

PANTHEISTIC RELIGION

WITH considerable satisfaction, the editors of MANAS are now able to report that the comment and discussion so far offered to readers are eliciting definite response, making it possible to deal with some of the problems raised in the sharper focus of an interchange of ideas. A California reader writes:

If "Tomorrow's Age of Faith" [MANAS, March 3] concludes with your purpose, I feel that philosophical and historical analyses will result in a feeling that a personal God is a pretty vital part of creative living, and that your thought of impersonality has been in vogue before. And as to the clergy, well, are not the magazine, your subscription list and your writers also recognition of the necessity of an organization? Join some church, catch up the world-wide sweep of its program, feel the need of working with a group of boys or girls, free the church of its short-comings, and it may be that the church can become more of what it might be.

First, then, this correspondent believes that the study of history and philosophy will lead a man who has become sceptical of his own scepticism to adopt the idea of a personal God as the keystone of his faith for living. Some historical treatises—such as Lea's *History of the Inquisition*, Lecky's *History of European Morals* and his *History of the Rise of Rationalism in Europe*, and Andrew D. White's *History of the Warfare of Science with Theology*—suggest another conclusion, and we know of no really great philosophers who have defended the personal-God-idea. The real question, however, is rather, Why do men need the God-idea at all?

Fundamentally, the God-idea represents the quest for meaning. Those who become Pantheists—who choose, that is, to think of the foundation of all life as an impersonal, spiritual unity—do so because of some inward sense of being part of a greater whole. There is no denying the presence of what may be called the "religious

instinct" in human beings. The incompleteness of the separate life of the individual seems to demand a balance in religious or philosophical conviction, and the name for this balancing or completing principle, traditionally in the West, is "God."

But over against the primary reality of Spirit, or Unity, is set another idea, involving an equal necessity for human beings: the idea of moral or spiritual independence. We want a sense of wholeness with the rest of life, but we also want to preserve the integrity of the rational spirit. There is something in man which struggles unceasingly against any attempt to confine the mind and impose arbitrary limits upon the growth of human understanding. Sometimes it seems as though there were an ardent mystic and an earnest atheist lashed together, back to back, in every human being, each one asserting his partial truth as though it were the truth entire, and trying mightily to break away from the other in order to enjoy a life of uncontradicted freedom.

The problem, then, for the human intelligence, is to find a way of stating *both* truths so that they will constitute a harmony instead of a discord, and this harmony must be not only a theoretical synthesis, but afford, also, a practical guide to daily life.

It is an honest facing of this problem, we think, that effectively rules out the possibility of embracing belief in a personal God. A personal being—God or not—is a limited being. A limited being cannot unify, but himself needs unification with other limited beings. There is no objection, of course, to having lots of personal Gods, so long as no one of them is described as omnipresent, omnipotent and all-knowing. In fact, there is a great deal to be said for the idea that every human being is a kind of personal god (a kind of personal

devil, too), for humans are creative beings, and this, after all, is the first qualification for godhood.

From a practical viewpoint, the conception of impersonal deity as an all-pervasive spiritual reality in which all beings are ultimately united offers the unique advantage of a unifying religious idea which makes a purely ethical appeal. The "wrath of God" is a ridiculous expression to a pantheist. No man can either hate or fear or go to war because of his belief in an impersonal deity. Nor could such a God exercise any partisan influence on the course of history. Among pantheists, the idea of a "chosen people" would be unknown. Men would embody what may be called "spiritual" influence only to the degree that they were devoted to the universal welfare—and that welfare would receive definition from human knowledge of the laws of Nature, not from any theology or special revelation.

It is certain that genuine scientists can entertain no other notion of God than the pantheistic idea. For the scientist, the testing ground for *any* idea, religious or some other, is the laboratory of experience. Some scientists have come very close to a kind of Pythagorean pantheism in their description of Nature. Not only scientists, but all men who have in them something of the scientific spirit of wanting to *know*, of being unsatisfied with any form of hearsay, are either embryonic or more or less developed pantheists. Take for example the reflections of Admiral Richard Byrd, set down while he was at death's door, alone—he had been alone for months—at an isolated outpost on Little America. Wracked by physical pain, haunted by the realization that although his stove was poisoning him with carbon monoxide gas, he would die in a day or two without its heat, he was nevertheless able to write in his diary:

The universe is not dead. Therefore, there is an Intelligence there, and it is all-pervading. At least one purpose, possibly the major purpose, of that Intelligence is the achievement of universal harmony.

