

THE ROLE OF MAN

READING about the life and work of Albert Schweitzer is likely to lead the mind in many directions, for here is a man who, born into not unusual circumstances, found reason to turn his existence into high drama. (A short but engrossing study of Schweitzer's career is Robert Payne's just published *The Three Worlds of Albert Schweitzer*, the three worlds being religion, music, and tropical medicine.)

Why, one is moved to ask, did Schweitzer's life turn out so differently from the life of the vast majority of his contemporaries? No doubt you can find half a dozen answers to this question, but none of them will do much to explain the mysterious *spur* which drove the great Alsatian on to his extraordinary accomplishments. Why Schweitzer and not some other man? Or, better yet, why should any man be moved to such far-reaching action? Why a Damien? Why a Gandhi?

There is an advantage, when pursuing such questions, to leave out of consideration (at least temporarily) the still greater figures of the founders of religions, personages such as Christ and Buddha, whose memory is so enshrined in myth, allegory, and tradition that rational analysis of their behavior is very difficult. Supernaturalist claims are too easily available—and too easily accepted—in regard to Jesus, and while the life of Buddha involves no supernaturalism in the context of Buddhist thought, the Westerner finds Eastern "naturalism" far more transcendental than any doctrines or ideas he is able to associate with a "naturalist" viewpoint.

Schweitzer and Gandhi, however, we willingly admit, began as ordinary human beings. Why, then, in the course of only half a century, did they so far outrun their fellows as to become contemporary "wonders of the world"?

There is no value in pretending to give a final answer to this question. A point is reached in the attempt to account for human behavior where to "explain" is to dispose of, to render insignificant in terms of human values. All we propose is the possibility that an inquiry of this sort may bring us just a little closer to the essential being of man.

It is hardly an answer to say that Gandhi and Schweitzer were animated by a strong sense of purpose, of large and encompassing mission, which is absent in other men. Yet this, perhaps, is where the inquiry should begin. For if we say that they are therefore exceptional, we may turn about and look at the rest of us, having then to admit that the idea of "mission" is alien to the familiar conceptions of human life. For example, the delegates to the Chicago convention of the Religious Education Association last December were invited to consider "*Images of Man in Current Culture*," and in general, the "images" presented by the Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic speakers on this occasion were of man who responds to the intentions and commands of another being, namely, God. It is fair to say that the prevailing "images" of man afforded by our culture suggest little or nothing of an independent sense of destiny for human beings. In these several, but, on this point, not conflicting traditions, man has no great "work" to do; or if he does, that work is only a grand "conformity" of means to some theological goal.

We are not speaking so much of words and claims as of attitudes and deeds. What distinguishes Albert Schweitzer is the apparently spontaneous power which rose within him and moved him unrelentingly to the great commitments of his life. This was no mere "obedience" to the dictates of religion. On the contrary, Schweitzer was more of a thorn in the side of conventional religionists than a vindicator

of their teachings. Nor are we, on the other hand, suggesting that you can find in Schweitzer a clear declaration of purpose which sets him off from others in the way that is here proposed. The important fact to be observed seems rather to be simply that Schweitzer—like Gandhi, and no doubt like some others—somehow felt himself to be the protagonist in a *role* which he had to play out, in relation to man and nature. This sense of having a role is what we wish to examine.

There is a vast difference between the idea of having a role in life, a work to do, and what biologists call the "struggle for existence" and "adaptation to one's environment." In both religion and science, the conventional idea of a "good" life is that of a life which brings personal happiness and fulfillment, together with the practice of a number of familiar virtues. That man, as a natural being—or, we may add, man as a spiritual being (the two are not mutually exclusive)—should have a role or destiny in relation to the rest of life far beyond ends commonly adopted or proposed, is almost a revolutionary idea. In fact, so strange or alien is this idea that even men who *feel* this sense of destiny might easily be expected to explain it in more familiar or conventional terms.

It is certainly a part of this problem, also, that making a claim to feeling "called" to some high mission would be more repugnant to men possessed of this feeling than to others. Human life and thought are vastly complicated by man's capacity for pretense and hypocrisy, which leads the worthiest of men to try to shroud their secret purposes in rude or humble language, leaving grandiloquent declarations to others. We can hardly expect, therefore, to find a clear account of the human sense of mission in the words or writings of individuals best qualified to provide such accounts. It is their lives which will instruct us, except for casual and unintended confessions which may occasionally reveal more than they were intended to say.

