

## SCIENTIFIC INSPIRATION

A CORRESPONDENT much interested in the question of synthesis between science and religion writes a brief comment on a recent MANAS review:

I noted your review of Kahn's *Design of the Universe* in the Feb. 29 issue, and approve in general the view that science and philosophy are interrelated, although I have not read the book. . . . It is the implication of science for philosophy and religion, for man's understanding of himself, his knowledge, and the nature of the world about him and his sense of values in this situation, which I think is of much greater importance than the impact of science on technology—great as the latter undoubtedly is. The great error in our contemporary valuations of science (and science education) lies in associating it with technology rather than philosophy.

Since the average man's experience of science is through technology, rather than in its influence on philosophy and religion—which has been somewhat indirect—it is natural that science should have the association to which this correspondent objects. But how, actually, is science related to philosophy and religion?

Newton called his science "Natural Philosophy," and, as scholars have shown, believed that his physical theories fitted in well with the philosophic speculations of the Cambridge Platonists of his time. Morris Cohen (*Reason and Nature*) has pointed out that the inspiration for Newton's discovery of the law of gravitation resulted in part from the great physicist's interest in the mystical doctrines of Jakob Boehme, and that Kepler's laws had parentage in the metaphysics of Plotinus and the speculations of Apollonius of Perga on conic sections. Kahn, to whom our correspondent refers, reminds us that Copernicus was moved to consider the heliocentric system a possibility by his studies of Pythagorean mathematics. Robert A. Millikan devoted one of his best lectures to

explaining that the very birth of modern science was owing to the philosophical Humanists of the Florentine Revival of Learning.

A further confirmation of the philosophic stimulus to scientific discovery is found in Lange's *History of Materialism*, in which the author, after detailing the researches and scientific knowledge of the ancients, has this to say:

When we behold knowledge thus accumulating from all sides—knowledge which strikes deep into the heart, and already presupposes the axiom of the uniformity of events—we must ask the question, How far did ancient Materialism contribute to the attainment of this knowledge and these views?

And the answer to this question will at first sight appear very curious. For not only does scarcely a single one of the great discoverers—with the solitary exception of Demokritos—distinctly belong to the Materialistic school, but we find among the most honourable names a long series of men belonging to an utterly opposite, idealistic, formalistic, and even enthusiastic tendency.

That observant skeptic and agnostic, Bertrand Russell, wonders if the wellsprings of science will not dry up in an age which discourages metaphysical speculation (see Review for March 7), and Cohen and Nagel, in *Logic and the Scientific Method*, approvingly quote De Morgan on the formation of scientific hypotheses: "A hypothesis must have been started, not by rule, but by that sagacity of which no description can be given, precisely because the very owners of it do not act under laws perceptible to themselves." Ten years ago (*American Magazine* for December, 1945), C. G. Suits, chief of research at General Electric, generalized from a survey of the experience of creative workers in science and technology to describe the way inventions are born:

Whatever explanation you prefer, it's fair to say that intuition *behaves as though it were* the result of

one's own mental resources operating in the shadowy expanse outside the spotlight of his conscious mind. The fresh patterns we call hunches invariably are formed first in the subconscious, apparently because our consciousness tends to bolt the door against the new and strange. One creative worker in our laboratory compares a hunch to unborn ideas scurrying around within his brain, like birds inside a cage. Every now and then one of them finds an unguarded exit and flutters through into his conscious mind.

Most of us probably live all our lives surrounded by great discoveries which we fail to see. Intuition rings the bell, but we don't bother to answer. Therein lies the big difference between the ordinary mortal and the man of genius. The genius is at home to new ideas. His conscious mind is freely open to these subconscious promptings. He's not held down by the dead weight of tradition. . . . If we want more Edisons and Whitmans—and America can use them!—our schools will have to de-emphasize mere memory drills and start teaching intuition.

Among the most dramatic instances of this sort of "intuition" was Friedrich Kekulé's discovery of the molecular structure of organic compounds. The following is quoted from Kekulé's words, as reproduced in Frederick Prescott's *Modern Chemistry*:

One fine summer evening I was returning by the last omnibus through the deserted streets of the metropolis [London], which are at other times so full of life. I fell into a reverie, and lo! the atoms were gambolling before my eyes! Whenever, hitherto, these diminutive beings had appeared to me, they had always been in motion, but up to that time, I had never been able to discover the nature of their motion. Now, however, I saw how, frequently, two smaller atoms united to form a pair; how a larger one embraced two smaller ones; how still larger ones kept hold of three or even four of the smaller, whilst the whole kept whirling in a giddy dance. I saw how the larger ones formed a chain. . . .