...

The human race, then, is not alone in the universe. Though I am cut off from human beings, I am not alone.

For untold ages man has felt an awareness of that Intelligence. Belief in it is the one point where all religions agree. It has been called by many names. Many call it God.

Even before misfortune overtook him, in his quiet loneliness Byrd felt the awesome rhythm of the cosmos.

It was enough [he wrote] to catch that rhythm, momentarily to be myself a part of it. In that instant I could feel no doubt of man's oneness with the universe. The conviction came that that rhythm was too orderly, too harmonious, too perfect to be a product of blind chance—that, therefore, there must be purpose in the whole and that man was a part of that whole—and not an accidental offshoot. It was a feeling that transcended reason; that went to the heart of man's despair and found it groundless. The universe was a cosmos, not a chaos; man was as rightfully a part of that cosmos as were the day and night.

Later on, still alone and increasingly living a life of the mind, the explorer recorded further reflections in his diary:

The human race, my intuition tells me, is not outside the cosmic process, and is not an accident. It is as much a part of the universe as the trees, the mountains, the aurora, and the stars. My reason approves this; and the findings of science, as I see them, point in the same direction. And, since man is a part of the cosmos and subject to its laws, I see no reason to doubt that these same natural laws operate in the psychological as well as in the physical sphere and that their operation is manifest in the workings of consciousness.

Therefore, it seems to me that convictions of right and wrong, being, as they are, products of the consciousness, must also be formed in accordance with these laws. I look upon the conscience as the mechanism which makes us directly aware of them and their significance and serves as a link with the universal intelligence which gives them form and harmoniousness.

Admiral Byrd's simple pantheistic faith is a religion of Nature worthy of the profoundest philosopher.

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Men require organizations for many things, but least of all for "religion." That is, some form of association may be necessary so that men can help one another to find the truth, but no one, certainly, can *tell* another what the truth may be. Church organizations are built around creeds, not as associations for genuine search. What Emerson said in his Address to the Harvard Divinity School remains true today.

As for the "world-wide sweep" of the program of the modern Church, it is hardly noticeable. Much more evident is the sectarianism of the churches than their common inspiration. The most vigorous thinkers within the ranks of Protestant Christianity are its most insistent critics. Reinhold Niebuhr in the *Atlantic* for February writes convincingly when he condemns the rivalry of the denominations—he speaks of their lack of moral energy, not of their "world-wide sweep." In the *Christian Century* the best writing, from week to week, is often confessional in content. Over and over again, these candid Christians keep telling us how the Church has failed. Such men are far ahead of the typical religious institutions of America. They could serve her people best by following Emerson's example, or even the example of John Haynes Holmes, in 1919, when he declared that sectarianism—to the extent of referring to religion as "Christian"—was an anachronism in this epoch of history. "The day of denominationalism," he said, "is gone." There is a "sweep" in this idea, but Dr. Holmes is still a one-man movement.

No, the problem is not to "reform" the church. People, all of us, will find it much simpler to undertake their religious reforms without assuming the impossible burden of an institutional lethargy which has accumulated since the days of Constantine and shows little promise of lessening in the future. We have not to make "the church. . .more of what it might be," but ourselves.

Letter from **INDIA**

BOMBAY.—Gandhiji's assassination has naturally thrown the country into turmoil. There is also the discouraging possibility that the orthodox Hindus who have been plotting to establish a "Hindu Raj" will now recede underground and work after the fashion of the white ants. Religious orthodoxy has been India's foe for centuries, and now it is becoming virulent. Gandhi's own followers are, many of them, not full-hearted believers in his gospel, and so history may repeat itself—the teacher and leader being spoken of with feelings of respect and even veneration, while his teachings and doctrines and ideas are neglected and belied. Today, industrialization, militarization and "scientification" are to the fore.

The event of Gandhiji's sudden death, therefore, has the immediate effect of increasing the burden of responsibility of India's educators, who now must work more strenuously toward the cultural and moral unity that the future of the new nation demands. Ordinarily, adult education implies formal teaching of the three R's, to adults in night schools and others in like situations, but the real Adult Education which India needs is a training in and preparation for citizenship. The labours of Gandhiji and Nehru are a further tracing of the pattern. Among the many experiments which life is compelling Indian leaders to undertake, in view of recent experiences, we may mention two—both of which, while passing and temporary phenomena, will doubtless leave behind a rich residue of practical wisdom.