Modesty, however, need not be an obstacle to considering possible "world-views" in which the role of human beings is conceived of as a part of larger natural processes. There is for example the somewhat Hegelian idea that man is that aspect of the world-spirit through which the latter becomes conscious of itself. In these terms, the human being would be quite literally the organ of self-consciousness and self-realization for the totality of nature. This idea leads directly to a conception of nature in which man is at the head of the hierarchy of life, in whom is vested responsibility for climactic psychological experience. Man would then be the being through whom the endless variety and even opposing forms of the natural world gain unified expression. The role of man would thus be defined as that of Knower and Philosopher. He would be the reconciler of differences, the balancer or harmonizer of conflicting energies. It might be thought that already, in the practice of the arts, is intimation of this role for man.

It would be possible, of course, to comb ancient theologies for a multitude of developments of this idea in respect to the role or function of man. Nor is the idea absent from the traditions of still-existing tribal peoples. The Hopis, for example, believe that the "progress" of the world and even the operation of natural forces are in some measure dependent upon how the Hopis conduct themselves in their own lives and upon their faithfulness in pursuing what they speak of as the "Hopi Way." This point of view comes through very clearly in a passage in *The Hopi Way* by Laura Thompson and Alice Joseph (University of Chicago Press, 1944) concerned with Hopi religion and ceremonial:

In spite of its complexity and law-boundedness, . . . Hopi ceremony has never become stereotyped, and has never degenerated into mere formalism. It emphasizes control of the universe not only by means of the supernatural or magic, but also through mind or will. The Hopi conception of man as differentiated, in the universal system of mutual interdependency, through his role as an active rather than a passive agent in the fulfillment of the law,

compels the active participation of the individual in the ceremonial at not only the physical but also the ideational and emotional level and imposes on him a high degree of personal responsibility for the success of the whole and not just for one small part of it. This in turn operates as an important influence in bringing about the internalization of the law and its apprehension as a whole and in its parts, which is very different from the sort of participation which following one's littler part by rote without responsibility or need for concerning one's self with the whole at the ideational and emotional level would give.

It is of incidental interest that for the Hopi, there is no distinction between *praying* and *willing*. The same word serves in the Hopi language for both actions. As the authors of *The Hopi Way* say:

Praying is willing. The Hopi believe not only that man can control nature to a limited extent by observing these rules, but that if he does not do so, the universe may cease to function. That is, the movements of the sun, the coming of rain, the growth of crops, the reproduction of animals and human beings depend (to a certain extent at least) on man's correct, complete and active carrying out of the rules.

While the Hopi conception of the universe is traditional and "set," the effect upon these people of their conviction that they have an important, even a crucial, part to play in universal life processes is evident to any careful observer. The Hopis have a dignity beyond many other men and groups. They have aroused world-wide interest in their attitudes toward life and have gained attention in the United States from scores of students as well as admirers of the American Indians. People who, without conceit, believe that they bear responsibilities of this order acquire depths and dimensions of character which are seldom encountered elsewhere. When you meet a Hopi who is filled with a sense of obligation to his tribal traditions, you do not meet simply an ordinary man, but a man who is at the center of a great web of intangible moral relationships, and who is responsive to them. The authors of *The Hopi Way* speak of the Hopi religion as "a stone-

age conception of the universe"; there is an implied condescension in this phrase, although probably not intended, and one wonders if there is not far more of truth in the Hopi conception than in the twentieth-century atomic-age conception, which sees nothing wrong in blowing great craters in land and sea to test nuclear weapons, in preparation for opening similar abysses in human populations.

But our present interest is more in the quality of life that may come with a sense of man's interconnectedness, not only with other human beings, but with the whole of life and nature. Suppose we were of a time and culture in which it was taken for granted and taught to the young that human life is a Promethean venture. At an early age, children would be introduced to the idea that they are born to a destiny of high purpose and responsibility. The work, the role, of human beings could be symbolized by various means. It is the part of man, perhaps, to show the way to resolution of the endless conflicts which pervade all nature—to bring synthesis to opposing forces, even as Hegel proposed. Quite possibly, many people already feel vague intimations of commitment of this sort, yet hesitate to expose their hearts to a cynical and contemptuous world. No doubt there are parents who long to call their children to ennobling conceptions of duty and meaning, yet find these fragile dreams blurred and blighted by the self-seeking mood of the times. Yet, here, perhaps, is the heart of all worthy educational ventures for human beings.

The tremendous need of our time is for some means to draw out and give scope to the latent idealism in people of all ages. We talk of the dignity of man; but man has no dignity unless his powers and capacities—his freedom and inviolable individuality—are consciously devoted to ends which reach beyond his own personal welfare. There is every evidence that man is a species of universal being; he has a mind to contain the universe, a heart which can beat in unison with the rhythms of all nature, feeling warmth and

sympathy for every living thing. How can we suppose that these qualities are without deep meaning—that they are not revelatory of a transcendental stature and role in life?