Reaching home, Kekulé spent the night sketching the figures the atoms danced in his dream. The patterns eventually became the formulas for organic compounds. In Ghent, Kekulé dreamed again, dozing off while thinking about the formula for benzene. This time he saw chains of atoms dancing like snakes: "One of the

snakes had seized hold of its own tail, and the form whirled mockingly before my eyes." By such incantations of the mind was born what chemists now call the benzene ring. Prescott comments: "No chemical theory, unless it be Dalton's, has been more fruitful and provocative of research." Kekulé's own comment was this:

Let us learn to dream, then perhaps we shall find the truth. But let us beware of publishing our dreams before they have been put to the proof by the waking understanding.

Kekulé was interested in authentic discovery; his counsel is that inspiration must be followed by careful development and experimental verification. This combination is no doubt the basis of all scientific progress, but we have still to ask where our definition of "science" should begin? Does science include the mysterious genesis of a new idea or hypothesis in philosophic brooding, Whitmanesque "lazing" to invite the soul, or the "dreaming" which thrilled Kekulé? Or are only the laborious working out of the theory and its subsequent testing entitled to be called science? If science encompasses everything that lies within the processes of Scientific Method, then is the advent of a flash of intuition a part of that method?

It would be easy, of course, to claim that all scientific inspiration comes as a result of application of the Scientific Method, but is this really the case? On the other hand, if we permit ourselves to mean by science the age-old yearning of human beings to know the truth—to which, in modern times, an elaborate discipline of impartial testing and verification has been added—then science does indeed include inspiration. But if we mean by science simply its discipline, the rigor of experimental work and the careful weighing of the elements of hypothesis in connection with research, then we should be very careful not to exaggerate its importance. No doubt inspiration is a fitful guest who may come at odd hours, regardless of whether a man is trying to "originate," or at the moment is deep in the drudgery of routines. But inspiration and hard

work are not the same thing, even though they may be inextricably mixed in the lives of human beings.

We have not, of course, answered the question with which we began this inquiry: How is science related to philosophy and religion? But our discussion thus far has a crucial bearing on the question. While science may radically change our idea of the world around us, our conception of the universe and the natural order, with resulting influence upon both philosophy and religion, of even greater importance is the effect of science on the idea of *self*. Our correspondent speaks of the implication of science "for man's understanding of himself," and it is here that the problem of distinguishing between creative activity and scientific activity—if we are prepared to admit such a distinction, or intend to define science in a way that demands this distinction be made—becomes practically all-important. For the idea of the self is the real beginning of both religion and philosophy. Until very recently, science, widely and intensely preoccupied with the external world, has given this matter very little attention.

## *Letter from* **Canada**

VANCOUVER, B.C.—So far as I am aware, Iceland—little "insignificant" Iceland—is the only Western nation with a wholly positive attitude toward art, science and thought. Through the Government of Iceland the people lend ample support to every element of their cultural life, individual and collective. They do it without question, wholeheartedly, as a people for whom mental and spiritual things are not the mere trimmings (dispensable at will) of commercialism, but the essentials for which economic prosperity exists. This is Civilization, and the rest of the world—Canada in particular—could learn a lot more about it.

To me the major Canadian event of recent weeks was the publication in *Mclean's Magazine* of an article by Dr. Leslie Bell of Toronto, calling for government subsidy of the arts in Canada. I have no doubt we shall all be dead before even the official "Inquiry" begins, but at least there is a stir in the swamp that gives us reason to extend greetings and felicitations to such of Canada's artists and thinkers as will some day have a tolerable time of it. Canada is at this moment rich in excellent talent that no country in its right mind would leave to the bludgeonings of economic chance, but instead of assisting that talent to a positive fulfilment Canada condemns it to make either a sickening capitulation to the vulgarities of commercialism, or (in the case of sterner stuff less open to compromise), to waste four-fifths of its time and energy in a mere struggle for food, shelter and integrity.

In fairness it might be said that Canada is not the only offender in this matter of business first and culture second—or last; but it would be hard to find a worse example anywhere in the modern world. Today the independent-minded Canadian artist who seeks some reasonable degree of security as a foundation for creative work will get little help from anywhere: there is no civic

machinery for the consideration of his needs, no official appreciation of his problems, and few individuals who will consider (even consider) making the smallest practical gesture in his direction—even when he gives clear proof of his right to it. It would be no exaggeration to say that for him the lintel of Canada is inscribed, Abandon all hope, ye who enter here. A country that has no room—in terms of solid practical support—for a Hart House Orchestra organized and conducted by a first-rate English musician (Boyd Neel), is unlikely even to glance in the direction of its individual creative talent, especially if it thinks the glance might cost it a dollar. Stone blindness on essential cultural issues is so universal in Canada that the creative artist whose problem would in some measure be solved by part-time employment—sweeping floors or hammering nails, if nothing else could be found—is lucky if he receives replies to such overtures as he makes in this direction. Any response he does get, "sympathetically" worded though it may be, is tacitly charged with Philistinism. While the writer says "So sorry . ." he is actually thinking: "If you can't make a living at your art then obviously you haven't got what it takes, or else you're perversely standing on the wrong side of the fence. We live in a Democracy where anyone can succeed who has the stuff and knows the ropes. Your plain duty to your family and yourself is to scrap all these fanciful notions and undertake to get along in a responsible way like other people. (Isn't this art business rather unrealistic and non-essential anyhow?)"