One is tackling the problem of refugees. Not thousands but millions of Hindus have run away from or been compelled to leave the Muslim state of Pakistan. A similar displacement affects Muslims who leave India to live in Pakistan. Actual killing and terror have been in such tremendous manifestation that Pandit Nehru's government has been devising plans for an orderly transfer of vast populations from India to Pakistan, and vice-versa. By this task, not only administrators and government servants, but vast populations, also, are compelled to think about causes and effects, and most naturally the religious factor comes into inquiry and question. Neither Allah nor Brahma saved their respective votaries!

The second problem is de-control of rationed goods. For several years, now, food, cloth, petrol, etc., have been rationed and sold at regulated prices. Black markets have flourished. Gandhiji succeeded in persuading the Nehru government to remove controls over some commodities—sugar, for example. Here a more direct experiment is on trial. How will sellers and buyers, manufacturers and shopkeepers, producers and consumers act? India's political leaders have felt it necessary to impose this test upon the different classes of citizens, and the result will be watched with anxiety by every true patriot.

All such events may sound ordinary and commonplace to Americans, but they are not for a country which for generations has been ruled despotically by a handful of foreigners—no doubt benevolently in some respects, but despotically all the same. The people are not educated in political action. Their training has been to do what they were ordered to do. Now their own Government requires intelligent co-operation and is using its power for constructive purposes. Hitherto, Indian leaders have devoted their energy to criticizing adversely the alien government.

Face to face with such experiments, the two schools of political thought are also on trial: on one hand, the democratic Congress under the leadership of Nehru, and on the other, Communistic organizations who assert the dogma—"there is no God but Marx, and Stalin is his prophet." These latter are effective propagandists for their creed, while the Congress leaders are busily occupied with ruling the country and carrying on the day-by-day administration.

So a new religion is arising in India. Russian Communism is its name. Large numbers of youths of both sexes are involved in it, but most of them are ignorant of the facts. What communism has done and has not done, and what are its ill-effects, especially on the mental life of Russians, are not known.

INDIAN CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW

METAPHYSICS

WITH the blessings of Henry R. Luce (*Time-Life-Fortune*) and F. S. C. Northrop (*The Meeting of East and West*) and a few others as supporting subscribers, some young men at Yale University have founded a new philosophical quarterly, *The Review of Metaphysics*. Defining Metaphysics as "the persistent, resolute inquiry into the ultimate nature of things," the editors invite "technical contributions to root questions," soliciting the interest of all those concerned with "constructive discussions of fundamental problems."

This department wishes it could offer some encouraging approval of the new *Review of Metaphysics*, but the forbidding obscurity of its contents has successfully prevented any ordinary reader from knowing what these devotees of metaphysics are trying to get at. The understanding of metaphysics, we are persuaded, while difficult enough, ought not to be limited to those who have mastered an exclusive, academic jargon. While we readily admit that the learned writers who argue their way through 108 pages of text in this journal may all have said things of value, the privacy of their knowledge remains unimpaired.

Metaphysics, it seems to us, is so important a subject that it needs as much and as popular an investigation as is possible. For metaphysics may also be defined as thought which investigates the practicability of the moral convictions of human beings. Metaphysics sets limits to religious enthusiasm and human credulity, but it also exposes the frivolousness of an unwarranted scepticism and the folly of refusing to consider the great metaphysical problems of life on the supposition that "Science" has rendered them without meaning.

Actually, every scientific judgment of any importance at all depends upon some sort of metaphysical doctrine or dogma. When, eight years ago, Dr. Albert Einstein named the objective

of physical science as "direct representation of physical reality in time and space," he was asserting the metaphysical doctrine that an independent "physical reality" does in fact exist. (For a thorough exposé of metaphysics in science, see E. A. Burtt's *Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science*.)

