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WHAT CAN WE LEAVE TO NATURE?

WITH the great wealth of books to read today—many of them extremely good—it is natural to draw back and wonder, from time to time, why all this conscientious effort to understand and explain, why all these serious attempts to set out attainable goals for human striving, are not more successful in focusing the energies of men and more productive of measurable progress.

An obvious comment is that action for human betterment requires something more than "reading books." This is true enough, but it is equally true that "action" of the sort usually meant is hardly possible without deep convictions concerning human good and how it is to be reached. Books are a major source of the materials which shape these convictions.

One such book which recently came to MANAS for review is Bradford Smith's *Men of Peace* (J. B. Lippincott, $6.50) . It tells the life stories of fifteen men, from the Egyptian king Ikhnaton to Dag Hammarskjold, who "dedicated themselves to the abolition of war." There are a lot of good reasons for reading this book carefully. One of them would be that the movement to outlaw war has been gaining prominence among human undertakings ever since the formation of the first peace societies early in the nineteenth century, and now plays a major part in the formation of enlightened public opinion. As a *popular* cause, the abolition of war is a peculiarly modern enterprise. While those who work against war come from widely diverse backgrounds, they all agree that the evil of war has become intolerable. And while views concerning *how* modern man may put an end to war vary greatly, it is fair to say that the thinking of determined peace-makers is rapidly reaching a revolutionary phase. Long-established assumptions about religious authority, political order, social organization, the nature of man, and the character of human progress are being questioned, altered, rejected and replaced.

In the concluding chapter of *Men of Peace*, Mr. Smith provides one-sentence summaries of the ideas of his "great peace makers," and these may serve to illustrate the wide spectrum of pacifist views, ranging from hope of peace through better use of existing institutions to proposals which would radically change the face of modern society. The summaries are:

Ikhnaton: The world is one; can man then fight himself?

Buddha: Peace comes only by overcoming desire.

Asoka: Man must achieve nonviolence by the practice of it.

Jesus: Love thy neighbor as thyself.

St. Augustine: True peace is found only in the City of God.

St. Francis: But we can discover it in ourselves through loving service.

Penn: Force may subdue, but love gains, assume in others the same good motives you find in yourself.

Thoreau: Protest evil and injustice—even when it is embodied in the law.

Tolstoy: Abandon the privileges that make for strife; resist not evil with evil.

Nobel: Combine to resist aggression; encourage the best minds to work for peace.

Carnegie: Educate; arbitrate; federalize; rationalize.

Angell: Face the fact that no one wins wars any more.

Wilson: Combine to deter the aggressor; cooperate to assure self-determination and world democracy.

Gandhi: Work upon the goodness in your opponent, and work nonviolently.

Hammarskjold: Stand on firm legal ground, but reach as far as you can to develop a law above that of nations which will build a consensus for peace.

First, then, these positions may be arranged in two groups: Those which respect and want to keep, but improve, existing institutions of social control, and those which seem to regard these institutions as either irrelevant to human good or needing extreme change. In the first group are Nobel, Carnegie, Angell, Wilson, and Dag Hammarskjold. In the second are Ikhnaton, Buddha, Asoka, Jesus, St. Augustine, St. Francis, Thoreau, Tolstoy, and Gandhi.

Let us look more closely at the second group. If we judge its members on the basis of the assumptions of the first group, we are likely to single out Ikhnaton as an emotional and perhaps foolhardy man, and Asoka as objectively expedient (he didn't turn against war until he had consolidated his empire by military means) and amazingly lucky. Ikhnaton did everything wrong, politically speaking. He alienated the powerful priestly bureaucracy and refused support to his armies in the field until the empire disintegrated. His early death at thirty allowed his successor, Tutankhamen, to restore the army and support the Egyptian general's policies until the country's strength and continuity were assured. Yet in Mr. Smith's account, Ikhnaton's brief reign, shared by the beautiful Nefertiti, was anæsthetic and spiritual idyll. The author concludes: "So pacifism had its first champion and its first failure. Yet the militarists of his time are forgotten; Ikhnaton lives."

The attempt to judge Ikhnaton produces some puzzling effects. You find yourself asking: What were the young king's responsibilities to his people? Did he serve them or betray them? If, after investigation, you think that the religion of Aton which he established for a few years was closer to the truth than the old religion of Ammon, and if you believe that having a better religion is so important that civil disturbances and loss of territory abroad were a small price to pay, you will hardly care about his political inefficiencies. Anyhow, "empires" ought to disintegrate. The fact is that you cannot be sure about such matters. One difficulty is that people schooled in the principles of self-government are usually unable to think seriously about the merits and demerits of ancient societies governed by absolute rulers. The autocratic power of the emperor or pharaoh seems so basically wrong that you can't make serious moral judgments in that context. There have always been good and bad people, however; what about Ikhnaton in personal terms? Again, you are puzzled. You want practical consistency of him in relation to his kingly job, but he didn't have much of that. He was busy with spiritual consistency and he let the practical consistency go. Maybe, you think, he should have abdicated, instead of being only a half-hearted king. But without power, he couldn't have started that fine new religion. So you conclude that all these questions are blurred by contradiction between half-established and half-rejected values. On the basis of the life of an individual and his personal vision of the good, Ikhnaton is an inspiring figure, but the modern instinct for insisting on social intelligence makes him a kind of museum piece.