In Canada the man whose mind is out of line with commercial and conventional Brass Hattery—who oversteps the "one of the boys" category—is taking his life in his hands: he puts himself outside the frame of reference of the ubiquitous "practical man" and into a position where there is no element of reciprocity. A man with a talent for composing music (or writing books or painting pictures), and a determination to do it at all costs, is too queer and questionable a fish for the adult-infant who can think only in

terms of dollars-and-cents prosperity and progress. And of course the "Transcendentalists"—as Emerson called them—are not notably equipped for ingratiating themselves with the man of the world: they are as opposed to his values as he is to theirs, and even less disposed than he to conceal their antagonism. "They are lonely; the spirit of their writing and conversation is lonely; they repel influences; they shun general society . . . Society, to be sure, does not like this very well: it saith, Whoso goes to walk alone accuses the whole world; he declares all to be unfit to be his companions: it is very uncivil, nay, insulting: Society will retaliate..." (Emerson: "The Transcendentalist.")

Society will retaliate! And of course, you can't very well blame it. You can't look for enthusiastic cooperation, or any cooperation at all, from financiers and bureaucrats who may have some flicker of an urge for "feeling needed" in ways other than money-grubbing or party politics, but who sense—even when they are not frankly told—that the creative mind has no need of them. You can't expect material support from a man who detects your complete mental independence of him (not to mention your contempt for his mode of life and thought), and who sees no prospect of even a moral return for his outlay. When you tell people in word or manner that you can live without them you can hardly make noises of rage and pain when they tell you to go ahead!

This, of course, is why it is so necessary to find some solid ground on which to deal with the problem; some super-personal and objective way of meeting the survival needs of the artist and non-conformist thinker. Dr. Bell's recent article ("What's Wrong with Subsidies for the Arts?") is a stentorian call to Canadian intelligence to find such a way. He who "goes to walk alone" is today as ever the bringer of universal values and cultural light, and any spiritually self-regarding nation will propose to maintain him vigorously alive by means above and beyond the caprices of private patronage and the impenetrable fogs of

Babbitry. The implication is a wise and far-reaching Social Subsidy for the arts and sciences, and for all conscientious workers in these fields, be they men of official academic standing or men who obstinately go to walk alone (not forgetting that the latter have on the whole produced the best things in humanity's cultural heritage).

CANADIAN CORRESPONDENT

## REVIEW

### A JOURNAL OF PSYCHICAL RESEARCH"

WE are indebted to the editors of *Tomorrow*, Quarterly Review of Psychical Research—and, at least in unofficial terms, an organ for the Parapsychology Foundation of New York City—for its special "Asia" issue, Autumn, 1955. An editorial by Eileen Garrett, editor-publisher of *Tomorrow*, affirms that Asia has something more than a "contribution" to make to Western psychology:

This special Asia Issue of our magazine contains a selection of articles on Far Eastern subjects: but it also reports on the recent Conference on Spontaneous Phenomena, which took place at Cambridge, England.

What, then, is the link between the Cambridge Conference, sponsored by the British Society for Psychical Research and supported by the Parapsychology Foundation, and new information of psychic studies in Asia?

I submit that the answer may be found in the emerging inquiry into methods of psychic research. Surely, it is no longer necessary to argue that psychic phenomena actually exist and always have existed. No one who has studied the literature of this field with even a half-open mind can doubt the reality of hauntings, poltergeist phenomena, telepathic dreams, apparitions, and so on. But what is likely to remain a matter of discussion for some time is the best method for investigating such phenomena; the best means of gathering case histories; the relative value of large quantities of cases, as compared to careful documentation of just a few case histories.

Asia's mystical traditions may help us in the West in seeking to answer questions of method that are now being reexamined. The great storehouses of information on alleged phenomena in the Far East should be opened to American and European researchers. The vast Asian literature on psychic questions, with its strong religio-philosophic impact, should be made more readily available to the West.

The gap between East and West is itself an unreality. The Orient is within everyone of us. Today's Asia is not only identical with our own cultural past—but is, in fact, represented by the very elements of our own personality which can be most closely linked with psychic experience. The men and

women of Asia's countrysides are our brothers and sisters—nay, are our very selves, if we were freed of the overlays of a mechanistic civilization that has succeeded in near-suffocating the spiritual traditions that are man's heritage.