Contrary to the common expectation, metaphysics need not be dull. Take for example the Arabian Nights' world which sober psychologists fear that Dr. Rhine of Duke University would have us believe in. The perturbing thing about Dr. Rhine's ESP experiments is what they imply, not only for man, but for the physical world in general. Waldemar Kaempffert of the *New York Times* has interpreted their results for modern physics:

Light, heat, radio waves, magnetism, every form of energy with which we deal in everyday life diminishes in effect as it ripples out into space--diminishes in accordance with the well-known inverse square law. But not the "force" or whatever it is that is involved in extra-sensory perception. In the new experiments we have another seemingly outrageous violation of physical law.

Dr. Rhine himself, speaking of Duke research in "precognition" (in effect, prophecy), remarked:

Its implications are the most far-reaching conceivable, both for the theories of mind itself and for the view of nature as a whole. There is no question that an adequate scientific demonstration of precognition would produce a major intellectual revolution.

Well, suppose both telepathy and precognition can be "scientifically" established. For the great majority of people, telepathy or thought transference has always been a fact—"scientific" or not—and readers of J. W. Dunne's *Experiment with Time* will require little more evidence of the reality of prophecy, even in modern times. What, then, shall we think about man?

First to go is the idea of the human mind as a separate unit of intelligence absolutely confined by and dependent upon the physical body. Mind is

not an elf who sits in the brain and operates only through the physical senses. Dr. H. H. Price, professor of logic at Oxford University, has clearly expressed the psychological implications of telepathy:

The plain man, and even the plain philosopher, assumes with Descartes that the world of minds is divided up into a number of separate and as it were isolated mental substances. No mind, it is supposed, has direct causal relations with any other mind, nor indeed with anything at all except its own brain. But it now appears [because of the demonstrations of ESP] that this view is true only of the conscious part of our mental life. . . . It begins to look as if both the unity and the isolatedness of a single mind were the result of certain special restrictive conditions, which are generally but not always fulfilled; or perhaps not even that, but rather a mere appearance arising from the extremely limited and superficial character of ordinary self-consciousness.

Having dared this declaration of the independence of mind from body, Prof. Price finds the problem of telepathy reversed. Instead of the familiar question, Why does telepathy occur, now and then? another query supervenes: Why, if minds are independent realities, are they not in independent communication *all the time*?

The most obvious solution to this riddle would be to say that if human beings were indiscriminately receptive to all mental communications, they would live in an incessant hubbub of conflicting thoughts, an insane maelstrom of psychic impressions. The body, then, seems to serve as a kind of barrier or umbrella against the rain of thought in the mental world. This theory is not altogether improbable. Telepathic experience, as a rule, comes at times when the body is relaxed—and, not only the body, but the mind as well. For ordinary mortals, at least, it appears that to strain after super-physical communication is the best way to prevent it, and from this fact is obtained the suggestion that the mind has a selective power of its own.

Indiscriminate telepathic intercourse, then, according to this theory, is prevented on two counts: by the insulation provided by the body and

by a kind of mental individuality; the former engaging the mind with the physical world, thus shutting out purely mental impressions, the latter exercising a similar selectivity through intellectual concentration. Failure in concentration might, in this case, have the effect of opening the psychic field of an individual to every sort of vagrant impression of feeling, idea or desire—making that individual what psychic researchers call a "medium," or a pathologically passive human being.

Another approach to the problem, also suggested by Prof. Price, would be the supposition that the personal consciousness of every man is a sort of node or focus within or upon the "surface" of an integral "World-Soul" or "World-Mind." If this were so, we could suppose that while human beings are "separate" as physical beings, they are all connected, more or less, one with every other, as intellectual and feeling beings—connected by the internal organic structure of the World-Soul, just as many individual thoughts are connected, without losing their identity, in a single man's mind; and that they may be still more closely united by moral sympathy, and even be identical in a common spiritual ground of absolute being.

Considering the enormous diversity of the physical world and the complexity of the natural laws which govern its processes, the prospect of a like complexity of autonomous natural law in the psychological world may be beggaring to the imagination, but we can hardly rule out its possibility. Certainly a metaphysical theory of this sort would help us to understand a great variety of obscure psychological experiences. One suspects that the great mystics of the past at least began the formulation of such psychological laws of nature, insofar as they can be considered in communicable terms. It would help, also, to explain the wonders of psychological history, such as the strange clairvoyant faculties of a man like Swedenborg, and might even give a rational footing to the

ancient mystery religions and support the flights of Platonic imagery.