Matters of this sort have a far-reaching effect in the influence of a book which goes back into ancient history in search of socio-moral truth. The stronger the social element in your thinking, the less real or even "human" seem the people of the distant past.

Asoka is less equivocal in the satisfaction he gives to a modern reader. Here was a man who was a great success as a king. After nine years of rule, when his empire was larger than both India and Pakistan combined, he took to heart the teachings of Buddha and became an advocate of the eightfold path. He caused to be carved on rocks and pillars throughout India the inscriptions known as Asoka's Edicts—some thirty of them—transmitting the gentle philosophy of Gautama. He opposed violence, all killing, religious arrogance and persecution, and preached the virtues of the *Dhamma* or Way. Under his influence, Ceylon—a "peaceful" conquest by Asoka—became the foyer through which passed

the teachings of the Buddha to Burma and other regions of Southeast Asia. Asoka ruled India for some forty years. Mr. Smith observes:

> The political system Asoka built up required a strong king. It made little or no distinction between executive and judicial functions. It was a noble idea to incorporate ethics into government in the persons of the Dhamma mahamattas [a kind of nationwide Buddhist "social service"]—perhaps a revolutionary idea. To base government upon morality, politics upon ethics—how naïve and how superb! We cannot very well judge the results at this distance, but we have Calvin's Geneva and Winthrop's Massachusetts to make us cautious. The difference, perhaps the important difference, was that they wanted to impose a theology as an integral part of ethics, while Asoka took pains—though he professed Buddhism—to welcome all religions and to assume that there was an overarching ethic which joined them all.

Well, there is little difficulty in recognizing Asoka as a great man. Yet he commits the unpardonable offense of having been a king! Again the issue of social morality intervenes. How can you make judgments about a situation in which *the people* have no voice? What good is a "peace" which came so many centuries before the revolution which set men free? You may persuade yourself to temper such views with tolerance of ancient backwardness, but the judgment is there all the same. Your admiration of Asoka has a story-book quality. You want to know how he would solve some of the really tough situations of the present, like the quarrel over South Vietnam, or the unification of Germany.

To put the matter briefly, in ancient times the conditions of social organization were never looked at critically in the terms of social philosophy. These were left to Nature, or to Tradition, which is practically the same thing. The moral treatises of the ages which came before the eighteenth century never made putting down kings a condition of the good life. A man might encounter a cruel king or a dishonest official, and he did the best he could in the circumstances, but he never felt obliged to think for himself about the principles of government. No one expected him to figure out what sort of arrangements would be best for the general realization of human freedom. This kind of morality wasn't even considered in antiquity, which is the chief reason why modern man often feels greatly superior to the ancients.

What were the terms of ancient moral concern? We could take Asoka's Second Pillar Edict as a model:

> "Dhamma is good. And what is dhamma? It is having few faults and many good deeds, mercy, charity, truthfulness, and purity."

If you add to the practice of such virtues the Buddhist or Upanishadic theory of spiritual knowledge—by means of which a man conquers the grip of illusion, thereby overcoming the longings which bind him to earth, and which make him neglect or harm his fellows—you have at least a bare outline of the fundamental ethics of the ancient world. Its first principle lies in the idea of the radical unity of all men and all life in the common spiritual ground. Self-realization means a life imbued with awareness of this unity, of which the individual is an instance or refracted expression. Compassion and brotherhood are the laws growing out of that unity, applying to the relationships of men who, while occupying separate bodies, are nonetheless able to recognize themselves in one another, and to improve the common lot by gaining wisdom and teaching what they learn by precept and example.

We have not the space to deal with what happened to this general view at the hands of organized and politicalized religion during the first seventeen centuries or so of Western history. Here, we propose to skip to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and to look at three of Mr. Smith's "Men of Peace" who were very nearly the first to attempt the restoration of at least some of the ideas of ancient religion or ethics to the political societies of Europe and America. These men are Thoreau, Tolstoy, and Gandhi.

Now the common and familiar judgment of these men is that while they were no doubt "great

idealists," their proposals are utterly impractical. Morality, while well and good in its place, cannot be permitted to impose its absolute sanctions on political affairs nor to interfere with the operation of economic laws. Such things are to be left to Nature—in the case of politics, to the compromises which it requires; and in economics, to the "natural" laws which appear to be some kind of extension of the conditions set by the external environment. Men meddle with these rules at their peril. And to prove his case the practical man could easily point to the fiasco of Akhnaton's enterprise in religious reform and peace.

