

THEOLOGY REVISITED

IT has been many years since the general reader has been able to interest himself in theology or theological argument. As a West Coast Unitarian preacher once put it: "I don't care what a man's theology is, but I am very much interested in knowing what his *sociology* is." Save for Catholics and Fundamentalists, the problems of theology concern Christians very little, and for the Catholics and the Fundamentalists, theology does not represent "problems," but the dogmas on which their faith depends.

The role of theology may be quickly defined by borrowing a phrase from Milton: it is to "justify the ways of God to men." So long as the world and the condition of man in the world were regarded as works of God, the justification of them remained important. It was natural, therefore, when the scientific explanation of the origin of things replaced the religious explanation, that interest in theology should wane and die out. Men no longer looked to religion for practical explanations. Religion remained a source of ethical ideas and of sentiments, but it was not expected to supply doctrines of particular causation.

Today, however, with the decline of confidence in scientific explanation, and with the growing realization that scientific explanations and theories, however valuable in some respects, have never really touched certain crucial issues in human life, there is a renewed interest in the old questions which theology once set out to answer. This trend manifests in Christian thought through the various forms of "Neo-Orthodoxy," and may be found in other guises in other parts of the world. In Japan, for example, as a writer in the *Christian Century* (Oct. 9) points out, "more than 120 sects, commonly classified as New Religions, are now officially registered with the Japanese government." The revival of Idealism in Western philosophy is another symptom of the trend, while the spreading preoccupation of psychologists with the idea of the

self and the general interest in Oriental metaphysics and mystical teachings are other instances to take into account.

Inevitably, the discussion of such lines of thought brings a comparison of them with the teachings of Christian theology, and one such discussion in the pages of MANAS has brought the following fair-minded comment:

In your review of Richard Gregg's book, *A Compass for Civilization* (MANAS, Aug. 28, page 8), Vicarious Atonement is defined as "the teaching that we do not have to save ourselves, but that it will be done for us." I am not sure whether that is Gregg's definition or yours. [Ours—Eds.] I admit that the idea can be stated in such a way as to give that implication, but it is also used to stand for the idea that there are some things one cannot do for himself and may be done for him by others—but that it is the whole process of salvation in the teachings of many religious groups, I think unlikely.

Something of the same problem is raised in your Sept. 25 issue, top of page 7, right hand column, where you say "Revelation, in Christianity, replaces the searching intuition of the individual." It is not only in Christian mysticism that the element of individual striving is retained, nor for inward vision only. One of the strongest strands in Christian history is that God gave something indispensable, but Deity does not do the whole job—man must respond, and based on the power and help given by the Divine Spirit, goes on to work out the implications of the new relationship of his life with his fellows. Likewise, revelation is not a one-way street, but requires a receiver who is not merely passive, but active in the divine-human relationship. Perhaps Christian mysticism does not as a rule attend to the "very real problems which life presents to the *mind*," but there is a strong activity in many branches of the Christian church—witness Niebuhr and his colleagues as example. There are strong movements in both Catholicism and Protestantism which are even less cavalier toward the world and its problems than Eastern mysticism, which is cited there as better than Western mysticism in this.

I quite agree with the implication of the next statement in the paragraph, that for "the anomalies in divine justice there is no explanation at all." This is the weak point still in the teachings of most of the churches. There are, however, a good many who have not lost themselves in the trap of believing that man is merely passive, with no responsibility, with God directly responsible for everything that happens—as though man had no freedom, nor nature's "laws" any validity in the framework of Providence.

We can hardly quarrel with so generously impartial a critic, and hasten to agree that what he says concerning the attitudes "of many religious groups" seems entirely accurate. We might argue, however, that the willingness to assume responsibility for one's own salvation ("Deity does not do the whole job—man must respond") flows as much from the innate dignity of human beings as from doctrinal considerations.

The problem of how to be "saved" has been debated from one extreme to the other—from Augustinian Predestination to Unitarian Humanism—for almost the entire period of Christian history. Augustine's doctrine is carefully summarized by Charles Bigg in his *Christian Platonists of Alexandria*:

What he [Augustine] says amounts in fact to this, that there is no such thing as Freedom of Will, but that the man himself is free when his energy is unimpeded. He can do what he likes, but never what he dislikes. It is a tenable view, but it carries with it obligations; and if these are disregarded, it becomes at once immoral. Augustine did disregard them. Action, he maintains, follows the strongest motive, and the strongest motive is given to us, either by the direct operation of God, or by Nature. But Nature is tainted; hence prior to Grace the strongest motive is invariably tainted. . . . He [Augustine] has to combine his Determinism, not only with the terrible doctrine that all men are reprobate for a sin that was not their own, but with the scarcely less terrible doctrine that the healing love of God flows only through the ordinances of a Church, from which all but a fraction of humanity have been shut out by His own direct act. The unbaptized infant is doomed to eternal exclusion from the Beatific Vision.