Prof. Price himself—to return to the solid ground of an Oxford "authority"—finds confirmation in telepathy and precognition for the philosophical speculations of Leibniz, who sought to explain the entire universe as made up of primary units of consciousness (Leibniz called them "monads") which were more or less progressed in their evolution according to their capacity to *reflect* all the others. A Christ-like man, applying Leibniz' doctrine, would be a highly evolved "monad" in virtue of his compassion for—his sense of identity with—other men. A Christ conceives himself, not as separate from his fellows, but mirrored in them, and they in him. The wisdom of a Christ might derive from a practical identity, in mind, with the intellectual and moral knowledge of the totality of mankind, present as *one* in the World-Soul, and the sympathy he manifests be an expression of the community of being he feels with every sufferer on earth. The Buddha or Christ ideal thus becomes an ideal goal of human evolution, and every man a potential savior, for whom the same high achievement is possible.

Improbable as these ideas may seem, they certainly represent possibilities of the human spirit, metaphysically speaking. They are, of course, gnostic, rather than agnostic conceptions, and indeed, have a long line of descent from the remotest antiquity. And they have also to recommend them the fact that they offer a theory of moral or spiritual evolution unassisted by any miraculous intervention, a factor which scientific inquiry will always—and always should—reject. But whether these particular ideas be taken as the starting points of metaphysical investigation, or some others, the problems which they seek to solve are of primary importance, not merely to "philosophers," but to every human being.

COMMENTARY

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

THE Supreme Court of the United States on March 8 ruled against any use of the public schools for religious teaching, holding that the First Amendment to the Constitution "rests upon the premise that both religion and government can best work to achieve their lofty aims if each is left free from the other within its respective sphere." This decision vindicates the claim of Mrs. Vashti McCollum that the religious program instituted by the Champaign, Illinois, public school system is in violation of the Federal Constitution.

Pupils in the Champaign school system were invited to attend a weekly religious program, during school hours and in school buildings, sponsored by representatives of the Protestant, Catholic and Jewish faiths. The religious groups contended that the program is "nonsectarian," but the Supreme Court held that in Champaign, the Illinois compulsory education system "assists and is integrated with the program of religious instruction carried on by separable religious sects." The Court ruled:

This is beyond all question a utilization of the tax-supported public school-system to aid religious groups to spread their faith. And it falls squarely under the ban of the First Amendment (made applicable to the States by the Fourteenth).

In a more or less concurring opinion, Justice Frankfurter said, "Separation means separation, and not something less," although observing that each instance of a contested relationship between Church and State would have to be ruled upon independently by the Court. The Champaign arrangement, he said, "presents powerful elements of inherent pressure by the school system in the interest of religious sects."

Justice Jackson, while concurring, raised the interesting question of whether the language of the Court's opinion was so sweeping as to affect the teaching of subjects concerned with church architecture, the historical effects of religious

movements, or even the biological theory of evolution.

The intent of the main decision, however, is clearly to curb the activities of religious organizations which seek to further sectarian ends through the agency of compulsory public education, and is not meant to sterilize independent thinking in religion or any other subject. This action of the Supreme Court upholds one of the most statesmanlike provisions of the Constitution.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

THE following letter from a subscriber takes strong exception to statements made here, and is self-explanatory. We are glad to have this particular letter for three reasons: First, it raises fundamental considerations on the matter of parental affection; second, its criticism focuses upon a particular suggestion which we ourselves feel to have been inadequately stated in this column; and third, it provides a natural point of departure for further discussion of the meaning of the word "love."

I feel that the theory presented in your February 18 column leaves much to be desired in the way of child-training. . . . "Liking" and "loving" may be the basis for all real relationships, but is it true that love can be turned on and off according to a child's impulsive behavior? . . .

With my own parents, the idea of love was a delicate matter, something felt and never defined. In a true family it is the most dependable thing, the fundamental reality which is never affected. If love could be turned off at a crisis, where would that leave the child? The child may respect his parents as those who ever try to do what is *right*, and it therefore may be natural for him to feel that he has cut himself off from them in following wrong action. But this is a child's viewpoint. If the parent takes it up as a procedure, what could be a guide to the child is twisted into a weapon of reward and punishment. If it were possible to use love as a weapon, the parent would have cut himself off from the child at the very time when all his love was necessary.

