nights now dark but not entombing, from the silence now vast but not empty. In friendship and fear we have met ourselves and rejected ourselves. In the rediscovery of our humanness we accept and become ourselves. Upswept in spectacular excitement, we feel ourselves linked with all life as we are born again and again. We stand above the world, outside of Time, watching and yet participating. We experience a powerful influx of confidence, and a fierce desire to live, to create. We are participants in the spectacle of life, we can share in the breaking of bread again. As we fuse with our own identities, we fuse with all mankind. We all partake in the communion of being human. It is this simple universality that triumphs over absurdity, that gives beauty and meaning to the sad, scarred face of life. It is this soaring clarity of mind charged with an intensity of spirit that gives us courage in the search for our different potentials, and faith in the acceptance of these potentials. Thus we discover a living religion that Man is good and we believe in the divinity of Man. Whether we are tools of a more powerful being or the humble receivers of the "Over-Soul," we are joined to the universal spirit revealing that Man is God. We must know ourselves in order to know all men, in order to know God.

Then, in another part of the *Review*, there is this stanza:

> Christ is coming back, sir
> Maybe tomorrow.
> Prepare yourself, brother
> He's coming back to save your soul.
> Me: I'm already saved.
> See? I can roller-skate.

* * *

For three years now, under the guidance of Donald J. Canary, faculty adviser, the children of the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades of the Vincent School, West Covina, Calif., have published their verses, stories, essays and drawings. A fourth-grader, Barbara Vaughn, wrote this about "Spring," for the 1965-66 volume:

> As the flowers opened and their petals parted the perfume of nature was in the air. The water slowly dripped off the petals, making a small pool of perfumed water. As the water lay, the beauty of spring was reflected in it, and then it was gone, colors and all.

Shelly Koon, fifth grade, composed "I Had a Little Pencil":

> I had a little pencil
> I sharpened it every day.

It grew shorter and shorter
And then it went away.

There is even some science-fiction. Anthony Toscano, sixth grade, tells the story of "The Living Bubble Gum":

Two years ago, five people were on an expedition in the Himalayas. We were all in a cabin at the time when the bubble gum dropped from my mouth. We all stared at it. It was in a blob-like position and it climbed up my leg and up my shirt. All of a sudden, it was in my mouth. I had to chew it. No, I wasn't chewing it, it was chewing me! I ran outside and threw it as far as I could. But, the next day it was in my mouth. I could not get rid of it.

Next day we left for New York. In my apartment, I found the gum in my pocket. I took it out; and, in a flash, it was in my mouth! I took it out and put it in a jar. I watched it and was amazed at it!

It was three nights before it died. The gum was shrinking and decaying fast. A night later, I was at the table where the gum was and I said to myself, "It's going to die."

I shudder to think that I was the victim of the Living Bubble Gum.

And this by John Riley, also a sixth-grader:

Once I went to the North Pole to see if there was really a hole in the earth. I took my plane and when I was on my way I thought I saw a flying saucer. I followed it. It didn't see me because its rear-view mirror was ripped off. Then it slowed down. I pulled out my squirt gun. I had everything I needed, Johnry Seven exploding bombs, and my Mini Bike. As it slowed down and landed I landed on the other side of some bushes. I tore off my Mini Bike and went over to the saucer. It had a competition stripe on it so I figured it might be a teen-ager.

The ground started to move. I went down. As I was at the bottom I saw a . . .

As Alfred Hitchcock would say, I will now leave you in suspense. . . .

Marty Cheatle, another sixth-grader, begins his story,

"A Day with Melvin Nikenbosh the Scientist":

My name is Melvin Nikenbosh. I am just a little old scientist, and live in a little old town, in a little old laboratory. I get a little old salary of $40.00 and all the test tubes I can eat. I work for the S & M Green Stamp Company. They want me to invent a new way to stick stamps in books. . . .

# *FRONTIERS*

## "Conservation Is Not Enough"

GEORGE R. STEWART'S latest book—he also wrote *Storm Fire,* and *The Year of the Oath*—is about the pollution of the earth by man. Titled *Not So Rich As You Think* (Houghton Mifflin, 1968, $5.00), it is illustrated with drawings by Robert Osborn. There is nothing very new in this book except perhaps the devastating total its contents add up to. There are eleven chapters covering smog, sewage, pollution from factories, the 125,000,000 tons of garbage Americans produce each year, junk, litter, mineral refuse, agricultural refuse, and smoke. Mr. Stewart has done a lot of research and he has had help from interested parties and worried public officials.