It is not our purpose, here, to win a point by making all Christians Augustinians or Calvinists, but

the fact is that Christians have never been able to deal, to any impressive degree of satisfaction, with the questions of Freedom, the origin of and responsibility for Evil, and the means to final Salvation. The common-sense view is that if man has responsibility for his own salvation, then he must have the power of decision; and if this is the case, then he must also have freedom. But if he has freedom, then he is in a position to challenge the foreknowledge of God of all future human acts; and if foreknowledge be challenged, the omniscience of the Deity is challenged, with the result that human beings become some sort of rival demi-gods who have taken on important powers and attributes of God.

Except for some dark periods in Western history, common sense has usually triumphed, but always at the cost of theological clarity and consistency.

The form which the doctrine of the Atonement has taken in historical Christianity is adequately stated in Darwell Stone's *Outlines of Christian Dogma*:

In spite of considerable differences on matters of detail, it may be truly said that historical Christianity is committed to the belief that man fell from a state of holiness to a state of sin, that the effects of sin are a part of the inheritance of the human race, and that a state of holiness must now be the result of restoration and new gifts. Since "in Adam all die," there is need of a gift of life which God alone can bestow. Since "in Christ" "all" "shall be made alive," there is need of the will of man associating himself with the work of Christ and receiving his grace. . . .

Holy Scripture . . . states with great definiteness the fact of the Atonement accomplished by the death of Christ. As to the details of the method, it says nothing. . . . the Church has always taught that man is set free from the evils produced by the Fall and recovers the good lost through the Fall by means of the death of Christ. . . . throughout Christian teaching it is affirmed that Christ's death was a sacrifice for human sin. . . . Christ's death satisfied for the salvation of men. It was an offering on behalf of man of that which man owed and could not pay; but at the same time it is required from man that he allow the results of Christ's work to be in his own life if he is to be benefited by the satisfaction of Christ.

The foregoing approximates a practical resolution of the difficulties in the Christian doctrine of salvation by insisting that Christ is the Saviour, but also that man, in order to avail himself of this benefit, must submit himself to faith in Christ and assist in such ways as are prescribed for the process. So long as the world of Christendom knew little or nothing of other great religions, the logical difficulties of this doctrine, being metaphysical, could be ignored. But today Christians are confronted by the fact that a majority of the world's population are not Christian at all, and do not believe in Christ as a completely unique divine being. On a strict interpretation of Christian doctrine, therefore, the majority of the world's population are damned.

Christians who follow Richard Gregg in seeking a way out of this intolerable situation find a humane and ethical answer, but is it a *Christian* answer? Gregg wrote:

I would say that any statement of spiritual or metaphysical truths in story form is valid, whether it seems only symbolic or purports to be historical. All these I would call myths. I include the story of Christ's life and works as a myth, on an equal footing with the stories of Buddha, Krishna, Lao Tsu, the classic Greek gods, the Celtic mythology, the Norse sagas and a good many fairy stories and Polynesian and African folk-lore. I am not saying that Christ or Buddha were not actual historical persons; I am saying that their lives have symbolic as well as historic meaning. They illustrate spiritual truths and principles.

Here, Christ becomes a principle resident in the hearts of all men, and the God of the Christians a pantheistic God of which Christ is an emanation, while salvation becomes an inward transaction, a form of true self-realization. What is lost? Nothing, really, is lost, except the doctrine of the Vicarious Atonement, and the externality of God and Christ, on which the Atonement had depended.

The point is that in the Pantheistic or "Godless" religions, the real burden of human development rests of philosophic necessity upon the shoulders of man, who grows in spiritual potentiality as a result; while in theistic systems such as Christianity, which make a separation between God and man, the chief hope of man for a spiritual future (and in religion,

what other future is there?) lies outside himself and always *essentially* beyond his control. There can be no doubt of the fact that many Christians—the Quakers are a good example—come quite close to being Pantheists, without calling themselves such, by making their God-idea very much of an inward calling.

The passage about mysticism cited by our correspondent had really only one point to make. Mysticism is concerned with inward perception of the "Way." Since it is *inward*, mysticism both East and West tends to be pantheistic, but those forms of mysticism which accompany the overtly pantheistic religions commonly provide disciplined theories of knowledge, taking into account the growth, through numerous stages of awakening, of the soul, which shoulders its own burdens of evolution or redemption. Philosophic mysticism, in other words, has a clear "scientific" side, while mysticism joined with theistic religion tends, on the other hand, to promise only the "Beatific Vision." No doubt the active intellects of intelligent Christians compensate for the lack of what may be called the "scientific" side of the religious quest, but activity of this sort, although it may be admired, is something that is *added to* Christianity, and is not intrinsically a part of that religion.