And right here the thought occurs of how all this bears on the problem of the abnormal child. Two cases are personally known to me. One is a child who at three and a half years of age is deaf and dumb and of a vicious temperament. He has been put away in a state institution by his parents who, presumably, didn't like the way he was acting, and couldn't love him. The other was the same type of child, now grown to manhood, but he has been kept and cared for by the parents as if he *were* "their own." They put up with every kind of disagreeable situation and made a tremendous sacrifice because they accepted the responsibility for his care. Somehow these two cases are brought to mind on reading your column.

Certainly, very few actions of an imbecile can be approved of, and the theory presented would seem to suggest that such a child is best put away. Yet there evidently are some parents who can serve the needs of a child with sympathy and understanding, without receiving any "cooperation" from the child.

The exact point at which parent-child "cooperation" begins must be at best obscure, to my way of thinking, especially since the parent is necessarily cooperating consciously long before the child is aware of benefits received. . . . Which spells for me the *difference in* responsibility between the parent and child and the folly of expecting that the child "will cooperate to the extent that you will." It is impossible to expect a full equality even between adults, because of the differences in each. How much more so in the case of a child and an adult! If the child derives benefit from the parent's love and care, is this not sufficient? It would almost seem that the parent should do the most learning, because what he is going through the child will have to wait another generation to learn. . . .

Santa Barbara, Calif.

The primary intention in the Feb. 18 column was to root out for closer examination the "my country right or wrong" conception of love. It now appears clear that the structure of one or two sentences in particular left much to be desired. For instance, the implication that it may be psychologically better to think of a child as loved when "he makes himself lovable to me" than to love simply because it is one's own child should have been amplified by "*fully* lovable when he makes himself *fully* lovable to me, *and when I make myself fully lovable to him.*" As the foregoing letter suggests, the chief labor should logically be with the parents. Parents have no more right to take a child's full love for granted than the child should be allowed to always expect a complete affection.

Our whole culture is an influence toward regarding the word "love" as the supreme value of personal existence. If we are to accept this connotation, and disregard the type of love—really universal fairness—which Buddha, Christ or Gandhi were said to have for all men, it seems

misleading to allow a child to think he *has* automatically from birth the completeness of love.

We did not say that a parent should "turn off and on" his "supply" of love, but only that he should learn to make the natural responses of his love as understandable as possible to the child. As a matter of fact, everyone "loves" just as much as he is able to at any given time.

"Love" as a sort of hazy abstraction may be misleading. We are worried about the fact that almost any parent, upon being asked whether or not he loves his child, will reply indignantly, "Of *course* I do." What worries us is the "of course." Love is simply not an "of course" proposition. What the parent is probably usually trying to express—and what our Santa Barbara correspondent is expressing very well—is that because of the relationship between parent and child, the parent will always maintain an especially sustaining concern for the welfare of the child and be ready to help him or her in any way possible.

Does not love, like freedom, have to be won anew each day, or at least constantly add to itself to retain its full inspiration? While every type of "cooperation" is not possible between young children and adults, and while parents and children are not "equals" in respect to general understanding, one of the best ways of gradually gaining the understanding of children is for these children to learn the *actual* and not the *supposed* feelings of the parents. We assume, by the way, that any of those who read "Children and Ourselves" are already indicating—if only by the effort involved—their serious desire to fulfill their responsibility to children, and that we can therefore take it for granted that such parents will be exemplary in their capacity to *stand by* the child no matter what outbursts of tendency reveal themselves.

Criticisms of many current usages of "love," via such experimental departures in terminology as suggested in this column, should stimulate a further clarification of this subject rather than "unsettle" the minds of parents.

FRONTIERS

Ethics and Civilization

WHAT is an "advanced" civilization, anyway? If you take as a measure of social achievement the degree of "order" that a culture has achieved, some primitive societies would seem to be far ahead of almost any of the great nations of the present. And if the prevalence and destructiveness of war be regarded as evidence of barbarism, modern civilization would probably stand condemned as the most backward society that has ever existed.

Yet, after a comparison, say, of the Zuni society described by Ruth Benedict in *Patterns of Culture* with our own civilization, we remain unconvinced that some primitive Arcady would be a fair exchange for our present existence. Although we should have to admit that the Zunis have been, on the whole, a lot happier than we are, and that their practice in human relationships is in many ways superior to our own, there always remains the implicit fact that *we are able to make the comparison* between them and ourselves, while the Zunis are not.

