Child and Man

A JOURNAL FOR CONTEMPORARY EDUCATION

FOCUS ON RELIGION

SUMMER 1968 *Vol. V No. 1*

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"It might all be true"

MANY years ago the headmaster of a London school in which I was then working asked me to take a party of boys with him to the seaside for a fortnight's holiday. He was a dyed-in-the-wool materialist with strong communistic tendencies, but a delightful companion personally, and beloved by the boys in his charge.

Whenever we had a few moments to ourselves, there was nothing he liked better than to inveigh against all religions in general, and the priestly class in particular. Yet every night the same man insisted on prayers with the boys before they went to bed, and he conducted them with a piety and devotion that really pronounced a benediction on all that had happened during the day.

Intimacy was such between us that it wasn't long before I asked him: "How can you hold the views you do about religion, and yet take those prayers in the way you do?"

"Nothing simpler," he replied. "I myself can see nothing whatsoever in religion; but who am I in the face of all that religion has meant to mankind? I may be wrong, and while there is any element of doubt why should I deprive those children of what may be of infinite value to them? It might all be true."

It would be easy to argue that this was trying to get the best of both worlds—at least it would be, if the man had been praying on behalf of himself and not someone else. Yet how much of the present demand for the continuation of religious education in schools rests (the professed believers apart) on just this: "It might all be true".

* * *

How then are we going to be sure one way or the other? For it stands to reason that if it might all be true, it just as reasonably might not. And if religion should be utterly false then we are definitely harming children by perpetuating a lie.

But, if it should be true, then there could be no doubt that all education should be orientated religiously. The failure to do this could even now be the major cause of all our troubles not only in education but in society at large.

Perhaps the alternative is too much for us, however. Lacking some modern Elijah to end once and for all by ocular demonstration our halting "between two opinions", we muddle on ineffectively to the detriment of religion and education.

It is even more confusing when one recollects that education itself grew out of religion. Until governments took over education it was the various religious bodies that founded schools and developed education as an extension of the religious responsibility of man for his fellow men. But the two have now become so separated that what of religion is preserved in most schools is at best of the "it-might-be-true" kind or, at the worst, the mere perpetuation of a state injunction.

Meanwhile, those who would have nothing whatsoever to do with religion, as for instance that strange sect of the "humanists" who have been so devotedly vociferous on this point lately, have a case which is difficult to answer.

There is no problem in denominational schools, for there the very foundation of the school gives it a religious basis, and the help of attached clergy solves problems of actual teaching and worship. Nor is there any problem in Waldorf or Steiner schools; for though they are not in any way sectarian, the content of man's religious striving is recognized as a basic fact of human experience, and is made part of the curriculum and dealt with by all teachers as they find it appropriate. These schools differ from others perhaps in that no attempt is made to guide the pupils into any particular form of religion. That is something which a pupil can only decide upon when he has come to the maturity to know what he is doing.

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It is in state education that the real problem lies, and there it can only be solved by the individual conscience of the teachers themselves. A government may decree that religious education shall be pursued in all its schools. It can even ensure that what might pass as such actually takes place. But no government on earth can ensure that what is the essential spirit and quality of religion shall live in the heart of the teachers.

So the problem comes back to the religious leaders and communities themselves. Only when they can make religion such a vital, meaningful force in the minds and hearts of all men everywhere will religion become what it should become in the schools.

"It might all be true" must first become "It is true". But truth is a matter, not of belief, but of knowledge, and until our age has found a spiritual knowledge as reliable as any other, religion will continue to be something to which we largely pay lip-service, a formula to propitiate what may lurk in the Dark Unknown.

What on earth is religion?

ALAN HOWARD

RELIGION is not an easy subject to talk about. Apart from the fact that it usually arouses strong feelings—and feelings are rarely conducive to clear thoughts about a matter—the things with which religion has to do are so far removed from ordinary understanding, that they impose a sertain restraint on the speaker from the start. The worst one has to fear in talking about anything else, is that one may hold one's ignorance up to ridicule or contempt. In expounding a view on religion one may all unwittingly offend.