We suspect that many of the differences among contemporary thinkers concerning what is "Christian" depend largely upon definitions. Should a religion gain definition from the highest implications of its most sublime expositors, or should orthodox exegesis and the practices of the majority be taken as authoritative? Who or what is to be vindicated in such inquiries? And for what reason? Not only men, perhaps, but institutions and traditions, orthodoxies and organizations as well, will have to die and be "born again," if they are to be "saved."

Letter from the Night

PSYCHOLOGISTS and psychiatrists are rarely politically minded, but unfortunately many politicians are the most malignant types of psychologists. With complete immunity they practice on the mass, without license and without even being called. Mental health is not their aim; mental ill-health and the destruction of culture provide them with their security, such as it is. Their heads are filled with a lighter-than-air need for office; they have no more intellectual support than a toy balloon. Yet they seem to be winning the battle for the mind.

In the middle of the night I awakened thinking that if any individual from an Arkansas mob were isolated and given a sanity hearing in a completely clinical setting, he would most surely be committed as "dangerous to himself and others." Delusions of grandeur would be an outstanding feature of his psychosis—he feels himself superior to and ordained to control and humiliate fellow humans. Then, as anyone who degrades another must, he feels that those he degrades are plotting against him. Thus it is that a totally false idea leads to an issue that brings out homicidal impulses. He differs from other psychotics only in that the "voices" that brought about his pathological thinking were real, that is to say, they were uttered by a living creature separate from himself.

One is brought up short by the power of a Faubus. The tense, the insecure, the resentfully ignorant, the morally impoverished, all those dissatisfied with their role in life, suddenly find, as the popular psychologists say, "a release from nervous tension." No long years on the couch, no shock therapy, lobotomy, or even tranquilizers—a Faubus speaks, and acts, and hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of maladjusted people are suddenly and quite rabidly "adjusted." That the adjustment is to a disease much worse than that from which they previously suffered doesn't mute the ecstasy and rage of release.

These people, as a whole, are proclaiming Christians and yet the words Christ spoke upon the Mount brought about no lasting "adjustment." But then, Christ didn't know what a Faubus knows—that it is far easier to adjust man's emotions to hatred than it is to love. Had Christ been able to consult with a Southern politician, or a Madison Avenue persuader, he need not have changed his sermon in order to make it effective. He would have ended it by calling out the militia and screaming, "Hate thou all those who do not Love!" And when he addressed the multitude in a quieter and more persuasive mood, he would have said cajolingly, "Are you using last year's prejudices? Are they making you a little uncomfortable and giving you a shabby feeling? You need not suffer. Love and tolerance are the design of the future but we have them available today. Join me and we'll wheel and deal."

The above is not intended in blasphemy, but the fact that mass prejudices can be so easily induced contradicts the nation's Christian heritage and tradition. That which is supposed to be the most powerful motivation in our national life is powerless. The press describes Little Rock as a city with a church on every other corner.

This whole spectacle, it seems to me, points toward the failure of our leadership to consult with and make use of the advances of modern, scientific psychology and psychiatry. Perhaps rather than waiting until Federal troops had to be used and a conference of governors was called, President Eisenhower might have summoned the nation's best psychiatric minds as soon as the Supreme Court handed down its decision on integration. In a day when you can reach all the people any time, surely an educational campaign could have been planned and an effective program of mental hygiene could have anticipated the Kaspers, the Faubuses, *et al.* Although it may not be an ideal condition, people can be made to feel superior through tolerance. Through further education it is even possible that people could

become tolerant of their need for superiority, and thus dissolve it.

A lot of damage has been done, but the sick hatred we now see is an acute but not necessarily chronic condition. When the President calls in the doctors, if he ever does; they should be men who treat illness and not the "sales motivators." In Topeka, Detroit, Cambridge, New Haven, San Francisco—in clinics all over the land—are physicians of the mind who if given a chance could each replace a division of paratroopers. The treatment they would offer might take time but its effects would be lasting.

It is not my intention to be critical of President Eisenhower, but one of my night thoughts was that it is strange that the man who has been President of Columbia University consistently goes to industry, the financial houses, the military, and the advertising agencies for advisers. C. Wright Mills was one of his faculty members at Columbia and I couldn't help wondering what a difference it might have made if he had called this great sociologist—a Southerner—and gotten his advice shortly after the integration decision. . . .