In other words, what we really value above all else is our emancipation from rule by custom and tabu, and the recognition that we have the power—despite our failure to use it—to live according to principles which are above the compulsions of history and the conditionings of environment. Even in our excesses of self-indulgence, in the enormity of our wars and the insincerity of our alleged "internationalism," we are able to find negative evidence of a freedom that is ours, however we have abused it, and the hope, not yet gone, that we may be able to exercise that freedom in a worthier manner.

Buried deep beneath the shambles of social failure are the seeds of what may be called an Ethical Civilization in the Western world. Ethical ideas are rooted in principles that do not change with the passage of centuries, whereas moral codes—the laws of custom, the cultural partisanship of time and place—result in the stagnation of free ethical perception and the confinement of people under the rule of traditional authority. Few Zunis question the rules by which they live. They may be good rules, and worth retaining, but the truly civilized man finds it impossible to live

according to rules that he has not subjected to a process of personal moral assimilation.

Wherever the striving after universal principles of human behavior becomes manifest, there we may see the seeds of an ethical civilization undergoing the process of germination. In India, for example, the struggle of Gandhi against the age-old oppression of the Untouchables and the inequities of the caste system in general was an emergence into practice of a universal ethical principle. He fought for the right of a degraded and persecuted segment of the Indian population to be accepted by the Hindu community without prejudice or condemnation based upon religious tradition. Essentially, the principle declared by Gandhi in this struggle was that man is by nature a *creative* being—that his past, cultural, hereditary or personal, ought never to be held against him.

The same idea, in essence, is contained in the assertion of the American Declaration of Independence that all men are "created equal." Manifestly, men are not "equal" in every respect. Human history is largely a study of the inequalities of mankind and the adjustments men make among themselves as a result. What both Gandhi and the American Declaration of Independence assert is that these "inequalities" are not fixed and eternal values, determined for all time by the conditions of existence. On the contrary, Gandhi and the Founding Fathers declared that the only fixed principle in man is his innate capacity to alter his "unequal" position—to work out his own salvation.

Nominally, the democratic nations of the West have just finished fighting the greatest war of history on behalf of that principle. Even the trials of the "war criminals," now proceeding to a dreary conclusion in Germany and Japan, are based on the idea of individual moral responsibility. The prosecution has argued that the leaders of the defeated nations should be punished, not because they lost the war, but because they must be held accountable to universal justice. While the exclusive "personal" responsibility of the men tried is highly dubious, and the "innocence" of the victors equally open to question, it remains a fact that the *theory* of these trials develops from a high ethical principle. The fault lies, not in the principle of individual accountability, but in the assumption that any court of human justice has the capacity to measure

the guilt of individual men and determine the penalty they should pay.

Actually, in attempting to "punish" any man for wrongdoing, we reveal our basic failure to apply other principles we claim to believe in, whether religious or scientific. The one whom the Western world accepts as its religious teacher set an example in all problems of punishment, with the words, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Restraint, perhaps, is necessary to any sort of social order, but *punishment*—the attempt to measure individual guilt—can originate only in a moral arrogance of the sort traditionally attributed by Christians to the rebellious angel, Lucifer. The materialistic theory of human nature, which claims that every man is the helpless product of the interplay of heredity and environment, must likewise reject "punishment" as meaningless, for when men are pre-determined in character by ancestry and circumstance, how can they be held morally accountable for anything at all?

We have, therefore, to acknowledge the extraordinary moral confusion which results from our attempt to theorize in terms of ethical principles, while at the same time continuing judicial practices which spring from tribal theories of right and wrong, hiding actual vengeance under the fair name of humanitarian ethics and maintaining racial and religious prejudices through community pressures after having renounced them by law. It appears that from all our "scientific" studies of sociology, our protestations against enthroned privilege and our alleged belief in human equality, we have gained little more than an increasing awareness of our cultural hypocrisy.