Thus, in sampling of Asia's realm of mystical knowledge, we are not really reaching out toward something new and unknown. Rather, we are re-learning something which, in our own evolution, we have merely forgotten.

In the same issue, Alan Watts, spokesman in America for the quizzical profundities of Zen Buddhism, contributes a short piece explaining the popularity of Zen among persons who dislike "Christian ideas of omnipotence." Mr. Watts notes that "a Western approach to Oriental wisdom based largely on the peculiarly Western urge for the extension of human power will neglect the main thing which this wisdom has to offer, and of which we stand so tremendously in need—and that is deliverance from the egocentric way of feeling the world, from our titanic anxiety to control everything and to obliterate the limits of time and space, from that will-to-power which makes our culture such a menace to life on this planet." The determined skepticism of the Zen Buddhist, in Watts' opinion, is a prerequisite to the study of Eastern philosophy in general—but it should be remembered that this sort of skepticism is not so much directed at other people's creeds or beliefs, but at one's own capacities for embodying truth in mere verbiage.

In connection with Carl Jung's "Psychology, East and West," *Tomorrow* presents some of Jung's introductory paragraphs to Evans-Wentz' *The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation*:

In the East, mind is a cosmic factor, the very essence of existence; while in the West we have just begun to understand that it is the essential condition of cognition, and hence of the cognitive existence of the world. There is no conflict between religion and science in the East, because no science is there based upon the passion for facts, and no religion upon mere faith. . . .

The religious point of view always expresses and formulates the essential psychological attitude and its

specific prejudices, even in the case of people who have forgotten, or who have never heard of, their own religion. . . .

By way of compensation for the loss of a world that pulsed with our blood and breathed with our breath, we have developed an enthusiasm for facts—mountains of facts, far beyond any single individual's power to survey. . . .

We must get at the Eastern values from within and not from without, seeking them in ourselves, in the unconscious. We shall then discover how great is our fear of the unconscious and how formidable are our resistances. Because of these resistances we doubt the very thing that seems so obvious to the East, namely: the self-liberating power of the introverted mind. . . .

It seems to me that we have really learned something from the East when we understand that the psyche contains riches enough without having to be primed from outside, and when we feel capable of evolving out of ourselves with or without divine grace. . . .

The extroverted tendency of the West and the introverted tendency of the East have one important purpose in common; both make desperate efforts to conquer the mere naturalness of life. . . .

We naturally try to get as far away from our weaknesses as possible, a fact which may explain the sort of extraversion that is always seeking security by dominating its surroundings. Extraversion goes hand in hand with mistrust of the inner man, if indeed there is any consciousness of him at all. . . .

MANAS does not usually pursue discussion of journals which reflect an avid interest in the trance phenomena of mediums. Mrs. Garrett, the editor of *Tomorrow*, has been a medium, and many of *Tomorrow's* readers are probably "spiritualists" of a sort—persons, that is, who hope for information concerning the "after-life" from seance sittings. However, at no time has *Tomorrow* catered exclusively or extravagantly to these readers. Mrs. Garrett herself, whose *Adventures in the Supernormal* is well worth reading, has successfully by-passed the cultish atmosphere, and as a lay investigator has earned the respect of serious parapsychologists. Dr. Gardner Murphy, Director of Research at the Menninger Foundation, Topeka, Kansas, is

General Research Consultant for the Parapsychology Foundation, of which Mrs. Garrett is president. Dr. J. B. Rhine and Dr. C. J. Ducasse have both assisted at several international conferences in Parapsychology, the first of which was held in Utrecht, 1953, the last at Cambridge, 1955. Resolutions passed by the 1955 Conference included the following:

That this Conference approves in principle the preparation of an international plan looking towards better studies of spontaneous cases;

That the Conference urges upon the Society for Psychical Research, and the American Society for Psychical Research, the immediate development of a common plan for investigations in the English-speaking world;

That such a plan should comprise measures (a) for the discovery, careful sifting, authentication, and intensive study of a large number of cases, including recent cases; (b) for the development of hypotheses regarding the principles underlying them; (c) for the development of methods for testing hypotheses by experimental and other methods;

That an international "follow-up" Committee be appointed to maintain international communications in this field of research, and to maintain contact with the Parapsychology Foundation, to which the parapsychological organizations in the countries represented at the Conference owe so much.

## COMMENTARY "LIBERATION"

FROM New York comes encouraging evidence of a rebirth in radical thinking in the form of the first (March) issue of a new magazine, *Liberation*. This monthly is published at 110 Christopher Street, New York 14, and subscriptions are \$3.00 a year.

For brief characterization of *Liberation*, we might say that the magazine gives voice to what in last week's leading article in MANAS was referred to as the "New Minority"—offering a synthesis of libertarian political thinking and nonsectarian religious inspiration. In the words of the editors:

The politics of the future requires a creative synthesis of the individual ethical insights of the great religious leaders and the collective social concern of the great revolutionists.