Indeed, men hunger for such stature, and give way to the madness of bitter frustration when the prevailing "philosophies" and religions of the world afford no encouragement and guidance to a far-reaching destiny. How can we deny the transforming power of such a view of life, until we have adopted and given it the full support of our imagination and energies? This, surely, is a question which the lives of men like Schweitzer and Gandhi should press upon us for an answer. The greatness of some men can be nothing less than evidence of the potential greatness of all men.

REVIEW

SURVIVAL AFTER DEATH?

DR. J. B. RHINE is a prolific writer, and we are glad that he is, since his repeated discussion of the "other than physical" capacities of man assures that such questions will stay alive during the age of science. Writing for the Sunday supplement, *American Weekly* (Los Angeles *Examiner*, Dec. 8), Rhine draws the attention of an enormous audience to his subject, "Science Looks at Life After Death."

Dr. Rhine first explains the rationale of a seldom-publicized Duke University examination of séance phenomena. Proceeding without either negative or positive bias, the Duke researchers went at the reams of seance testimony in their usual painstaking fashion, and have now arrived at some tentative conclusions, viz., that the extraordinary messages alleged to "come from beyond the grave" are almost always produced through the agency of "mediums" who score very high in telepathy and clairvoyance tests.

Such research has been going on for some time. In 1934 a British medium, Eileen Garrett, volunteered to come to Duke University. As Mrs. Garrett reveals in her autobiography, she did not have, but very much wanted, an explanation for what the spiritualists called her "powers." Reviewing the Duke study of Mrs. Garrett's ability to provide extrasensory knowledge to those who came to consult her while she was in trance, Dr. Rhine says:

We could add up the total effect and see that, here in the laboratory under excellent controls, the medium had furnished a great deal of knowledge which seemed to apply to those who had come to consult her.

The big question, of course, was whether or not the information came from the spirit world. In trying to settle this question we gave Mrs. Garrett the standard ESP card tests to determine how much ability she had in telepathy and clairvoyance.

The results were striking when she was in her normal state, and in a trance state, when Uvani [her

"spirit control"] was tested, he too was almost equally good. As a matter of fact, it was pretty well indicated that these two were basically the same personality, with at most a shade of difference, much as one differs slightly from the normal self while in a dream state or hypnotized condition.

Summing up, this medium's capacity for gaining knowledge through telepathy or clairvoyance (from the sitters in the adjoining room or from other earthly sources) was so great that it could well have furnished all the information she gave in the messages. Her own belief in spirit communication would, of course, lead her unconsciously to act the part of the "communicating spirit" appropriate to each visitor.

But how about the undeniable proof of clairvoyance and telepathy, which were also involved? What bearing do these superphysical capacities have on the question of immortality? Dr. Rhine and his colleagues wondered if the presence of powers not dependent upon the five senses might not indicate an *entity* which is likewise not ultimately dependent upon them—and therefore an entity which would retain its essential powers after the death of the body. Spiritualist phenomena, as well as telepathy and clairvoyance, have always been a goad to philosophic reflection among the few. But, even now, the general "mindset" of the time is indifferent to the implications of whatever valid data have been amassed. Dr. Rhine explains the consequent dilemma of the ESP researcher:

The history of human thought is littered with beliefs that once held power over men's minds but, without ever having been proved or disproved, have been silently discarded by the mere withdrawal of confidence and eventually of scientific attention.

When we began our inquiries in the early '20s there were many great names in Europe and in America associated with a frank and active interest in the evidence of mediumship. All that has changed. The movement toward oblivion has gone far since the first quarter of the century.

The biggest factor in this loss of interest is the growth of natural science itself. In the last 50 years, more and more of the personality of man has come under the scrutiny of Science. The concept of an indivisible mind-body unity has almost, if not quite completely, been substituted for the older picture of a

separable spirit that could do at least something in its own right, even with its body returned to the soil of the earth.

Therefore any scientific theory of survival today would appear to have a fantastically greater set of odds against it, in the mind of the average scientist, than it had a hundred years ago.

In conclusion, Dr. Rhine feels that ESP research is at least ensuring that we retain and record "extrasensory" data which may be found to have relevance to the question of immortality in the future. He says that "what we investigators most need in the years ahead is some fresh break-through into a pocket of a more clear-cut and reliable type of evidence. Otherwise, despite its importance, the whole problem may gradually move entirely off the stage of scientific attention."

Recognition of the probable importance of Rhine's work is improving with each passing year. For this reason, he is able to feel optimism about the future of ESP research:

To one who has labored and pondered over this great problem for the major part of a lifetime it still offers an inviting prospect of fascinating discovery ahead.