Only one thing have we avoided, thus far—a thing that would mean cultural death for the West—and that is a false certainty, in both theory and practice, in the field of morals. A society maintaining dogmatic certainty concerning issues of right and wrong, and in which that certainty is unquestioningly accepted by all the people, is a wholly static, a truly "primitive" culture, for it is a culture incapable of self-analysis and self-criticism. Further, the culture pretending to moral certainty is a culture without a literature and without creative arts. For literature, as the expression of great thinking, must hold in solution—upholding the dynamic tension between unresolved paradoxes—both the vision and the doubt of great minds. Literature

may contain the truth, but will never slay it with glib definitions and moral codes. Literature, in this sense, represents the vital and plastic growing tip of civilization, the area of human promise and unfulfilled potentiality for man, while the arts mirror in their several symbolisms the movement of the imagination toward higher plateaus of achievement, seeking out and capturing, momentarily the meaning of the particular experiences and event of an epoch, in relation to the larger human struggle after ultimate meaning itself.

A "primitive" society may have rich and colorful traditions, and customs which preserve both manners and morals from disrepute, but it can have no creative and questioning minds. It will produce no literature of restless aspiration, no love of transcendental paradox, no heights of genius and no depths of degradation. It will offer, perhaps, goodness and virtue, and provide a nicely regulated life, but afford no hospitality to the venturesome spirit, and no understanding of the insatiable desire to know the truth.

The civilized man, in contrast, treasures his uncertainties like pearls of great price. For everything the prim moralist decries as evil, the unfettered mind will seek an opposite description, if only to preserve the principle of undogmatic freedom. Someone, somewhere, the agnostic will argue, may prove this thing you say is evil to be a necessary good. And even though the agnostic's claim may sound ridiculous in a given instance, it is not ridiculous at all, in principle. For in principle he is arguing against dogma in morals, and for the creative future of man. The agnostic, then, may not be really an all-denying sceptic, but a true believer in the highest spirituality of which man is capable, and he is willing to confess to all the lesser heresies in order to maintain this truth that he feels in his heart—that the essential nature of man is beyond all good and evil, is greater than any moral code, past, present or future.

THE REAL ISSUE

Certain important facts seem unable to find expression anywhere except in small "dissenting minority" journals. During the war years, for example, the British *Socialist Leader* (then the *New Leader*) alone among political journals contained a complete and objective account of the pacifist movement in England. While the majority of the *New Leader* writers, and their readers, were not themselves pacifists, as representatives of an unpopular minority they seemed to have little difficulty in appreciating the trials and disappointments of a body of men perversely dedicated to pacifist principles. Similarly, the *New Leader* carried objective accounts of the treatment of German prisoners of war and labored diligently for their repatriation immediately following the capitulation of the German Army. While ignorantly branded as "communist" by public opinion, both before and after World War II, it was while Russia was one of the Great Democracies—i.e., a country fighting Hitler—that the *New Leader* writers called attention to the changed totalitarian design of Stalin's government.

A recent issue of the *Socialist Leader* summarizes the attitude of the present British Conscription Tribunals regarding the proper qualification for those accepted as bona fide conscientious objectors. The case given particular attention is that of Duncan E. Cameron, a London Conscription-Resister whose name was removed from the register of conscientious objectors because he had declared himself ready to "fight on behalf of World government," although unwilling to fight for England. After a lengthy hearing on appeal, Cameron's position was conceded as justifiable, indicating an admission by the London Appeal Tribunal that a conscientious position in relation to war may legitimately differ from the "absolute" pacifist stand in regard to the taking of human life.

A real matter of conscience has to do, of course, with the relation of individuals to crucial political decisions, and has nothing whatever to do

with organizational affiliation. This seems implicitly recognized by the decision of the British Tribunal. In depressing contrast, President Truman recently denied the independence of conscience in his Amnesty Order affecting American conscientious objectors who spent the war in prison, by refusing amnesty to men who founded their rejection of war on grounds of political morality. Americans who dared relate their politics to their consciences must remain "felons" for the rest of their lives—unless, of course, Mr. Truman or some later President decides to adopt the British position.

The issue involved in these contrasting points of view is not actually an issue between pacifism and militarism, but a question of the fundamental relationship of the individual to the sovereign state. It is possible without oneself being "pacifist" to congratulate the people of England for having tribunals that make such principled decisions, and the *New Leader*, also, for calling attention to this significant development in the history of civil liberties. Whether or not future events may "justify" participation in warfare will itself be an important choice for every individual to make, but before such questions can ever reach the area of free decision, there must be prior recognition of the basic right of the man who is to fight and kill to determine whom he shall fight and kill, and for what reasons.