But that is what happens when you have insomnia—you dream when you're awake.

W.W.

Los Angeles

REVIEW

THE LATEST OVERSTREET BOOK

IT is not difficult to admire any volume produced by Harry and Bonaro Overstreet, for this unusual "team" always contrives to deal effectively with themes of psychological importance. Even an interested teen-ager can read the Overstreets without difficulty, while respect is also due from—and shown by—practicing psychiatrists, who likewise find their ideas worthy of consideration.

The Mind Goes Forth (Norton, 1956) is devoted to the problem of teaching people "how to make living space for one another's minds and opinions." The drama of human understanding, the Overstreets say, is the greatest drama of all—the venture of the mind beyond familiar horizons, to terrains occupied by other humans whose mental processes have different reference points. The story of bigotry is the story of *developed* techniques to "shut out" opinions and evaluations with which we do not personally agree, and since bigotry has played such a large role in both religious and political affairs, what is most needed is the determination to break down its walls.

The first chapter, "The Practice of Understanding," provides a typically graphic Overstreet illustration of how we have allowed personal weaknesses to control our lives:

We recall here a cartoon. It shows two duelists standing back to back, poised for the signal that will make them pace off the fatal distance from which they must shoot to kill. All is in order for one of the traditional, formalized dramas of conflict. Their seconds, standing in the background now, have seen to the proper preliminaries. All is in order. . . except that one duelist has turned his head enough to say wistfully to the other, over his shoulder, "I don't feel very insulted this morning, do you?"

He does not feel very insulted. Yet in a few moments he may be dead. For the drama of conflict does not easily set free even those who start it, once it has taken over and cast them as its victims.

It would be impossible to estimate the number of human lives and relationships that have ended in ruin because individuals, groups, and nations that no longer feel "very insulted," but only tired and trapped, still see nothing to do except pace off, as it were, the final irrevocable steps to disaster.

However useful and stimulating, in brief, conflict may be as an emergency measure, it can never serve as the sustaining drama of life. It too easily brings all parties involved to a point where pride, fear, and an inability to see any choice except to "liquidate," or "be liquidated" make broad the way that leads to destruction.

The Mind Goes Forth, we suppose, may be charged with being repetitive, yet basic truths need to be viewed from as many vantage points as possible. The Overstreets' intent is plain from such chapter and section titles as "The Drama of Understanding," "Making Psychic Space for One Another," "The Dimension of Knowledge," and "The Space-Making Personality." Like Karen Horney, the Overstreets endeavor to illustrate the distinction between "the roles we play" as beings conditioned to a certain sort of society, and "our basic human role." One emerges from reading the Overstreets with something more, however, than a preachment of humanist ethics, for the attempt is made to specify the means by which the increase of basic human understanding may be accomplished: "There is no reason why the manner of the mind's going forth to meet other minds—even those that widely disagree—should not be as expert as any other well-learned skill. In this greatest of our undertakings, there is no virtue in being clumsy."

In a chapter devoted to "Space-making Institutions," the authors point out that, instead of decrying the dogmatic intolerance we find so common, an effort should be made to utilize those public institutions which help to "make mental space." Libraries and adult educational councils, for instance, should be patronized as much as possible:

We are exceedingly lucky in our western civilization, and specifically in this country, in the fact that so many of our bedrock institutions are

space-making. This is so basically true that when individuals are denied room to stretch their minds, develop their powers, participate in government "by the consent of the governed," or move into associations of their own choosing to enjoy the company of others as free as themselves, the basic intention of our society is somehow being flouted. Either someone is exerting more power over other people's lives than he has a right to exert; or else our basic intention, at this particular point, has not yet equipped itself with the secondary institutions through which it can rightly be enacted.

As might be expected, the Overstreets contribute an analysis of our vulnerability to anti-Communist hysteria—we simply refuse to venture into discussion and reading which might require some modification of our present opinions:

One reason, we ourselves feel certain, why the extremists among us have had more influence than their numbers would justify is that the rest of us have largely failed to use the psychic space open to us for exchanging ideas across lines of difference. We have too often been satisfied simply to express our own ideas, read newspapers we agree with, assemble with our own kind—and call this the practice of freedom. We have thus tended to become self-repetitive rather than self-corrective; self-defensive and self-congratulatory rather than open and generous.

This has been true even among groups dedicated to the defense of freedom. In the teaching profession we have seen this sort of thing at work. As a professional group, we teachers have to be firm and clear in stating issues we take to be basic to the mind's freedom and in holding the line against invasion of that freedom. Yet we can scarcely afford to retreat into an exclusive, high-tensioned companionship with those who share our fears: those with whom we insistently talk about them in a language of ready agreement; and from whom we borrow, if not a sense of security, at least the comfort of having someone to shiver with.