Nonetheless one can, and up to a point should, repeatedly ask oneself what religion really is, if one is not to connive at some of the most lifeless traditions of human society or (by refusing to entertain the subject at all) to cut oneself off from one of the strongest supports and impulses of human nature. If only because religion has such deep roots in a past beyond any power of recall, one should ever and again ask, "Has it after all any reality which can still recommend it to the serious attention of modern man and, more specifically, warrant its inclusion in any programme of modern education?"

Any answer must depend primarily on what significance one places on a simple and universal fact of human experience, namely that the universe, and one's whole life and significance in it, have an origin far beyond the wit and hope of man to understand. We are aware—or we can become aware—of that environment of appalling grandeur and mystery in which we live, before which knowledge is silent, and in which our most important activities seem mere trivia.

One may ignore that experience; one may try to explain it away; but one cannot ultimately deny it. Any attempt to do so is about as convincing as the remark of the old lady, who, on seeing an aeroplane for the first time, said, "I don't believe it."

The acknowledgement in all ages that such an experience of itself substantiates a reality of being, beyond our comprehension, is, in whatever form men may have acknowledged it, all that is primarily meant by that little word "God". Since one must have a word to characterize one's experiences, then "God" is as good as any other, and far better than most alternatives that have from time to time been used.

That this word has come into such disrepute today is not because it no longer has any meaning, but because more and more people are rejecting the meaning they supposed it to have. It is the fate of words to tend to become identified with the thing they represent, and so it is easy for the unthinking in our day to imagine that by rejecting the word they have disposed of the thing.

Nothing could be more shortsighted. Not only is the "thing" as real today as ever, but one must not overlook the fact that meanings evolve as well as everything else. The problem of religion in our time is not so much that God is outmoded, but that God needs to be redefined in the light of all man's accumulated experience.

Not proven

God then is still the primary and unavoidable datum of religion. It is what religion is about. The various attitudes men have taken towards it, the various pronouncements they have made about it, are the sources from which the various religions have sprung. Some men have gone in terror of God; others have tried to propitiate him, or even manipulate and exploit him; and some have made him the excuse for the most reprehensible and inhuman conduct that history bears witness to. But God continues in spite of this to be the ultimate hope and meaning of human experience.

In the last 100 years or so, it has become customary in science to ignore him, and to try to come to terms with the world on the basis of sense experience only and the logical thinking connected with it. This has led to, and up to a point consolidated, the widely prevailing materialistic view of man and the world in which God is entirely left out.

But science has "disproved" neither God nor religion in doing so. It has merely—and quite justifiably—restricted its investigation to the "how" and "why" of things. Religion, on the other hand—albeit on the basis of what some might call an unscientific premiss—has always been concerned with the "who".

Fortunately, there have been those in all ages who, perhaps because of the intensity in themselves of this initial "experience of God", have made the simple acceptance of, and a concentrated and devoted living with it, the main business of their lives. That is to say, they have dedicated themselves with all their powers of intellect, feeling and will to it.

They have even developed a technique, by which they have made their whole being, not just their senses and logical thinking, an instrument for its reception. These are those whom we know as the founders of religions, the mystics, the saints. In so far as they were able they have communicated the result of their researches to

mankind in general, together with advice on how to follow up and confirm their findings.

Whether their work, had it ended with the findings, would have recommended itself to any persons other than the few who were similarly disposed, is an open question. But in almost every case these men also made a great impression on the generality of mankind because what they did also transformed them.

It transformed them in the moral stature of their personal lives; in the power of their personality; often in their practical and even political wisdom. In many cases, through their access to powers beyond the reach of ordinary men, they were able (during their lifetime or posthumously) to find ready acceptance of their teachings and practices, even among those least able to understand them.

It is a subtle form of self-deception to imagine that religion arose out of the gullibility of the ignorant masses who "fell for" what these religious leaders and teachers had to give. Granted that the masses were gullible; granted, too, there were charlatans and power seekers who corrupted the work these men did.