The editorial board is listed as including Dave Dellinger, Roy Finch, A. J. Muste, Bayard Rustin, and Charles Walker. Among those who may be expected to contribute articles to *Liberation* are such writers as Lewis Mumford, Waldo Frank, Richard Gregg, Claire Bishop, Norman Mailer, Milton Mayer, William Neumann, and others.

In an opening editorial, "Tract for the Times," the editors take note of the decline of independent radicalism and indicate their intention of attempting "thorough reappraisal" of the assumptions of recent radical thinking. "Old labels," they say, "do not apply any more, and the phrases which fifty years ago were guideposts to significant action have largely become empty patter and jargon." Rejecting the familiar expedient of "reshuffling power," they say: "We require a post-Soviet, post-H-bomb expression of the needs of today and a fresh vision of the world of peace, freedom and brotherhood in which they can be met."

Editorially, the magazine will represent four "root traditions": (1) the Judeo-Christian conception of human dignity, righteousness, equality, and brotherhood; (2) the "American

Dream" of a nation "conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal"—as embodied, also, in men like Jefferson, Paine, Thoreau, Emerson, Debs, and Randolph Bourne; (3) the radical, libertarian and anarchist tradition which envisions a classless and warless world; and (4) the pacifist or non-violent attitude, represented by figures who have rejected war as "accursed and unworthy of men," from Asoka to Gandhi. The first issue presents the credo of Vinoba Bhave, leader of the Bhoodan or land gift movement of modern India; an indictment of the failure of both the Soviet and the American blocs of nations to produce "a real peace-policy," by Pitirim Sorokin, Emeritus Professor of Sociology at Harvard University; and an analysis of "The Problem of Guilt in Post-War Germany," by John K. Dickinson.

The militant mood of *Liberation* is perhaps best conveyed by passages taken from a contribution by Kenneth Patchen, "one of the few anti-war poets of the Thirties who did not join the Office of War Information or the Campaign for a Second Front during World War II":

*"Modern scientific accomplishments"—a wealth of methods coupled with a poverty of intentions which, having nearly exhausted the bell-potential of the earth, move on now to the first frontier of the heavens.*

*What shall light us to murder and defile if by some chance the Laws of the State happen to get turned off?*

MANAS readers should find much of interest in *Liberation*.



## CHILDREN and Ourselves

Editors: We've had quite a discussion in our family, for some time now, as to whether a child of nursery-school age needs some encouragement in "standing up for his rights" when bullied by more aggressive youngsters. Our particular child, you see, seems to have no natural talent for coping with rough tactics. If he gets thrown on the ground or hit with a fist, he simply stands and cries. Wouldn't he suffer less if he were encouraged to hit back? My husband thinks not, being devoted to the "let them grow up in their own way" school of educational thought, and is willing to carry his convictions to a case such as this. The child of which I am speaking is only four years old, but still, even at this nursery school age, patterns later to solidify in grammar and junior high school often begin to emerge.

This is an interesting question, not only because it raises the issue of "pacifism" in a new context. We have first to ask ourselves whether the child who refuses to retaliate is *afraid* of what will happen to him if he does, or whether he simply has no desire to do so. There are sensitive children growing up in conflict-free homes who do not *comprehend* violence in any form. They are not afraid of aggressive compatriots, since they have never had occasion to fear any other human being. In the face of willful aggression, they are only puzzled and hurt. Our questioner wonders whether a little counter-aggression would not help.

Undoubtedly it would, but we need to bear in mind that as soon as a child begins to consider the ability to wield physical force to be important, not only his standards of behavior, but also his standards for friendship, are formed on a corresponding pattern. Instead of being drawn by natural affinity to those with whom he may share rapport, he will tend to build friendships with the most powerful and aggressive youngsters in his age-group. When children do this—as is so frequently the case—they suffer a loss of perception in regard to themselves. For, if we accept "friends" on the basis of *group* standards

alone, they are not really *our* friends. When we adults pretend to have friends that are not truly so, we end by being mightily confused about ourselves. So, with children, "self-alienation" can doubtless begin in this way.

We can agree that purely passive submission to violence is non-educative, but, as Gandhi demonstrated, there is more than one way of resisting aggression. Moreover, any arousal of will and intelligence, in a determination to alter existing conditions, has a measure of effectiveness. Sometimes words will do it, sometimes simply a response of complete composure will announce that physical aggression, motivated by animosity, is pointless and deserves only disdain. Quite possibly, a child who is sensitive rather than fearful will later develop original methods of counteracting violence.

The majority of children will probably find it necessary to defend themselves by physical force. Yet we can see no harm in having this development come a little later in life. The problem in the nursery school is not the child who cannot understand violence, but the children who expect and provoke it. Perhaps in their homes, as in the homes of so many "red-blooded Americans," the fathers have assumed "you gotta know how to fight," and by counselling and example, have fostered the youngsters' aggressive patterns.