What we have here is a kind of pragmatic philosophy of the nature of things: We live in a pluralist universe—a universe with different rules for each segment of "reality." The physical world has its own laws, which no one can ignore. The world of politics is more complicated, and views concerning political "reality" diverge into various schools, but they all, except for tiny fractions of anarchists or others who refuse to acknowledge "hard facts," agree that politics is an autonomous system in which power is the highest good, since with power you can do what you decide is best—best either for yourself or for the community. The world of economics also has its hard facts with which men must learn to come to terms. Here, again, opinions are divided, but all who regard economics as a scientific inquiry agree that the values of economics grow out of having and controlling material goods or the avenues of access to material goods. And it is generally held that the "higher values" of life need a sound economic foundation built under them before they can be realized or enjoyed. Economic individualists and social welfarists alike take this view. For both, the economic foundation comes first. In antiquity, the ruling caste which governed all these matters had its sanction from a divine authority. It had its prerogatives from Manu, or from a divinely appointed royal succession. This arrangement gave moral issues a pleasant simplicity. You had to look at yourself by the light of some ideal model, and then you tried to do better. Your self-improvement was undertaken within the matrix of a fixed and unchangeable environment combining the natural elements with the almost as "natural" social system.

But when the prestige of divine authority for the social pattern waned and finally disappeared, and the political inventions of men established a new order, there was manifest need for a stability which, if not of divine origin, would at least discourage presumptuous and irresponsible tinkering. Men felt it necessary to support the human sagacity of the social compact with a more impregnable authority. "Nature," a secularized version of the divine, was the logical choice. Indeed, the moral side of the compact obtained its sanction from Natural Right, and men soon acquired the habit of arguing from Nature for practically all their important views. Thus the social Darwinists, who wanted it understood that life is a struggle to survive, and that to interfere with the gains of the strong becomes a dangerous defiance of Natural Law; thus Kropotkin, who found a very different principle prevailing in Nature, and reported its operations at length in *Mutual Aid* and *The Evolution of Ethics.* And thus the Communists who, borrowing from Hegel, declared his Dialectic to be the endlessly repeating pattern in the transactions of the phenomena of all the sciences, including social science.

There is a sense in which the managers of modern economic and political institutions have taken as their most serious business the task of keeping ordinary, intuitive morality out of their several regions of authority. They say that all the morals that economics or politics can possibly sustain were put in at the beginning, when these systems were founded, and that the social order will break down if any attempt is made to add more now. So you have the argument for the Just War, in behalf of a Free World. Or you have to make an Example of Eichmann, to remind people with poor memories of the magnitude of the Nazi crimes. And it is necessary, if unpleasant, to put

conscientious objectors who resist the draft in prison for three or four years, since while they may be personally "harmless," they could disturb the order of the state by their impractical. notions, which might spread to other young men. Besides, they have broken the law.

An informal report of a recent conference of American and European Christian leaders concerned with "peace" told of the anguish of a German colonel when he was informed of the computer-verified judgment that use of nuclear weapons would be the *cheapest* way to defend Western Europe against attack. Horrified by this neglect of the cost in life and destruction of the nuclear solution, the colonel almost, he said, took off his uniform. But he didn't. He decided to remain in the service, hoping to leaven the ruthlessness of computerized defense policies. Nothing, however, was said at this conference about the contribution to peace that might be made by young Germans who would refuse *ever to put on* uniforms. Only "responsible" people attended that conference, so the subject of conscientious objection and uncompromising individual war-resistance did not come up. Plainly, the issue is not peace, but preservation of the modern political state.

At this point it is necessary to stipulate that the behavior of men like Tolstoy, Thoreau, and Gandhi, were it to become popular, would be completely disorganizing to the modern state. These three, while in many respects far from similar, joined in insisting that the high standards of individual morality must be made into rules of social life. Tolstoy's personal life was filled with confusion—brought, it seems, by an uneven and impulsive devotion to his ideals—yet these defects cannot hide his magnificence as a human being nor muddy the clear current of his extraordinary inspiration of other men. He wrote:

> By means of the army, the clergy, the police, the gallows, and of the threat of bayonets, bullets, prisons, workhouses, gallows, [the rulers] compel the enslaved people to continue to live in their stupefaction and slavery without ousting the rulers from their positions of privilege.
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> In proportion as the habit of violence and crimes practiced under the guise of law by the custodians of order and morality themselves becomes more frequent and cruel, and is justified in greater measure by the inculcation of falsehood uttered as religion, people become more and more firmly established in the idea that the law of their life is not love and mutual service, but struggle and the devouring of each other. . . .
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> It is as impossible to unite patriotism with peace, as at the same time to go out driving and stay at home. What produces war is the desire for an exclusive good for one's own nation—what is called patriotism. And so to abolish war it is necessary to abolish patriotism.