In the further findings that may reasonably be expected to follow from the beginnings already made, there lies, I suspect, more promise for man's genuine self-enlightenment and his high place of command in nature than in all the fantastic speculations and divergent creeds from the remotest to the most recent past.

Our traditional beliefs and aspirations have always fallen short of the true grandeur of the universe as Science has brought it into view. We can only profit by a faithful search for the facts.

The "fresh break-through" to which Dr. Rhine looks forward may very well have as much to do with philosophy and psychology as with the data of experiment. As any historian of science knows, there comes a time when theory is far more important than "fact"—or rather, more important than those disconnected "facts" which yield no new harvest of meaning until someone comes along with a synthesizing supposition. Since the triumph of Aristotelian over Platonic philosophy,

Western thought has been dominantly anti-metaphysical, and the Platonic viewpoint—that ideas rule the world—a minority expression. But now, with unprejudiced men like Rhine pursuing their researches, a blending of the virtues of both schools may eventually take place.

Dr. C. J. Ducasse, a modern philosopher, is both an explicit and implicit collaborator in Rhine's assault on mechanist premises. His *Nature, Mind and Death*, published in 1949, was an extensive reevaluation of the question of immortality—approached from the standpoint of what is known and what may be tested of mental powers. In *A Philosophical Scrutiny of Religion*, a later work, Dr. Ducasse returns to the question of immortality, suggesting that the philosophy and psychology of the Orient may soon bring the very "break-through" of which Dr. Rhine speaks.

To be unable to believe in the miracle-immortality of traditional Christianity is not the same as finding all forms of immortality incompatible with reason. Ducasse, like Macneile Dixon and John McTaggart before him, has been able to synthesize the accumulated data of psychic research with an affirmative proposition regarding the immortality of the human soul—but not an immortality represented by some kind of discarnate existence in the shadowy nether world of the mediums.

COMMENTARY

A PERSISTING THESIS

IT is February 12, the anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln, and an occasion to consider once again the role of the "distinguished individual." Lincoln was such a man. Life on the American Frontier was the matrix of many admirable qualities in human beings, but it produced only one Abraham Lincoln. Why?

The answer, we think, is that it didn't really produce him. Abraham Lincoln produced Abraham Lincoln. You can stop right there. If you go on, what you say should be about Lincoln, and not about supposed causes external to Lincoln which, as we say, "contributed to his stature."

Some men, it is true, seem to represent little more than a complex of effects of their heredity and environment. You can trace this trait to that cause and explain them away almost entirely. Such men are the children of their times and they make theories of historical determinism sound pretty reasonable.

But other men, instead of being a complex of effects, are a constellation of visions. They are walking observatories of great moral vistas. Here is a man, Lincoln, who, in an hour or two, as the story goes, scribbled the notes which would a little later unfold in the Gettysburg Address. He lived at a level which made such thoughts natural to him—even effortless, in a sense.

What we are suggesting is that some men live in a world in which the real entities are great principles of justice and right. Lincoln was a man like that. So was Whitman.

What we complain about, when we are reproached for our apparent indifference to the scientific viewpoint on such matters, is that science does not really have a viewpoint on such matters. The entities—the principles—which people the world of men like Lincoln and Whitman, and some others—do not appear at all in the scientific spectrum of "reality." In other

words, what is most real about such human beings has no existence for what we refer to as the science of Man. Now this is all right, so long as the scientists who practice in this field make no pretense of telling us what makes up such human beings—or, for that matter, any human beings. But they do make such pretense, and they ought to know better. We can only conclude that such scientists have no real greatness in them; or if they do, it is systematically hidden by the dogmas which they have embraced.

We should like to see a science of man we can respect. We should like to be able to say that the ennobling tradition of impartial inquiry which has won for science so high an estimate in the opinions of men is bringing its benefits to the study of human beings. We cannot say this. In our understanding of man, we owe more to the poets than to the scientists. It is the poets who give us a vision of the role of man, who have written about man as subject, as a center of original and creative action. The scientists tell us only about man as object—about a being who gets pushed around. Is it any wonder that, in our scientific age, very little happens to man besides being pushed around?