There are pacifist parents, as well as the red-blooded variety, who desire their children to follow a clearly-defined pattern of behavior response. We take it that the father mentioned by our correspondent has no "doctrines" on the subject, and doesn't want to proscribe or even prescribe. The stern order, "Go back and beat the hell out of Jimmy," is just what some young boys need to hear—and just what others shouldn't ever hear from a father. Similarly, the pacifist who wants his child to feel guilty if he strikes a blow may be talking to the wrong party at the wrong time.

As for the child described by our correspondent: Picture his unhappiness as he stands crying, with his hands at his sides, and saying to himself, "He hurt me again! Yesterday he pushed me off the slide. It always hurts when he comes around. No it doesn't! Some days he doesn't act that way. Some days he acts as though he likes me. What can I do? Everybody yells at me to fight, but I don't want to. I don't want to hurt him—and I don't want him to hurt me any more either. I wish the teacher would make him stop. I wish my father would make him stop. I hate this old school. I want to be with a friend who never hits me and not be at school at all. But some days I like school!"

Now, if anything even remotely resembling this sort of "ambivalent" thinking goes on in the mind of the young sufferer, there is a pretty good chance he will begin to think, and choose, however ineptly, in *his* way. He will treasure associations with non-aggressive children, because he has suffered aggression. At the very least, he will try to think.

Perhaps he will learn only to "appease" the aggressor! But is this so terrible for a four-year old? To appease an over-aggressive child, and do it successfully, one must be quite a psychologist. One must also, of course, be willing to turn the other cheek—a practice Jesus is said to have recommended—and willing to give up possessions for the sake of peace. No one else, be it remembered, is involved in the proceedings we are discussing: no younger sister is being tortured, no frail little boy is in need of succor. The issue is squarely between the aggressor and our friend. *Why not let him work on the problem, for himself and by himself, for quite a long time?*

He is unhappy, you say. Indeed he is. He suffers according to his ability, but also, possibly, according to his need. Suffering on the horns of a dilemma may not be a bad thing for any young person. We allow them so few dilemmas, insist instead on "pointing the way" and solving all their problems before they have themselves really

discovered that a problem exists. But when they grow up, the problems are all there, waiting for them. They will then have to deal with conflicts according to whatever they have learned at home and in school, and, what is more important, they will also meet problems in terms of some precious qualities of innate temperament.

If you can find no such precious quality as "innate temperament" in your child, such remarks will, of course, be nonsensical. But if environment and heredity do not quite seem "all," then there is room for wondering if we can ever expect our children to meet conflict successfully in *our* way. They will try, of course, if we have been diligent in our effort to "condition" them. But can anyone use the way of another with full force and conviction? So the child who suffers because others don't treat him the way he wishes to be treated, and who can't stomach treating them as they expect to be treated, may be encouraged to make some sort of beginning in discovering *a way of his own*.

Of course, only those children who have been offered the true security of tolerance and understanding in their own homes can be safely left to such "suffering." But there is no need of a dreadful complex resulting from being a victim of aggression for a time, so long as the child feels he truly belongs in *some* situations. After all, who among us feels that he belongs perfectly and completely, wherever he goes and whatever he encounters?

## *FRONTIERS*

### A "Spiritual" Problem

REPROACHES ranging from tolerantly amused comment to more serious questioning have been directed at a contemporary Indian thinker, Sardar K. M. Pannikar, for remarks made in his convocation address at the Visva-Bharati University at Santiniketan, the educational institution founded by Rabindranath Tagore. Mr. Pannikar, termed "historian-scholar" by the editor of *Harijan* (Jan. 21), launched an attack on what he regards as a false conception of Indian culture, and while few readers will feel sympathy for his point of view, many may nevertheless be grateful to him for starting what might turn out to be a useful discussion.

The ideas that were singled out for condemnation in Mr. Pannikar's address are briefly summarized in *Harijan*:

. . . that (1) India has accepted "poverty as a national ideal"; "The doctrine of the simple life which is presumed to encourage high thinking is but the worship of poverty"; that (2) India is more spiritual than the rest of the world is "no more than a self-deception. . . nowhere in fact, is materialism so rampant as in India", and that (3) the adoration of the village life and rural economy based on handicrafts or home and village industries is based on a perverted view of our past, because "at all times a vigorous urban life existed in India."

Therefore he {Mr. Pannikar} denounced the Ashram mentality which, according to him, is only worship of poverty. Did not Shri T. T. Krishnamachari, the Union Minister of Industries, also denounce the Gandhian Ashrams almost in a similar vein?