When William Jennings Bryan asked him if he would use force against a monster who tortured a child, Tolstoy replied: "I have lived in this world for seventy-five years, and I have never yet seen such a monster. Yet I see how millions of people, women and children, are being destroyed as the result of the wickedness of governments." This is an interesting application of the Utilitarian argument.

Thoreau, who lived about half a century earlier, was an inspirer of both Tolstoy and Gandhi. His first principle was this:

> There will never be a really free and enlightened State until the State comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treats him accordingly.

He proposed civil disobedience as one means of changing the State:

> A minority is powerless while it conforms to the majority; it is not even a minority then, but it is irresistible when it clogs by its own weight. If the alternative is to keep all just men in prison, or give up war and slavery, the State will not hesitate which to choose. . . .
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> The law will never make men free; it is men who have got to make the law free. They are the lovers of law and order who observe the law when the government breaks it. . . . Whoever can discern truth has received his commission from a higher source

than the chiefest justice in the world who can discern only law.

Gandhi was a genius at practical suggestions for introducing the highest morality of which the individual is capable into the forms of social organization and the methods of seeking political justice. The wonder is not that he often failed, but that he succeeded as much as he did, leaving an ineffaceable mark upon his age and planting hope in the hearts of men that a regenerated and morally directed social order is a possibility of the future. He concentrated on the design of social institutions which would call upon the moral resources of individuals. He never compromised on this principle. He would allow no "practical" excuses for neglect of individual moral reality. The order of inner growth and individual responsibility had absolute priority in all his thinking. That throughout the first half of the twentieth century he was able to put this thinking into numerous forms of action, with immeasurable social effect, is for many sufficient evidence that he had found out some profound principle of truth in relation to human growth and potentiality.

What these men declare—Thoreau, Tolstoy, Gandhi—is that the orders of institutional "reality" must be made subordinate to the moral reality of man. And man, while he lives and realizes himself in society, can be understood only as an individual. The individual is the sole repository of all human growth. His growth is independent, although it takes place within a social matrix of interdependence, and the matrix is enriched only by the growth of individuals.

Accordingly, the great problem of the present is to find ways of returning to the individual the responsibilities and opportunities of individual growth. It is a problem hedged by enormous difficulties and all attempts to solve it are attended by siren invitations to compromise. What is wanted is endless experiments of the sort dreamed of by Tolstoy, practiced as an individual by Thoreau, and given numerous social embodiments by Gandhi and his helpers. The genius, instead of the skepticism, of our age must be turned to the design of many more such experiments. We must fill the atmosphere with the ideas, and our lives with the actions, of men who are ardently devoted to new Experiments with Truth—in which individual freedom, individual responsibility, and individual inventiveness combine to fill the emptiness and end the hostility of modern social life.

The only argument against this proposal is that human beings are not "ready," that they are only half- and quarter-grown individuals, and that they lack the maturity and discipline required for such high-flung undertakings. "They tell us, sir, that we are weak, unable to cope with so formidable an adversary." . . . Well, we *might* be able to do it, and the end is certain if we don't. We have a choice between trying to do it, and settling for the whimpers we have now, or the bang that seems not very far ahead.

REVIEW
"THE IMMENSE JOURNEY"

THIS title of Loren Eiseley's latest book seems apt, since it is clear that "immensity" for him means more than endless complications in physical form, referring as well to the wonder of unfolding intelligence on this planet. The chief "wonder" of all is, of course, man himself. Dr. Eiseley provides a balanced yet poetic development of the view adopted by Alfred Russel Wallace during the early days of evolutionary theory—in opposition to the implied "materialism" of Charles Drarwin. Darwin may have believed in "God" as sort of instigator of life processes, but from then on material forces were to govern. Wallace had another conception. Dr. Eiseley writes:

> Wallace challenged the whole Darwinian position on man by insisting that artistic, mathematical, and musical abilities could not be explained on the basis of natural selection and the struggle for existence. Something else, he contended, some unknown spiritual element, must have been at work in the elaboration of the human brain. Why else would men of simple cultures possess the same basic intellectual powers which the Darwinists maintained could be elaborated only by competitive struggle?
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> "If you had not told me you had made these remarks," Darwin said, "I should have thought they had been added by someone else. I differ grievously from you and am very sorry for it." He did not, however, supply a valid answer to Wallace's queries. Outside of murmuring about the inherited effects of habit—a contention without scientific validity today—Darwin clung to his original position. Slowly Wallace's challenge was forgotten and a great complacency settled down upon the scientific world.