We need to recognize the uniqueness of great men. Even a little hero-worship will not hurt us. It will not hurt us if it can help to develop the qualities of heroism among men more generally. It will not hurt us if it will teach us more about what men can do, in and of themselves.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves NOTES AND QUOTES

ALMOST any literary work, whether novel or play, which focuses on the life of Socrates is likely to be worth-while. For example is Cora Mason's *Socrates, The Man Who Dared to Ask* (Beacon), written for young people of high-school age. This 165-page book includes an imaginative reconstruction of Socrates' boyhood years. While the book is on the whole well-written, we suspect that even teenagers will thrill more to Plato's account of the trial and death of Socrates than they will to Miss Mason's somewhat prosaic account of the great drama. But this author has many first-rate passages, such as the following:

Every old man was a boy once—some kind of boy. Mean, cynical old men may not have been mean boys, but it is hard to believe that a lively-minded, adventurous-hearted old man like Socrates picked up the seeds of greatness only near the end of the journey.

No one has told us much about young Socrates. He was clearly not important to the public like his flash-in-the-pan friend Alcibiades. It looks as if he spent his young days, as indeed he spent all his days, just growing. For seventy years he just grew, like anyone else—except that he did a better job of it. He grew out of the rags and patches of the common thinking of his time, and if the people after him had a better way of thinking which they might use if they would, they could thank Socrates for not a little of it.

There is certainly something to be gained from thoughtful reconstruction of Socrates' nature as a child and youth. Just when does a youngster first come to "do philosophy"? Unless the habit of asking questions begins early and comes naturally, it is quite doubtful whether even the most impressive kind of abstract instruction can induce original thinking. Scholars are not necessarily philosophers, but any man or woman, however humble by academic standards, can become a philosopher by beginning to ask questions and ask them honestly. Miss Mason, who is herself a classicist and teacher, may simplify a good deal in

her account of the workings of Socrates' mind—in the interests of a younger-than-adult audience—but she manages to get across that the true philosopher can hardly be a specialist, since his mental action, as a philosopher, is always involved in synthesizing the content of many different kinds of experience. As Miss Mason shows, Socrates was contemptuous of no activity, and essentially respectful of tradition, although he reserved the right to question his elders:

Perhaps Crito was right, and Socrates began thinking like a philosopher, looking for the meaning of things, while he was still a boy in school. Later he used to help other boys to think at almost this same age, believing that they were ready for it then. Or perhaps the beginning for Socrates came after school days. Because he must have been not more than thirteen or fourteen when his father took him out of school.

Socrates was not sorry. Yet some of the things that he had learned at school, especially the poems about the old heroes, were going to stay with him to the end of his life. And it was worth while having learned to wrestle and run and do what was done in a gymnasium. That was going to be useful, too, though it never made him into an athlete of the ordinary kind. But Socrates had a way of learning not just from teachers or trainers but from everyone he met. This kind of learning went on, of course, school or no school.

* * *

All sorts of history textbooks are written for young people, but most of them, we have found, are unimaginative and dull. The historian usually seems to imagine that he is supposed to be exclusively a collector of data. Another view suggests that the best history books should make plain the basic questions which the student must ultimately resolve for himself.

An English MANAS subscriber, Mr. F. G. Pearce, who is principal of a residential school for boys and girls in India, has favored us with a copy of a history textbook he has written. His accompanying letter suggests why he felt it necessary to write this book:

I should like to explain briefly why I have taken the liberty of sending you what might appear, at first glance, a book of no special interest to readers of MANAS. The book is, as a matter of fact, a textbook in World History mainly intended for Asian students preparing to enter Universities. This is explained in the Preface for Teachers.

The *matter* of the book is necessarily not very original, though a great deal of careful thought has been necessary in making the selection of facts for such a short and simple account of the history of civilized man. What might possibly be of interest to you and those who read your excellent magazine is the *manner* of presenting the facts chosen.

In the first place, having spent most of my working life in the East, and having seen the value of eastern culture and religion, I have attempted to lay somewhat more stress on the achievements of the peoples of eastern countries, than is usually found in studies of World History by western authors. This will be evident from a glance at the contents page. Secondly, and more important, I have tried to show, without being (I hope) too obviously didactic, that the study of History can be, if approached in a spirit of discovery, a very valuable stimulus to serious thought about the fundamental problems of mankind,—and in particular about the problems of our own times.

An Outline History of Civilization contains 450 pages and is easy to read. The Indian branch of the Oxford University Press is the publisher, and Mr. Pearce suggests that copies may be had from Oxford's New York office.

We particularly like the way Mr. Pearce concludes the book, for here he blends spiritual insight and ethical concern with the impersonality of the western scholar. Mr. Pearce's last two pages, we think, might be appended with profit to all histories written for high-school students:

Is it possible that men will ever have the *Fifth Freedom*,—freedom from selfishness? Some people say: 'Human nature never changes'. Fortunately that is not true. If it had been true, Man could never have reached even the present stage of civilization. Human nature *does* change, though it seems to change with great difficulty. How can we change it?