The very temptation we face, in a time of fear and anger to "huddle" with our mental, emotional, and professional kind can lead us into a far from healthy state. It involves the risk that, exercising freedom of speech and assembly, we will talk ourselves into adding phantom threats to real ones—hitting out as furiously, or as nervously, at the one as at the other.

It involves the risk, also, that we will tacitly agree to play down certain dangers that are both real and important. To our minds one of the strangest phenomena of our time is the extent to which those of us whose very profession depends upon the mind's freedom have "agreed" that the issue of Communism in our midst is to be deprecated rather than wrestled with.

From the standpoint of the "liberating mind," there is some psychological truth to be found in every religion and philosophy, even every political formulation. To venture, without prejudice, far afield from our familiar ideas, is the only means by which we can avoid stultification of our faculties and bondage to dogmas.

COMMENTARY

KAGAWA'S ORGANIZATIONS

A CORRESPONDENT in Weston, West Virginia, musing on the question of organization—what it is good for—has this to say:

Sensing something of a life that is an end within itself, one at times groans in agony to know what to do to help others to grasp this idea. Of one thing he becomes increasingly sure: Organization (power) is not going to help others to gain that sense. The two things belong to utterly different worlds.

Sincere people are using organization (power) in an effort to help the world. They feel that they are doing so little. Yet the organization is moving (power *is* being expended), and surely, *some* good is being done. But it is a big hurdle to get over into the other world, into life that is an end in itself. Here, to the human eye, one is doing absolutely nothing to help the world. (The kingdom cometh not by observation, lo, here, lo, there.)

This reader, it seems to us, has hit upon a distinction of great importance. Some things we can do with organization, and cannot do without it; other things are alien to, untouched by, the organizational approach.

To give organization its due, the relief of economic injustice and the development of socio-economic forms which enable all human beings to enjoy decent living conditions: this is the work of organization. We have been reading, lately, about Toyohiko Kagawa, the great Japanese reformer and Christian. The story of Kagawa's success in organization for social reform in Japan reveals a special kind of a moral genius.

After an American education at Princeton (theology, mathematics, and the sciences), Kagawa returned to live in the slums of Kobe. There he organized Japan's first labor school, the first labor newspaper, and founded the Japanese Federation of Labor. During the 1919 rice riots, in the slum districts where Kagawa was known, the police stood by with folded arms while the hungry people quietly took (without paying for it) the rice they needed for one day's food. Even the

rice dealers did not protest. Kagawa's pacifism stayed the hand of the governor, who refused to call out the troops to suppress occasional acts of violence in other parts of Kobe.

Japanese farmers, hearing how Kagawa had helped labor, called on him for advice. Soon he was meeting regularly with delegations from thirty-four provinces, helping them to organize for education and self-improvement.

When Tokyo was laid waste by the 1923 earthquake, Japanese government officials turned to Kagawa for help. He had been "black-listed" for his labor activities, and jailed for leading strikes, but now he was summoned by the Premier to take charge of the work of social reconstruction in Tokyo. Ten years later he was appointed head of the Social Bureau of that city by the Mayor—a post which he accepted on condition that he could refuse the salary of 18,000 yen.

Entering politics, Kagawa started a (Christian) socialist party and won his campaign for universal manhood suffrage in 1925. He then began working for woman suffrage. Since 1918, he had been active in reviving the consumer cooperatives of Japan, and in 1933, as head of the Social Bureau, he turned the old-fashioned charities of Tokyo into consumers' cooperatives. Japan's Depression was worse and longer than America's. Through cooperation, Japan's middle-class population, 90 per cent of which lived in Tokyo, fought to maintain its self-respect. Kagawa helped the farmers to form producers' cooperatives and then brought the consumer and producer co-ops together to establish marketing cooperatives.

Japan, as Helen Topping points out in her informative pamphlet, *Introducing Kagawa* (1935), is about the size of Montana. This tiny country, which is 10,000 square miles smaller than California, must support a population of more than 89 million people! Only fifteen per cent of Japan's land is arable, so that food production is a major problem. Kagawa has been teaching the

Japanese farmers to raise tree crops (chestnuts and walnuts) on the mountain-sides, and to pasture goats and sheep on land that will not support larger animals.

Kagawa also started a cooperative hospital in Tokyo, and by 1935 there were sixty-seven such hospitals around the country, bringing both healing and preventive medicine to Japan's rural poor.