The majesty of the evolutionary process, then, for many anthropologists, is much more than a series of physical marvels to rival Grand Canyon and Niagara Falls. The marvel and the mystery have to do with the way in which human intelligence focuses so rapidly, and Dr. Eiseley endeavors to bring some of Wallace's thinking up to date. In a chapter titled "The Real Secret of Piltdown," he writes:

> Ironically enough, science, which can show us the fruits and the broken skulls of our dead fathers, has yet to explain how we have come so far so fast, nor has it any completely satisfactory answer to the question asked by Wallace long ago. Those who would revile us by pointing to an ape at the foot of our family tree grasp little of the awe with which the modern scientist now puzzles over man's lonely and supreme ascent. As one great student of paleoneurology, Dr. Tilly Edinger, recently remarked, "If man has passed through a Pithecanthropus phase, the evolution of his brain has been unique, not only in its result but also in its tempo. . . . Enlargement of the cerebral hemispheres by 50 per cent seems to have taken place, speaking geologically, within an instant, and without having been accompanied by any major increase in body size."
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> The true secret of Piltdown, though thought by the public to be merely the revelation of an unscrupulous forgery, lies in the fact that it has forced science to reexamine carefully the history of the most remarkable creation in the world—the human brain.

After reading Eiseley—at his best his words have both beauty and instructive simplicity—one is inclined to think that evolution should never be discussed for our schoolchildren except by men who have some poetry in their hearts. When Dr. Eiseley describes the intelligence of a rat or a bird, one is fascinated by more than "the wonders of nature," in the usual sense. Instead we gain bonds of sympathy, through a kind of mental symbiosis which, if one's philosophy involves mysticism as well as idealism, might lead to the conclusion that all creatures of the earth, including man, can indeed instruct one another in wondrous ways. To see that there is one common underlying principle in all that lives and moves—that Macneile Dixon calls "the power to become something more"—is to establish ground for a vision of universal brotherhood. Such kinship not only includes the nations and the races of the earth, but suggests man's responsibility to all of nature's living resources.

Dr. Eiseley discovers a mystic principle at work in the forces that organize the cell and the organism. This takes us in the direction of what has been called "morphobiology," showing that

the controlling principle of activity for the cell is not the nucleus, but rather some sort of electrical field which allows both nucleus and protoplasm to contribute structure to the whole. On the mystery of "organization," Dr. Eiseley writes:

> Men talk much of matter and energy, of the struggle for existence that molds the shape of life. These things exist, it is true; but more delicate, elusive, quicker than the fins in water, is that mysterious principle known as "organization," which leaves all other mysteries concerned with life stale and insignificant by comparison. For that without organization life does not persist is obvious. Yet this organization itself is not strictly the product of life, nor of selection. Like some dark and passing shadow within matter, it cups out the eyes' small windows or spaces the notes of a meadow lark's song in the interior of a mottled egg. That principle—I am beginning to suspect—was there before the living in the deeps of water.

This is not, we take it, a backdoor to theological speculation. Dr. Eiseley is a philosopher, not a theologian. It is the philosopher in this writer, as well as the poet, that brings him into close rapport with the "nature writings" of Joseph Wood Krutch. Apparently the editors of *Time* saw this relationship and chose Mr. Krutch to write an introduction for the *Time* edition of the Eiseley volume. Following is Mr. Krutch's characterization of what Dr. Eiseley has accomplished in *The Immense Journey:*

> The story of evolution has been told many times, but it has seldom been viewed as Loren Eiseley views it. He takes more or less for granted the established external facts such as the fossil evidence which records (despite a good many important gaps) the step-by-step emergence of increasingly complex organic forms. His chief interest is in the questions which most 19th and too many 20th Century scientists refuse to ask questions which concern the ultimate meaning of those facts. Darwin and his immediate followers were content to say, "This is what happened," to reduce it all to mechanics and chemistry and to assume that they had not only explained everything but actually explained it away. Professor Eiseley is one of the increasing number of contemporary scientists who insist that the mystery still exists, and that there is more to evolution than was dreamed of in the 19th Century's refusal to philosophize. Moreover, he makes us feel that unless we too realize this we are in danger of ceasing to be truly human.

COMMENTARY
IN PRAISE OF LIBERALS

OUR Frontiers article labors some with Mr. Theobald. Here we should like to praise him. For all the hard things that can be said about liberals (including many that are false), there remains this fact: the liberals are people who feel fundamental concern for the rights of all men. They will not sit quietly watching manifest and systematic injustice. When Mr. Theobald exclaims:

> I condemn the propagandists of any country who unhesitatingly distort the unfavorable and bury the undesirable news. I condemn the academics who distort the truth as they see it in order to gain reputations or power. . . .

he is performing a classic liberal function—attempting to arouse public opinion in behalf of what ought to be regarded as the common decencies of life, but which an acquisitive society seldom gives more than hypocritical attention.