Why do men behave selfishly, thinking only of their own power and wealth, and safety for themselves and their families, not really caring much about the fate of others?

This is the greatest of all problems. It is the problem to which all the great religious teachers have tried to find the answer. Unless we can find the answer ourselves,—you and I and each one of us—all the other problems of the world will continue unsolved, and the struggle of Man will go on. There will be wars as long as men want power over other men: there will be poverty as long as men want great wealth which gives them power. Even if scientists discover how to provide enough food and clothing for all, and even if a strong government gets things distributed fairly, *as long as there are men and women who are greedy and want to rule others through the possession of more things or more knowledge, there will not be peace and happiness.*

The world problem is the individual problem. This means that unless there is a change in *ourselves*,—in you and me and each one of us—the world will not change. So long as we have greed in our hearts, we are helping to make a greedy and cruel world. Blaming others and expecting *them* to change is of no use. Even blaming ourselves, telling ourselves that greed is a horrible thing and that it is wicked to be greedy, will not put an end to greed. Then, how can there be an end to it, and to all the other evils which bring suffering to mankind?

We can be free from greed and other such feelings only by watching fearlessly how they arise in our minds, and *by understanding the mind which creates them*. It is the power of Man's mind that has discovered so many secrets of Nature. We have studied in this book many of those wonderful discoveries and inventions. But very few of us have discovered *the secret of our own nature*. The wise men of ancient China and India said that the most important thing in the world is *self-knowledge*. 'Man, know thyself!' said the Greek oracle. We know many other things, but not that. Our mind makes us think that each one of us is a separate being, because we have bodies which appear separate (though the matter of which they are made is constantly inter-changing). Science is now finding out that there is only one life in the universe. *Things are only separate in appearance*. Even men are not different in this, for we too are a part of the universe. But our minds cannot understand that the appearance of separateness is not a real thing. Therefore our thoughts and actions are always based on this misunderstanding, this false idea of separateness. 'What a man thinks, he becomes' said Buddha. We *think* of our self as separate, and we become selfish, isolated. Then we want more for ourselves, not caring if others have less.

All quarrels and fights and unhappiness come from this. They can come to an end only when our minds see this truth clearly, for, when we see clearly, we cannot help thinking differently, and acting differently. *The truth shall make us free.* In *that* freedom the struggle of Man will cease, and his real life as a civilized being will begin.

FRONTIERS In Behalf of a Choice

WHAT ought a man to do when he begins to feel that he can no longer support the actions taken in his behalf by his government? There are probably more difficult questions for human beings to answer, but this question can at least be put into tangible form with its implications stated.

The Founding Fathers and authors of the Constitution of the United States felt that they had given the problem which this question represents an approximate solution. They wrote the Bill of Rights, setting forth the areas in which the government has no authority over the individual—areas where the individual is free to do what he thinks best. The government can commit no man to belief in a particular religion. It cannot restrain him from speaking or writing his mind, so long as what he has to say constitutes no "clear and present danger" to the welfare of the country.

It could hardly have occurred to the Founding Fathers that a time might come when the individual citizen might find legitimate reason to protest actions taken by the government—actions such as the use of atom or hydrogen bombs in war, or simply any act of war itself. And even if such things had been thought of, the practical difficulties would have appeared very great. Further, a man could in those days dissociate himself from a nation's "war effort" without very much trouble. Conscription, which began with the Napoleonic wars of Europe, was unknown at the time of the American Revolution. War and expectation of war were not then major preoccupations of American citizens. Nor were the wars of that time "total," drawing upon and exhausting virtually all the substance of the participating nations.

Today, however, war has become an almost continuous affair. While the "shooting wars" have beginnings and endings, any nation which expects to play a part in a shooting war must remain in a feverish state of preparation *all the time*. The

nation's wealth in money and its wealth in youth are subject to continuous draft to assure that its armed forces are always poised to strike. Last month the national budget presented to the nation by President Eisenhower allocated 64 per cent of the entire tax income of the country to meet the expenses of preparation for war. Our national being, therefore, is essentially a military being, and every citizen participates in that military being to the extent of almost two thirds of the taxes he pays to the government.

Now it is true that a man killed by a musket shot in the American Revolution was just as dead as a modern victim of nuclear explosion. And it is natural to ask, if war is immoral today, why wasn't it just as immoral in 1776? This is an important question. The reply, so far as we can see, depends upon what we feel answerable to for our morality or our immorality.