Kagawa is now sixty-nine, but still hard at work. As vice-president of the Japanese Union of World Federalists, he campaigns for cooperation through world organization, while maintaining contact with the numerous other projects he has fathered. His life is indeed a study in what *can* be done through organization, when a man like Kagawa is at the helm.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

HUTCHINS VIEWS FROM ABROAD

ON the strength of a brief publisher's announcement in the *Manchester Guardian*, we sent for a volume entitled, *Some Observations on American Education*, to which Robert M. Hutchins' name was attached, not knowing whether it contained what would be "original material" for American readers, or a collection of Mr. Hutchins' earlier writings. *Some Observations* did, however, originate in England and is, therefore, presumably new to MANAS readers. The book is based upon lectures given at the Universities of Manchester, Birmingham, Edinburgh, Oxford, and the University College of North Staffordshire, by Dr. Hutchins, offering fresh formulations of his familiar themes. Hutchins, it seems quite apparent, had a lot of fun with his lecturing, whenever he got around to relating the problems of education to professionalized collegiate athletics and to the activities of "loyalty committees."

A brief statement of the American educational dilemma appears in the concluding lecture, titled "Today and Tomorrow." Dr. Hutchins is not really a pessimistic man, but he insists that education acquire intelligible definition. In this lecture he devotes some time to what education is *not*, before offering a definition of what it should be. In America, he feels, a superficial understanding of "democracy" has led to the belief that everyone should have all the "education" he can get, but that each student should himself determine his course of study. Now the trouble with this approach is that when educators start accommodating their courses to the desires of undergraduates, they can easily lose sight of the fact that their real task is to introduce young people to broader and more percipient viewpoints. Unless education, through all of its stages, is a challenge to reassessment, we have no bulwark against the deadly onset of social and political

conformity. "Accommodating" schools tend, quite clearly, to produce such conformity. But let Mr. Hutchins speak for himself:

Renan remarked that "countries which, like the United States, have set up a considerable popular instruction without any serious higher education, will long have to expiate their error by their intellectual mediocrity, the vulgarity of their manners, their superficial spirit, their failure in general intelligence." This statement seems true. But the United States may now be going beyond the situation Renan described, for we are tending to abandon the considerable popular instruction to which he referred and to substitute for it a considerable popular accommodation.

Undoubtedly conditions that we may hope are temporary have accentuated the anti-intellectualism of American life and have brought the tendencies of American education into sharp relief. The Cold War and the opportunity it offers to identify conformity with patriotism have gone far to silence that independent criticism and that full and frank discussion which seem indispensable to any system of education worthy of the name.

The United States has experienced periods like this in the past and has emerged from them without perceptible permanent damage. Presumably the Cold War will some day come to an end. But unless there is a change in the American conception of education, how can we be sure that something else will not become a force transforming the educational system into a place of accommodation?

Since the British are far less adolescent concerning the evaluation of the function of athletics in university life, Hutchins' English audiences must have delighted in his digs at the obvious over-valuation of football as a "character builder." After describing such amusing instances as that of a college football player in Colorado who successfully sued the university under the workman's compensation act when he was injured in practice and his income stopped, Dr. Hutchins turns to an amazing statement from the president of a football-minded college:

The condition of the higher learning is such that responsible educators can abandon the pursuit of a rational and intelligible programme and suggest that football is the spiritual core of education. One of

them, the President of the College of the Pacific, has lately pointed out that philosophy was once the "integrating force" in higher education and that such a force is needed today. He then repudiates the claims of science or religion to this role. He goes on: "The curriculum has become diversified; there are numerous electives. Few study the same courses or sit under the same professor. . . . So, in this period of intellectual and social disintegration of the American college, all unite in football. . . . Football has become more than a spectacle; it has become a symbol; it has become one of the great intangibles not only of college but of our American life. Actually, if you want to look at it on a higher level, football has become the spiritual core of the modern campus."

Concerning the tension between the search for truth—which should underlie the purposes of any community educational institution—and the requirement of dead-letter conformity by way of "loyalty oaths," Hutchins again provides a humorous note:

The State Superintendent of Education in Indiana is rereading "Robin Hood" to discover whether it contains Communist doctrine, as charged by a member of the Indiana Textbook Commission. The same commissioner has urged that all references to Quakers be eliminated from school books because they support communism. She said, "Quakers don't believe in fighting wars. All the men they can get to believe that they don't need to go to war, the better off the communists are. It's the same as their crusade for peace—everybody lay down his arms and they'll take over."

In California some embarrassment has arisen when a child, rather than its nurse, has been required to take the anti-disloyalty oath. A Pasadena three-year-old earned \$3 as a model for an art class in a tax-supported college. Her mother was informed that the money could not be paid unless the child signed the oath. The child could not write. To the suggestion that she might take the oath for the child the mother not unreasonably replied that she could not do so because the words of the oath are, "Within the five years immediately preceding the taking of this oath I have not been a member, etc." College officials say that they cannot pay the money.