It is the indifference of the powerful, and the apathy of the mass, which cause men of liberal intelligence to seek political remedies. Often from anger and desperation, the liberal becomes a political person—a man who tries through organization and manipulation to compensate for the inactivity of the comfortable and the powerful. His solutions sometimes seem "extreme" because he attempts to lift so much dead weight. He often becomes a distorted human being, from anxiety about his projects for the general good.

Sound conservative principles—which no doubt exist—do not convert possessiveness into a desirable trait. Belief in self-reliance does not turn poets into wastrels nor amiable vagabonds into men without rights. It is the naïve, plebian egotism of the wealthy and the substantial which wears out the patience of far more intelligent but non-acquisitive people, making them insist that power be given a better seat. The property of a man of property does not make what he does right. On the whole, men who make a career of having property show little interest in what is right. Or if they do, the "right" they speak of seldom goes beyond the field of their "interests." The evidence for this is quite clear from the fact that the changes Mr. Theobald advocates are badly needed. No one in his right mind will deny this.

Men of property who dislike the prospect of a police state—a state empowering bureaucratic reformers to tell everybody what to do—had better begin trying to create a society in which no one would ever think of such policing because the offenses do not exist.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

MORE ON RELIGION IN THE SCHOOLS

THE "legal memorandum" by Dennis Farrar (quoted here last week) which summarized the deliberations of the 88th Congress on proposed legislation which would allow religious indoctrination in the public schools, deserves further attention. Herewith are additional passages from Mr. Farrar's paper, covering criticism of the Becker amendment:

> Amending the Constitution in a piecemeal fashion to deal with specific details and practices only results in the creation of new problems of interpretation. The more a constitution deals with specific practices, the more questions it raises about other practices not mentioned. The amendment process should be used to state general and fundamental principles rather than to sanction any particular practice or activity.
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> It is inherently difficult to compose a truly nonsectarian prayer or religious exercise. There are over 200 different sects in the United States, over 80 of them having more than 50,000 members each. One man's piety may be another's idolatry. Further, members of different faiths pray in different ways. Some pray with head bowed and some with hands clasped. Christians pray with their heads uncovered; Orthodox Jews with their heads covered. Some pray on their knees and some upright. Some cross themselves as they pray, others do not. Some pray audibly and some silently. To some, such as the Quakers, all forms of public prayer are objectionable.
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> Where Bible reading is permitted, the question becomes whose Bible and which translation. Use of the New Testament is offensive to members of the Jewish faith. The King James version is as unacceptable to Catholics as the Douay version is to Protestants. As noted previously, the Becker amendment does not require non-sectarian prayers and does not define "biblical scriptures."
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> Even if it were possible to compose a truly nonsectarian prayer, the result would be so diluted and watered down as to be devoid of religious meaning. The search for a "common core" religion in the classroom serves only to degrade religious sensitivity by making God a trivial inconvenience which must be dispensed with before getting down to the real work of the day. A religious exercise in the public schools is detrimental to education as well as religion.
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> In these days of "dial a prayer," the public schoolroom has become the mass media through which the proper dose of religion is introduced into our children's lives. It is not a proper forum. The church and the home are the appropriate places in which truly meaningful religion may be experienced.
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> Although the defendants in *Schempp* claimed that the religious exercises involved there were conducted primarily for the purpose of prompting moral values, it is not apparent that a ritualistic recitation will serve to strengthen the moral fibres of those schoolchildren who participate. An atmosphere of order and good discipline can as well be promoted by the reading or reciting of a document or composition having no religious connotations.

The Schempp case brought Supreme Court support of a Federal injunction against a Pennsylvania practice of reading "ten verses from the Holy Bible, without comment, at the opening of each public school on each school day." Despite the fact that any child could be excused from this exercise, both courts ruled that the "excusal procedure" had a coercive effect sufficient to infringe upon the right to religious privacy of children who wished to be excused. Justice Frankfurter called the result "an obvious pressure upon the children to attend." The Farrar report continues:

> Just as it is difficult to conceive of a nonsectarian religious exercise, it is likewise almost inherently impossible to make participating in such an exercise completely voluntary. Even where the excusal procedure includes attractive alternatives to participation, very definite pressures are brought to bear upon the dissenting child to conform to the conduct of his classmates and his teacher—the symbol of authority in the classroom. Exposure to these subtle forms of coercion may leave psychological stigmas that are impossible to erase.
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> Even if it were possible to conceive and administer a truly voluntary religious exercise for schoolchildren, it is difficult to imagine how participation could be voluntary for the teacher. Orderly classroom procedure would demand that the teacher conduct and support the religious exercise, regardless of his or her personal beliefs or