But it is not gullibility when people recognize either by his work or by his person one who stands head and shoulders above his fellows, because he is an expert and an authority in the particular field he has marked out as his own.

We above all should recognize this. We live in an age inundated with experts and authorities. We can hardly express an opinion of our own which is not also the echo of a statement by such a one.

"Religious experts"

We, too, are often misled. Many an epoch-making discovery which we have received with all the world "on authority" has been found 10 years later to be worthless or bogus. But this does not discredit the genuine authority, either in this age or any other, either in this field of investigation or in that.

It is in this sense that we can speak of experts and authorities in the religious life. Modern man is by no means forswearing the sophistication with which this age has endowed him by still going simply and humbly to the "religious experts", if he really wants to know what religion is all about. Their claim is direct, and as modern as today.

If anyone is prepared to follow certain disciplines and studies (which, after all, is no more than science enjoins on its followers—mathematics is an obvious example), he may so deepen his experience of God as to come to an awareness of him beyond his former capacity to imagine.

Nobody, of course is obliged to do this, just as no one is obliged

to study mathematics. But equally no one can say anything worthwhile against it, unless he has done what the teachers of the religious life recommend. In other words, only the thoroughly religious could disprove religion, if such a thing were possible.

That they do not, of course, is obvious. They have found that it has become real and meaningful for them, in the way that it has done so for countless others. The recognition of the awe and wonder of the being of God leads step by sure step into a deeper and deeper experience of him.

Religion as a general human striving, of course, is one thing; each separate religion, with its conflicting contentions, is another. Even here, however, one should not yield too easily to despair or cynicism. A particular religion is nothing more nor less than a specific way of being religious in the general human sense. It should surprise no one that a man born and brought up in India, say, will have a different way of being religious from a European or an American.

That is just the way things are. But it has no more to do with the essence of religion, than being born in London or Calcutta has to do with what is necessary for a human being to come into the world, or living on curry (or roast beef) to do with the essential need and process of nourishment. The essential is religious experience, and this is a basic factor in all the religions.

Differences in doctrine

The most difficult thing about the different religions is, to put it naively, to decide which is the better or the right one, when certain doctrinal tenets seem fundamentally different. The jingoistic loyalty to one's own tribal version of God which featured so powerfully in the past is perhaps on its way out at last. Though the dogmatic certainty of the Christian denominations still persists, there is every sign that a union which would make these separate Christians more "Christian" is eagerly desired on all sides.

It is a different matter altogether, however, as between, say, Christians and Mohammedans. It seems for ever unlikely that they would ever seek, let alone find, a common religious basis. The question of which is the better or the right one here is something more than tolerance or compromise can solve.

One can nevertheless take comfort from looking back, if only one looks back far enough. We are a long way from that ancestor of ours who prostrated himself before a stone image, or offered up his children as a living sacrifice to some Moloch. Religion, too, evolves, and the separate religious forms are after all nothing more than mutations upon the evolutionary tree of religious experience.

If evolution does imply an increasingly perfect adaptability to the requirements of life (accepting man's need for religious experience as one of these requirements), then somewhere it must have given or now be giving a revelation or experience of God which stands higher than anything ever known before. It should thus be possible to submit the various religions to an objective evaluation which would put the matter beyond all doubt.

Obviously no adherent of any particular religion could do it. Even if he could be sufficiently objective, his declared adherence to one would make adherents of other religions smell bias in his conclusions. Equally, no one who was antipathetic to or ignorant of religion could do it. It could only be someone who, completely familiar with the sphere, the spiritual, from which all religions draw their content, could survey it with a scientific detachment untrammelled by any loyalty to this or that sect.

Evolutionary expedient

Strangely enough this is what Steiner claims to have done. He says, moreover, that it is something which in future will become increasingly possible for more and more persons to achieve.

The various religious faiths, in other words, are stages by which man evolves to an objective, knowing participation in the facts and beings of the spiritual world, which all religions have spoken about in one way or another. Each faith is a temporary evolutionary expedient by which the human consciousness is prepared for such an enlargement of itself as will enable it to know what it has hitherto only believed, to see what it has hitherto only felt.