And now, a less-than-humorous matter:

The Los Angeles *Mirror* on 25 March 1954, published the results of a questionnaire addressed to 250 teachers of history and political science in the

high schools of Los Angeles. Fifty-three per cent of them said that they did not feel as free to discuss social studies, history, geography, political science, and international relations as they did five or ten years ago. Fifty-five and a half per cent said that fear of their jobs caused teachers to be cautious about "controversial issues." Sixty-seven per cent said that teachers felt they should be cautious about subscribing to certain books and magazines and about attending meetings or joining organizations. Twenty-one and a half per cent said that the Bill of Rights, the Constitution, and the Fifth Amendment are considered dangerous classroom topics because of the teachers' fear that they will be misinterpreted. Forty per cent said they avoided such topics as the New Deal, public housing, Senator McCarthy, and Communism. Fifty-one per cent said that the teachers of Los Angeles were afraid to teach "in the manner which they feel will best educate our children."

One wonders why it is so difficult for some men and women of "normal I.Q." to realize that "free expression" on some topics is of little value unless untrammelled ideative exploration takes place on all other topics as well. All subjects, ultimately, have vitally important connections, so that to be "tolerant" of deviating opinion in some areas and not in others means that the supposed tolerance is always something less than it pretends to be. It is only through the disciplines of philosophy and psychology, we suppose, that the interdependence of all ideative liaisons can be grasped. Hutchins is a philosopher, and this is why he finds it impossible to discuss the meaning of "the higher learning" in universities without analyzing political and social attitudes made manifest by those who set an ambiguous tone for university policy.

(*Some Observations on American Education*, 105 pages, may be obtained from Cambridge University Press, 200 Euston Road, London N.W. 1, England.)

FRONTIERS Criticism in the Nation

THERE may be better reviewers than the *Nation* reviewers, but if there are, we don't get to read them. Harold Clurman's articles on the theater, while no doubt valuable to play-goers, are even more valuable, we think, to the general reader, for the clear basis of their judgments. Robert Hatch on the movies usually says things you can't get out of your mind for days, and Kenneth Rexroth on literature has a similar effect. Illustrations:

In the *Nation* for Oct. 12, Clurman reports on *West Side Story*, a musical comedy which he predicts will run for a year. After paying his respects to the technical excellence, good cast, and occasional originality of the production, Clurman says what seems to him must be said: the show is a phony. The book deals with teen-age gang warfare in New York, but Clurman finds the treatment so "slick" that he condemns it as "intellectual slumming by sophisticates for purposes of popular showmanship." In his concluding comment, he puts his finger on the offensive element in a lot of similar material which is supposed to uplift as well as entertain:

Our theatre is too clever by far. Talent we possess to a formidable degree, but in true moral-artistic perception (they are indissolubly linked) we are pathetically undeveloped. So it is possible for such gifted people as the authors of *West Side Story* to mix the pain of a real problem, penny sociology, liberal nineteen-thirtyish propaganda, Betty Comden-Adolphe Green fun and the best of the advanced but already accepted musical comedy techniques into an amalgam which eliminates what is supposed to be the heart of the matter. For above all we want at one and the same time to be progressive and to please several million playgoers, the ticket brokers and the movie companies. That is not how *Threepenny Opera* was made.

Stereotypes are all right in parody and burlesque, but they can have no primary role in "true moral-artistic perception." Stereotypes may be useful to convey a complex idea which needs neither questioning nor elaboration, but the real "point" of a communication is made into something frivolous when embodied in stereotypes.

So much of modern entertainment is mixed up in this way. In *Oklahoma*, for example, regarded as wholesome, clean fun by nearly all who saw it, the ballet seemed a strange intrusion of something deadly serious. Rod Steiger was too convincing as a psychopath to be carried along without emotional mishap in a vehicle of upward-and-onward, happy-go-lucky Americanism. You may go to the theater to be either kicked or tickled, but they ought not to do it to you all within the same five minutes. You come away with a sensation of being sold out by people who do not really believe in anything, but who are continually striking attitudes which are supposed to represent important beliefs.

Two paragraphs from Hatch show how well worth reading he is, whether or not you see the pictures he writes about. Even if he should happen to be wrong in his judgments, he is still worth reading:

A quartet of short films from Mexico, *The Roots*, feels like a venture put out with official backing. It is devoted, with profound earnestness, to the message that Indians are as human as anyone else. This is an awkward thesis—it is patronizing even to state it—and it was insisted on with so little finesse that I became embarrassed for everyone concerned. To make matters more difficult, the picture is made with a non-professional cast; amateur performers, except when they are handled by a marvelously sensitive and patient director, always tend to look inexpressive and dull-witted.