In his first chapter he makes clear the unity of the "disposal" problem:

> Nothing is gained in the long run if one city or county—or even one nation—merely casts off its refuse upon some other one, whether this procedure means sending smog into the air currents, pouring sewage into a flowing river, or releasing atomic debris into the wind-driven atmosphere. Second, any fractionation of the elements of disposal is futile; they must be considered as one. It does no good, for instance, to get rid of garbage by burning if smog is thereby increased. Finally, the problem is one because there is only one environment. No matter where or from what the materials originate they must be passed on into the same earth, water, and air.
>
> Currently, the failure to grasp this unity is striking. Though scarcely a day passes without a story of some kind appearing in the newspapers, these accounts deal with one phase or another of the situation. One writer presents his story of mountains of garbage piling up in the outskirts of a city. Another tells of algae invading a previously crystal lake. A third one describes a river turned into liquid filth by factory effluents, manure from feeding pens, and raw sewage. A fourth and a twentieth and a hundredth add their accounts of smog, pesticides, atomic residues, litter, and so on, in a seemingly endless and confused list.

Mr. Stewart does a skillful job of compilation and his comment is urbane. He has some encouraging passages on a few municipalities and states which are doing good work in disposal, but the general effect of this book is to make the reader feel hopeless about the incredible and often poisonous messes which are invading people's lives. Our conclusion—we haven't the heart to repeat Mr. Stewart's gruesome facts—is that this horror story, while necessary to tell, is not the sort of stimulus that will change men's attitudes toward their relationships with the natural world. People aren't frightened into practicing decencies. They may make a few attempts to put things right, but present efforts to reduce pollution in America are on a par with our efforts to make "peace."

A more fundamental approach—although both are needed—is made by Lynn White, Jr.'s paper in *Science* for March 10, 1967, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis." Prof. White, a historian, contends that Western man's conception of nature—that its wealth is simply there to be used and exploited, without the slightest obligation—is the cause of the ugly disorder man has imposed on the world. Himself a Christian, Prof. White blames Christianity for this attitude, and he calls for a revolutionary change in religious belief. He favors a revival of the pan-psychism of St. Francis, who "tried to substitute the idea of the equality of all creatures, including man, for the idea of man's limitless rule of creation." Both science and technology, he says, "are so tinctured with Christian arrogance toward nature that no solution for our ecological crisis can be expected from them alone." The root of the trouble is religious, and therefore the remedy must be religious. "We must rethink and refeel our nature and destiny."

Richard L. Means, in his more recent article in the *Saturday Review* (last Dec. 2), says virtually the same thing. He finds that "the traditional thought pattern of Western society" conceives nature to be "a separate substance"—irrelevant to man. For a change in attitudes to take place, he thinks, man must accept his unity with nature. Even our ethical ideas ignore the natural world.

Harvey Cox's *Secular City*, Mr. Means points out, considers only "man's relations with man within this urban world, and not with the animals, the trees, the air—that is, the natural habitat."

Fourteen years ago, in an essay in the *American Scholar* for the Summer of 1954 (reprinted as a pamphlet by the University of Utah Press), Joseph Wood Krutch put these matters in broad terms under the heading, "Conservation Is Not Enough":

> What is commonly called conservation will not work in the long run, because it is not really conservation at all but rather disguised by elaborate scheming, a more knowledgeable variation of the old idea of a world for man's use only. That idea is unrealizable. But how can man be persuaded to cherish any other ideal unless he can learn to take some interest and some delight in the beauty and variety of the world for its own sake? . . .
>
> In our society we pride ourselves upon having reached a point where we condemn an individual whose whole aim in life is to acquire material wealth for himself. But his vulgarity is only one step removed from that of a society which takes no thought for anything except increasing the material wealth of the community. . . . Might it not be that man's success as an organism is genuinely a success so long, but only so long, as it does not threaten the extinction of everything not useful to and absolutely controlled by him, so long as that success is not incompatible with the success of nature as the varied and free thing which she is, so long as, to some extent, man is prepared to share the earth with others? . .

And then, the crucial question:

> But how can he learn to accept such a situation, to believe that it is right and proper, when the whole tendency of his thought and his interest carry him in a contrary direction? How can he learn to value and delight in the natural order larger than his own order? How can he come to accept, not sullenly but gladly, the necessity of sharing the earth?

Just conceivably, the answer may turn on recognition that not only human intelligence, but every form of life, is working toward some evolutionary fulfillment, and that the universe is a vast system of living reciprocities. A religion of nature with this as its central idea could become host to a new kind of science and develop an ethical awareness that would make "reverence for life" the plank of salvation for all.