If the "rules" of morality are to be found in some external code or decalogue, then morality or right and wrong remain the same in any age. But if, on the other hand, morality results, even if only in part, from human *awareness* of what is involved in particular situations or acts, then the wrong of a given act may grow with awareness of its consequences, until it reaches the point of inexcusable offense. So with war. Modern war, almost no one will deny, has immeasurably hideous consequences. To war's obvious evils, which have always existed, must now be added a host of unpredictable and incalculable disasters, not the least of which is the progressive perversion of what we refer to as "peace." As long ago as 1910, William James saw this characteristic of modern war very clearly, and identified it in his famous paper, "A Moral Equivalent of War," which was published in *McClure's* for August, 1910. He said:

"Peace" in military mouths today is a synonym for "war expected." The word has become a pure provocative, and no government wishing peace sincerely should allow it ever to be printed in a newspaper. Every up-to-date dictionary should say that "peace" and "war" mean the same thing, now *in*

posse, now in actu. It may even reasonably be said that the intensely sharp competitive *preparation* for war by the nations *is the real war*, permanent, unceasing; and that the battles are only a sort of public verification of the mastery during the "peace"-interval.

It is quite possible, therefore, for a man who might have fought willingly in the American Revolution to regard modern war as thoroughly immoral, on the ground that the entire circumstances of modern war involve an abuse of language, a misleading of the public, and a lack of democratic control, with consequent absence of the element of choice on the part of the citizens. Add to this the frightful and indiscriminate destruction of modern war, its unavoidable attack on women, children, the aged, and civilians of every sort, and the damage inflicted on the untold millions of future generations, and you have made out a fairly good case for saying that if war was once morally permissible, under extreme provocation, it is now an unforgivable crime against both man and nature.

In this perspective, then, we may return to the Bill of Rights and the question of the areas where individual freedom is preserved by the Constitution. How would you go about writing an amendment that would exempt from participation in war those members of our society who regard war as a crime? To go the whole way, you would have to make conscientious objection to military service a right of every citizen, and you would also have to relieve every taxpayer of the obligation of paying for his share of the war.

It is easy to anticipate the objections to any such proposal. First, a constitutional provision (instead of a privilege, granted by legislation, and hedged with onerous provisos) for conscientious objection would undermine the authority of the draft law. Many men, perhaps most, submit to the draft unwillingly, and such a provision would probably nullify the draft.

The same sort of objection could be made against any sort of qualified exemption from paying taxes for war. Nobody likes taxes. A provision allowing anyone who says he is "against war" to refuse to pay, say, 64 per cent of his taxes (the proportion devoted to military purposes in President Eisenhower's budget) would be the practical equivalent of disarmament for the United States.

Such provisions, then, would mean that the minority (no one knows how small or how large a minority) who feel strongly that the United States should renounce war as an instrument of national policy and forthwith abandon all preparation for war, would control the decision for everyone. And this, it will be argued, is both unthinkable and unjust. So we must conclude that an addition to the Bill of Rights to accommodate the people who are now pacifists is not a solution that will be chosen in the immediate future.

Thus the dilemma remains—a sore dilemma for a society which is supposed to honor the rights of individuals to the point of calling them "inviolable."

What are the opposing forces in this dilemma? On the one side is the insistence of a growing number of individuals that the State has no right to compel them to commit acts which they regard as involving grave or intolerable immorality; on the other side is the contention that those acts are absolutely necessary to survival. And survival, in this case, like peace, is said to be indivisible. You can't filter out the pacifists from the population and transport them to some undefended area of the earth. That is, you can't do anything like that without condemning them as criminals and sentencing them to "exile" from the common community. It is a question, moreover, whether national morale could withstand any such extreme measure, since a moral decision which is now blurred and indistinct would then confront every citizen with great clarity. For this reason, if for no other, the government itself cannot be

expected to take the initiative in precipitating any such decision on a national scale.

This returns the question to the individual: What ought a man to do when he begins to feel that he can no longer support the actions taken in his behalf by his government?

One answer to this question has been returned by a group of religious pacifists who have formed a committee with the name, Non-Violent Action Against Nuclear Weapons. Some of the members of this group went to Nevada last summer and picketed a road leading to the nuclear testing grounds at Camp Mercury. They chose August 8—the anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima—as the day on which to picket and hold a "prayer vigil." Nation-wide publicity resulted from this effort of a handful of people to oppose before the world any further development of nuclear weapons.

Now this group has another protest under way. Two architects in middle life, Albert Smith Bigelow, 51, of Cos Cob, Connecticut, and William R. Huntington, 50, of St. James, New York, with two others as yet unnamed, have decided to sail a thirty-foot ketch across the Pacific to the Eniwetok testing grounds and to enter and remain in the dangerous area where, next April, further test explosions of nuclear weapons are to be set off. According to a release containing "Summary Information" on the project:

They intend to remain there, come what may, in an effort to halt what they believe to be the monstrous delinquency of our government in continuing actions which threaten the wellbeing of all men. They recognize these explosions will be stopped only if this is the will of the American people. They hope by their presence and, if necessary, by their sufferings to speak to the reason and conscience of their fellow Americans. A parallel project to carry the same moral and political message to the people and authorities of Russia is being organized.