> predilections. It is not difficult to imagine the economic as well as social coercion which a dissenting teacher would be subjected to.
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> School prayers are frequently defended on the ground that they have long been a part of our Nation's history and have resulted in no apparent ill effects. However, there is evidence to show that although school prayers have been long standing, they have also been long suffered. Compulsory religious exercises have been struck down by at least a dozen States, beginning as far back as 1890. See, e.g., *State ex rel. Weiss v. District Bd.*, 76 Wis. 177, 44 N. W. 967 (1890). Thus, the Supreme Court's *School Prayer* decisions may be viewed as the result of an evolutionary process rather than a radical departure from the traditional norm.
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> Our increasingly pluralistic society is today more sensitive to all kinds of real and imagined racial and religious affronts. A religious exercise in the public schools is now apt to act as a divisive, rather than cohesive, force in our society. Although school prayers may not represent a substantial encroachment upon the religious freedom of the nonconformist, their lack of any significant redeeming virtues suggest that they ought not to be suffered longer. The proposed amendments to the Constitution designed to give them new birth should not be adopted.

This seems a perceptive analysis. Unless the preceptors and advocates of a religion justify its tenets on the ground that it leads to a greater sympathy and understanding among all human beings, they are, in effect, denying the underlying spirit in which Christ taught—or Buddha or Gandhi, for that matter.

One can, of course, claim that the beliefs of a coercive religion serve to "unite" the whole of humanity, but the punishment which awaited heretics during medieval times showed by what means such unity might be established, and we could classify both Nazism and Stalinist Communism as political religions based on the premise that unity mast be enforced. Further, study of data such as that reported by John Morris (MANAS, Nov. 11) points to the conclusion that honesty cannot be "taught" by reference to religious rewards and punishments. In his *Humanist* article, which we quoted, Mr. Morris showed that children whose parents had enforced church attendance had poorer records in respect to classroom cheating than those who had no overlay of sanctimony from injections of "morality." Moreover, William Bernard's 1950 report on juvenile delinquency showed that there were more, rather than fewer, delinquents among Sunday school children in New York City, and that throughout the United States there was no observable correlation between abstention from juvenile crimes and Sunday school attendance.

The kind of religion which the Constitution of the United States should encourage is religion which heightens a sense of justice, with fair play toward the ideas and beliefs of every man, woman and child, regardless of what one "believes" personally. It is with an open mind and an open heart that we come to full appreciation of the philosophy implicit in the Bill of Rights, and thence to respect for each individual as a being of value in his own right—possessing an integrity we are bound to honor—rather than as a steppingstone to some goal of our own. We also submit that honesty is an outgrowth of respect for the fundamental nature of other human beings. It flows from mutual trust, and trust begins with a conviction that there is that in each individual which merits and deserves trust. Here the "Constitution" and "religion" do and should meet, for this is the sort of religious education we need, and badly.

FRONTIERS

What is the Challenge of Cybernation?

IN his discussion of cybernation in *Liberation* for August, Robert Theobald sets out what are presumed to be the facts of the economic case for the Triple Revolution. He then offers several far-reaching proposals of means to achieve economic balance and justice in the new kind of social order which, he argues, must inevitably result from the "production revolution" brought by cybernation. This article is followed with considerations raised by two other writers—Karl Meyer and Alice Mary Hilton.

Mr. Theobald begins with an explanation of why he uses "cybernation" in preference to the older term, "automation":

> Cybernation is the process of linking a computer, which is effectively a machine which will make decisions, and using it to control automated machinery. These interlocking machine-systems can often be controlled by a few people sitting at computers, while the requirements for other workers are very small, for not only will the machines do all the work but the latest ones are being built practically to repair themselves. The potential to organize human beings out of work in order to increase the efficiency of machine-systems is already large and rapidly growing. In other words, the present type of change in technology cannot be considered merely a continuation of the organizational process of the last one hundred and fifty years—it means something completely new which is quietly taking place all around us. Cybernation involves a production revolution which has two major consequences. First, in the field of production it is challenging and will increasingly challenge the supremacy of man's mind, and it will do this just as surely as the industrial revolution challenged and overcame the supremacy of man's muscle. In the relatively near future the machine-systems will take over all repetitive physical and mental production tasks and huge numbers of people will be thrown out of work. It has been estimated by some authorities that as little as 10% or even 2% of the labor force will be required for conventional work in the future.

Our effort, here, is not to give a symmetrical summary of Mr. Theobald's arguments, but simply to block in his leading ideas, and then to add some pertinent comment by the other *Liberation* contributors. For careful study, readers are referred to Theobald's book, *The Challenge of Abundance* (Potter, 1961), and his article in the *Nation* for May 11, 1963.