Editorial replies to Mr. Pannikar in such papers as *Harijan*, *Thought*, and the *Hindu Weekly Review* demonstrate that India is well equipped with persons able to show the weaknesses and misleading character of his oversimplifying indictment. There is a sense, however, in which the scholar seems to be speaking not only to his countrymen, but to the rest of the world, about India. He is perhaps, a little tired of the

clichés used by uninformed Westerners to give an account of India to one another; and he may also be over-anxious that India be accepted as a "typical" modern nation, without being singled out as a country of somewhat "peculiar" people.

An echo of this mood comes from an entirely different source, the *Atlantic* for December, 1955, in which Aubrey Menen, an English writer who had an Indian father, explores Western misconceptions of India under the title, "The Way the New India Thinks." Mr. Menen begins:

When an Indian comes to the Western world these days, he finds that nobody has read his newspapers, nobody has read his books, and very few people know anything of his national history. This neither surprises nor dismays him. What he does find upsetting is that so many people are sure they know all about the way he thinks. He finds that, broadly speaking, two opinions prevail. No sooner has he finished with the ordinary courtesies on meeting a European or an American than either (1) he will be told that he and all his countrymen have great spiritual depths and will save the world by the exercise of their psychic powers—and here there is often a vague impression conveyed of saints in white robes floating through the air—or (2) he will be denounced as a fool who is blindly preparing to hand India over to the Communists.

Europeans and Americans who recognize that Mr. Menen knows whereof he speaks will be delighted by this article, which unites a pleasant light-heartedness with a profound appreciation of Gandhi's common sense, and they might even work up a little sympathy for Mr. Pannikar, who, although convicted of bad judgment, bad history, and bad taste, may have been exposed to a little more than his share of frothy religiosity. Let us say that both Mr. Pannikar and Mr. Menen would prefer a more realistic view of India than that of Western stereotypes, and that Menen speaks for many when he says:

There are 400 million Indians. In that large number there will be found, of course, some saints and a fair sprinkling of fools. But the normal Indian feels that he is far from being either. He regards himself as a typical member of the civilized portion of the human race; and since Indians make up one fifth

of that community, it must be admitted that there is much to be said for his point of view.

The discussion, however, cannot be allowed to stop here. For while Mr. Pannikar may insist that the notion of India's superior spirituality is "no more than self-deception,"—and while in this he may in fact be right, since nothing suffocates spirituality so much as wearing it on one's sleeve—the particular problems of modern India are by no means identical with those of other nations, and India's particular problems arise from India's past. It is hardly arguable, for example, that the transcendental and religious philosophy of India has been equalled by any other culture in the world. From the days of the ancient Greeks, India has been regarded as a source of high disciplines in both speculative thought and psychological powers, while the majesty of India's epic literature has won the admiration and devotion of every serious scholar of Oriental studies.

How, then, should a people with this heritage be regarded by others—and by themselves? Fortunately, we do not have to formulate a reply to this question, since it has already been well answered by a distinguished Indian philosopher, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. In the article on Hinduism in G. T. Garratt's *The Legacy of India*, he writes:

In its great days Hinduism was inspired to carry its idea across the frontiers of India and impose it on the civilized world. Its memory has become a part of the Asiatic consciousness, tinging its outlook on life. Today it is a vital element in world thought and offers the necessary corrective to the predominantly rationalistic pragmatism of the West. It has therefore universal value.

The vision of India, like that of Greece, is Indian only in the sense that it was formulated by minds belonging to the Indian soil. The value of that vision does not reside in any tribal or provincial characteristics, but in those elements of universality which appeal to the whole world. What can be recognized as truly Indian is not the universal truth which is present in it, but the elements of weakness and prejudice, which even some of the greatest Indians have in common with their weaker brethren.

If Westerners could adopt the first of these paragraphs as a basis for all attempts to understand and evaluate Indian thought and ways, and if Indians were to take to heart the wisdom of the second, then the follies and extravagances of opinion about India might soon be diminished. Meanwhile, there may be value in trying to understand why the follies and extravagances exist at all.

It should give no offense to anyone to say that the gifts and virtues of men usually bear with them certain corresponding defects and egotisms. The English have a deserved reputation for courage, daring, and intrepid independence. They have been conquerors and colonizers, and they have been intensely proud of the fact that, for a time, the sun never set on British possessions. As to the corresponding defects, we shall let an Englishman speak. The writer is J. F. C. Fuller, a former British major general:

In my heart I have a very warm place for Mr. Smith, who, as Private, Sergeant, Subaltern and General, has been for many long years my friend and companion. I have watched him in two long wars struggling against odds, and I have learnt to appreciate his virtues, and his failings, and his indomitable courage. He is a man who possesses such natural pride of birth that, through sheer contempt for others, he refuses to learn or to be defeated. . . . he has, in fact, raised the vice of contempt to a high virtue and on this virtue is the British Empire founded. . . . He is always there, for the sun never sets on his Empire, but he is never ready. For readiness would presuppose fear, and what has he, an Englishman, to be afraid of? He is an incarnation of King Henry V., and every battle he fights is an Agincourt.