The stories themselves are a little too pat—almost O. Henry cute—and I felt I was being manipulated into accepting a premise of brotherhood that I never questioned in the first place. The photography is clean and the faces and carriage of the Indians are extremely beautiful when they are caught unawares.

This would be a difficult comment to make, if the reviewer had not thought through rather carefully the relation between his æsthetic and social principles. For most artists and writers are on the side of the Indians—any Indians, anywhere and will feel an impulse to help along anything that can be regarded as *for* the Indians. But manifestly, Hatch writes as he does just because he is *for* the Indians. Good intentions, in the arts, are never quite enough.

Again, it is a question of artistic-moral perception. A work that is patronizing cannot be art. Doubtless

the makers of the picture didn't *want* to be patronizing, and, if they read Hatch, will be hurt and humiliated by the suggestion that they were. Maybe they weren't. We haven't seen the picture and a friend in Mexico declares that it is a rare and beautiful film, which should be seen. Maybe Hatch was comparing it with his recollections of the kind of films Robert Flaherty used to make (*Nanook of the North*, *Moana*, and *Man of Aran*), which is probably asking too much.

The point worth remembering, however, is that works of art with a social message often have some difficulty in avoiding this defect. There is something corrupting about patronage. Hatch's notes on this film are valuable because he articulates the uneasiness that may be experienced in regard to all do-good activities which reflect an unconscious condescension.

The Rexroth review in this issue of the *Nation* concerns a volume of prose poems by Rimbaud. One would have to know Rimbaud's work and be familiar, also, with what Rexroth calls "the whole Rimbaud gospel" of protest and revolt to evaluate the application to the French poet of Rexroth's criticism. The general point of what Rexroth has to say, however, easily stands alone:

The neuroses whose treatment now consumes so much of the budget of the more fashionable members of the American upper middle classes are, by and large palpitations of behavior due to unsatisfied bourgeois appetites and lack of life aim. In the young, especially in the young poor, the syndrome is called delinquency. Its ravages are often attributed to television. Television has a lot to do with it all right, but not the horror serials, the Westerns and the crime shockers. The real source of corruption is the commercial. It is possible to misinterpret a demoralized craving for Cadillacs as "revolt" against the restraints and inequities of society. Revolutionaries have not hitherto expressed themselves by snatching the gaudier appurtenances of conspicuous expenditure. Genuine revolt goes with an all too definite life aim—hardly with the lack of it.

Rexroth refuses the dignity of genuine rebellion to the delinquents, whether juvenile or adult, of our society. And he will not accept the violence and brutality of television and comic books as primary causes. The real trouble is subtler and more widespread—the generally conceded contention that anything which is "profitable" needs little more to

justify its existence. You may do all manner of fine things, and doubtless should, but first you have to show a profit. The commercials are like outdoor advertising, which may deface the landscape but are none-the-less necessary. We talk of *limiting* or *controlling* the acquisitive instinct in its more vulgar manifestations, but never of amputating it. It is doubtless the contempt Rexroth feels for this sort of "prudence" that drives him wild, leading to the extremes which soberer poets dislike. A wild attitude of no-compromise, however, is certainly a lesser evil than the wrong sort of "balance" in relation to commercialism.

But what these three *Nation* pieces have in common is evidence of recovery from the habit of pressing a "social" attitude or argument in the fields of literature and art. The "social implications" of art have to be spontaneous byproducts of the artist's sense of justice or they are neither social nor art, but only second-hand posturings which mirror the sort of conformity to which artists sometimes become subject.

The expression of the artist *must* be better than themes which have been professionalized or propagandized into trite lines of criticism. This is principal among Harold Clurman's objections to *West Side Story*, and it figures, also, in Robert Hatch's comment on the Mexican film, *The Roots*. Kenneth Rexroth has little patience with a "social" interpretation of phenomena which, far from exhibiting the drives of inchoate revolutionary protest, signify only "unsatisfied bourgeois appetites and lack of life aim."

It is true, of course, as Clurman says, that moral and artistic perception are indissolubly linked, and that if the only "morality" of an age is social, then the artists will produce works of social content. For a time they can do this with power and integrity, but when the system of social morality becomes systematized, codified, and has been administered for a generation or so of bureaucrats and martinets—not to say executioners—the artists need to give expression to a less mechanical and less stultified view of good and evil.

The *Nation* reviewers, it seems to us, are working hard at this project.