The explanation and justification for this venture offered by the group is as follows:

The time has come when action of this kind is imperative. There are some things which even

democratic governments do which those who stand for the dignity and survival of man must oppose. Our leaders are following policies which will greatly intensify the arms race, not helping form an American will to lead the world away from this senseless folly. We have tried: for years we have spoken and written, protesting the folly of seeking to preserve human freedom by developing the ability to kill and hurt millions of other men, women and children. But our voices have been lost in the massive effort of those responsible for preparing this country for war.

We believe more than words are needed if the apparent willingness of Americans to accept any horror in the name of national defense is to be challenged. If the majority in our democracy consciously want these tests, their desire will prevail. We oppose them only by non-violence and self-sacrifice. We speak now with our whole lives. We can no longer acquiesce in these tests.

The two architects who will have a leading role in the expedition—the ketch, *Golden Rule*, is scheduled to sail from San Pedro Harbor on or about Feb. 10—are both Quakers and several of the supporters of the project are also members of the Society of Friends. It may be said that in general the project is being undertaken in the Quaker spirit, there being no sectarian coloring in the statement of principles on which the action is based:

—Each individual, regardless of color, race, creed, nationality or moral condition, is sacred. Any hurt to him, no matter how slight, is, ultimately, injury to the whole human race;

—As individuals, as groups, as nations, our action is destructive if it violates the ancient concept of the oneness of man;

—Punishment, retaliation and revenge cannot reform those who do evil; forgiveness and love are necessary to redemption.

While the participants in the *Golden Rule* voyage and their immediate supporters are absolute pacifists, this particular action focuses on the bomb tests. The statement continues:

We believe many who do not yet fully reject reliance on military power *do* see wisdom in America's stopping these tests, as the first step in a

major effort to reverse the arms race. No vital risk is involved. No inspection is necessary. The Soviet Union has said it is willing to stop tests. If the Soviet Union did not respond to America's action, the Soviet Union, not the United States, would be regarded by mankind as the nation that refused to end the radiation danger and help move the world toward peace.

Many Americans know these things. But as a nation, confused by the complexity of the problem, we stand benumbed, morally desensitized by ten years of propaganda and fear. *How do you reach men when all the horror is in the fact that they feel no horror?*

It requires, we believe, the kind of effort and sacrifice we now undertake. There are men in our national leadership who seem to understand no other language but violence. They press for continued tests in spite of the admitted risk that the end of such an arms race will be global war—that is, national suicide. Other men, while recognizing the risk in stopping, see this as a lesser risk, and the only one with hope. They dare not take that risk without the support of American public opinion. There have been signs recently that that opinion is forming. Yet most who favor a risk for peace remain silent.

The act of these men is an act intended to move other men to reach down into the depths of their being and ask themselves what they really believe in, what they care about, and what they are living their lives for. There are doubtless other ways to exert this sort of influence, but this is the way these men have chosen. The important thing to think about, in this instance, may well be, first, the unquestionable reality of their dilemma—the dilemma of men who can no longer support actions taken in their behalf by their government. The next thing to think about is what men in such a position might do. What alternatives have they? Is it the duty of a free society—which means the duty of free individuals in a democratic society—to help them find alternatives? Are the problems which national policy creates for such individuals—people who are resolved to be harmless in their relations with others—problems for those individuals alone, or are they problems which every citizen must help to work out?

Actually, the dilemma, while terrible enough, is not the harsh choice between a stand for "absolute war" or "absolute peace." Men *could* try to move in the direction of understanding with greater sympathy and tolerance the acts and even the "threats" of other nations. There is still a little time. Men not yet ready to disarm could at least begin to think seriously about some means of composing international differences without resort to force of arms. They could begin to show some *honest eagerness* in this direction. It is the uncompromising attitude of those who are bent on a course which can lead only to violence, and the apparent submission of the great majority of people to leadership committed to this direction, which drives other men to take the somewhat desperate measure of exposing themselves to the fury of a nuclear blast.

You could regard these men who are setting sail in the *Golden Rule* for Eniwetok—unless, of course, they are arrested, or otherwise prevented from sailing—as men who are using this means of declaring to their countrymen that Americans do have a choice. It is a choice, however, in which Americans must take some kind of individual initiative in order to enjoy.