The spread of violence and the unrelated, goal-less life of many people in the United States are taken by Mr. Theobald to be symptoms of an alienation which is bound to increase unless steps are taken to reverse the trend. He proposes:

> The first necessity is to guarantee every individual within the United States a decent standard of living whether he can find work or not. We should provide every individual with an absolute constitutional right to an income adequate to allow him to live with dignity. No governmental agency, judicial body or other organization whatsoever should have the power to suspend or limit any payments by this guarantee. Such an absolute constitutional right to an income will recognize that in an economy where many jobs already represent made-work in any social, and indeed economic, sense and where the requirements for workers will decrease in coming years, it is nonsensical to base the right to an income on an ability to find a job. . . . The guaranteed income is not one of the many solutions to the problems of cybernation: on the contrary it is the economic prerequisite for the solution of the real problems of the second half of the twentieth century, many of which have not yet even begun to be discussed in realistic terms. . . . There is no need—and no excuse—for poverty in the America of the second half of the twentieth century.

Having stated the economic prerequisite, Mr. Theobald passes to other objectives. Second is the right of the individual to buy from any seller. Once clearly established in law, and supported by institutional safeguards, this right, he says, would put an end to discriminatory practices. He continues:

> The third human right is that every individual should have the right to receive information undistorted by desires to mislead for the purposes of private gain. . . . What types of distortion am I condemning? I condemn the advertisers who play on the weaknesses of the individual in order to increase their sales. I condemn the propagandists of any country who unhesitatingly distort the unfavorable and bury the undesirable news. I condemn the academics who distort the truth as they see it in order

> to gain reputations or power. On the other hand, I do not condemn but resolutely uphold the right of the individual to put forth all the truth as he sees it. . . . The existence of lively controversy which allows the discovery of truth in constantly changing circumstances is one of the prime necessities of today.

We have one quotation each to add from Karl Meyer and Miss Hilton. Mr. Meyer:

> The greatest problem is not to eliminate poverty, through the equitable distribution of abundance. (That would be relatively easy, if there were a public will to do it.) It is to avert the moral disintegration of man, once he is cut off from the discipline of tradition. Our generation is either too untrained or too specialized for constructive life that has outgrown the wage-labor nexus.

Miss Hilton:

> It is necessary to accustom a nation that is politically and socially in the Nineteenth Century to think in terms of doing things for the public good. It is necessary to remember the social backwardness of the society and to propose more—but not too much more—than the public is accustomed to. Much as I wish that the proposals of the Ad Hoc Committee could have been more specific and directly concerned with the real problem of transition into a cybercultural society, I must admit, having read the press comments, that I have overestimated the understanding and intelligence of the population and the press, and that the committee was wise in stressing public works.

Since our discussion seeks no more than to isolate primary issues, we shall set these quotations against one another. Which kind of poverty needs to be corrected first? Mr. Theobald's kind—economic poverty, for which, he says, there is no excuse in the second half of the twentieth century—or Mr. Meyer's kind, which he calls a "moral disintegration" which unfits people for constructive life independent of the wage-labor nexus?

No serious analyst can afford to brush aside this issue. Nor can we let Mr. Theobald argue that such questions do not lie "in his field." Actually, he cannot get the attention he needs and *ought to have* without an exhaustive examination of the intellectual and moral life of various sub-populations who already have "guaranteed incomes." For example, the French Communities of Work pay the young a student wage, just as Mr. Theobald proposes; mothers and wives, too, are paid for their services to the Community. Would conclusions based upon such a highly selected group be valid for the general population? Is it important to research this question, perhaps asking it directly of members of existing Communities of Work in France? Then there are the inheritors of wealth. Some use it well, others don't. Some waste their free time, others don't. We suspect that if data were gathered and explanations of contrasts in behavior attempted, the results would indicate difficult problems of human integrity very much the same as those Mr. Theobald would like to control by the regulation of business morality and "truth-telling."

For light on the possibility of preventing advertisers from misleading the public, we suggest a depth-study of the operations of the Food and Drug Administration—to reveal both the practical difficulties of control and those inherent in putting any government bureau in charge of Truth. Catalogued truth is vulgarized truth—truth based on the *status quo* of supposed "scientific knowledge." The depth-study, to be just, would have to look at the practices of the FDA from the viewpoint of heterodox people such as makers of homeopathic remedies and the entire spectrum of practitioners of unorthodox medicine. How will you fit *their* right to "put forth the truth as they see it" into the scheme of socially controlled advertising and sales promotion? Will you settle for informal resolution of such problems by officials of the AMA?

Economics is not a branch of magic. Meeting its necessities, however urgent in humanitarian terms, will not erase the non-economic disabilities of modern society as a kind of happy functional by-product.

What, finally, are the relations between Mr. Meyer's "moral disintegration" and Miss Hilton's "social backwardness," which are crucial sources of infection in the operating room where Mr. Theobald's radical surgery is to be performed. He may be well trained and perfectly scrubbed, but how low is the patient's pulse, just now, and what sort of benumbed condition must the anæsthetist produce?