Any attempt to characterize an entire people is a hazardous business, in these days of suspicion of all big generalizations, yet to avoid entirely such judgments would be to emasculate historical inquiry. It is certainly not misleading to say, for example, that the British for a long time felt that their contribution to world civilization was sufficient moral justification for British imperialism. This was the doctrine of "the White Man's Burden," once an expression of long-

suffering and unappreciated service, and now virtually an epithet voiced in cynical disapproval of all apologies for imperialism.

The British have had their day in the sun, and now other stars are rising, while the British lion, although a bit lean and old, is suffering his decline with dignity and even some graciousness. Times are changing, and nations and peoples with them. One might even argue that India is already feeling the discomforts of the Brown Man's Burden—for it is no light responsibility to have to shoulder a past which includes philosophical treasures unrivalled by any other country in the world.

Perhaps Mr. Pannikar senses that if modern Indian culture had indeed embodied the full strength of India's ancestral wisdom, the Indian people would not have been so vulnerable to the onslaughts of British influence—British ideas and ways of doing things, not British arms, which is another sort of problem. Mr. Menen tells how the British, secure in their conviction that only British culture and British education were worth having, imposed their cultural assumptions on intelligent young Indians:

The man who was responsible for the extraordinary system of education that I have described was Thomas Babington Macauley. When India became an Imperial possession, he was asked to go out there to prescribe what the new subjects of the Crown should be taught. He took ship, and sailed East with a cabinful of books. These were translations of the major works of Hindu civilization. By the time he had rounded the Cape of Good Hope he had read the lot and decided that they were all rubbish. On arrival in India he had made up his mind that the inhabitants should henceforth be educated in a foreign language which they should be taught by studying a foreign literature; that is to say, they were to be taught English literature in the English language. They were to be taught nothing whatever that was Indian. He explained this in a Minute on Education, which was adopted.

This enormity was put straight in our own times by a great man. With the simplicity that often goes with greatness, this man reminded Indians of an elementary fact. He told them that they had no need to try to think like Englishmen; they could perfectly

well think like themselves. They had been doing so for several centuries before the English had conquered them, and they could do it again. He was right. An Indian shot him dead for his pains, but India is at last beginning to follow his advice.

This man was Mahatma Gandhi. No Indian has been so widely known in the West as he, and none found more of a puzzle. Those who revered him as a great Indian were sorry that he often behaved so like a Western politician. Those who admired him as a statesman were irritated at his Oriental ways. But to Indians he was no puzzle at all. He was the final product, and the first destroyer, of Macauley's huge mistake.

Obviously, India will have a lot of readjusting to do, as this mistake continues to be corrected. One of the "readjustments" will involve a careful reconsideration of what the term "spirituality" means, since Mr. Pannikar's campaign to discourage interest in such matters will hardly be successful. A letter received by MANAS some years ago from an Indian reader who sought to interest the editors in one of India's contemporary "saints" will illustrate the problem. This correspondent urged the saint's work upon our attention, insisting that the solution to the difficulties of the world lay in close attention to the injunctions of this "guru." We replied that we felt a greater sympathy for the undertakings of Gandhi and his followers, as more in touch with the needs of India and of the world. We were then told that Gandhi, while accomplished in politics, was not in the saint's class so far as "spiritual" matters went. We dropped the matter, feeling ourselves pretty "unspiritual," too, since our correspondent's point seemed to have very little meaning.

There are moments when we wonder if "spirituality" is not a word that should be abandoned, along with "God" and "prayer" and "salvation," to give the world a chance to work out some truly functional meanings for the realities behind such terms. The trouble with a theological vocabulary is that it tends to becloud the major issues of philosophical meaning with attachments to customs and codes of morals. The

*Bhagavad-Gita*, to our way of thinking, is a great book because it provides functional definitions of spirituality and because it frees the truly wise from any blind devotion to tradition; thus:

A man is said to be confirmed in spiritual knowledge when he forsaketh every desire which entereth into his heart, and of himself is happy and content in the Self through the Self. His mind is undisturbed in adversity; he is happy and contented in prosperity, and he is a stranger to anxiety, fear, and anger. Such a man is called a Muni. . . .

When thy heart shall have worked through the snares of delusion, then wilt thou attain to high indifference as to those doctrines which are already taught or which are yet to be taught. When thy mind once liberated from the Vedas shall be fixed immovably in contemplation, then shalt thou attain to devotion.

People among whom such wisdom could arise have a high calling. A high calling, however, is not the same as high achievement. High achievement will mean the ability to stand the impact of every sort of imperialism, whether military or cultural, and this may take all the wisdom in the world—the wisdom of both East and West.