When that happens, says Steiner, mankind will see that, for instance, with the coming of the Christ into the world a certain climax in evolution was reached, to which not only all that had happened previously contributed, but which all religions in their way foreshadowed.

The incarnation of Christ in both its symbolism (or "mystical fact", to use Steiner's term) and its historical authenticity was the final act of that creative-evolutionary making of man as the "image of God". By that act man reached the level where he could be invited by divinity itself to partake again in all that he had been obliged to forsake in order to grow into an independent but earth-conditioned creature. He may continue to occupy himself only with those earth conditions, or he may rise to a more universal life of which those conditions are only one aspect. The choice is his.

This is not a religion; at least not in the sense of a faith which one believes or of a tradition which one accepts because one has

been brought up in these or those circumstances. It is not something which one compels or even merely persuades other men to believe. It is—or it is not—a fact of evolutionary development. It demands not faith but research, spiritual research, if it is to be substantiated in individual experience.

The major contribution that science has made to human progress is that it has forged a method by which the world may be known. In that method Rudolf Steiner was trained; for it he had the highest regard; and in the use of it he maintained the strictest integrity. It was the starting point of and basis on which all his more recondite researches into the spiritual sphere were made.

Only in one particular do Steiner and modern natural science part company—over the claim of modern science that there are limits to knowledge beyond which man can never go. He will have none of these limits. In his own contribution to the theory of knowledge he shows how, if one really understands what "knowing" means, there is a clear path from the knowing of the natural world to the knowing of the spiritual.

* * *

"Ultimately, educating the human being is a way of helping him find his way to the Divine; and here education parts company with its more limited task and leads over to religion. But this is not religion in its sectarian, proselytising sense. This is religion in its eternal, human sense, and in this respect educating the human being is a religious act."

ALAN HOWARD in an essay on Education in *The Faithful Thinker.*

Religion in a State primary school

PETER HEATHFIELD

THE only subject which must by law be taught in state (local authority) schools in Britain is religion. The 1944 Education Act makes it compulsory to hold a "religious" assembly each morning in schools.

This enforcement has crystalized teachers' attitudes to religious instruction more than to any other subject. There are three main approaches to it. First, there are the teachers who have a liking for religion and teach it in a traditional way. A second group are also religiously inclined but seek to present "Christianity" stripped of "religious humbug". The third group consists of atheists, who are naturally against teaching religion. They are not obliged by law to take religious instruction, but because of pressures of various kinds they usually have to do so.

In primary schools (children aged 5-11), of which I have personal experience, the situation is by no means hopeless. In a growing number of primary schools a "permissive" approach to education is allowed. The heads leave their staff free to tackle each subject, including religion, in their own way.

In such schools the religion lesson consists of story telling (fables and moral tales), and discussion with the children about people who help us (social service), parents and friends (people on whom we are dependent), road safety, kindness to animals (thought for others), etc. In these schools too, the religious assembly is often given by each class of children in turn and is not taken solely by teachers. The form such an assembly may take varies considerably—little plays, for example, music, and readings (including work by the children) about the Bible stories or the legends of the saints or connected with some of the topics mentioned above.

Personally I have the good fortune to teach in a "permissive" school in which I have complete freedom to approach the teaching of religion in the way I choose. Having been educated at a Church of England public school where I saw the devastating effect of formal (and excessive) religious education, I initially approached this subject with apprehension.

Before planning any lessons or choosing stories, etc., I set myself a certain general aim: to arouse within the children a sense of reverence, wonder and awe for the Creator and His servants and for all created things. I attempt to achieve this in all my lessons,

by training and encouraging the children to use their senses in acute observation and appreciation of their environment. By bringing into the classroom many beautiful pictures and natural objects (like crystals) I seek continually to enrich both the environment and the children's experience. The handling, observation, describing and drawing of these objects help to deepen the children's experience.

My main approach in religious education, however, is through the story. We end each day with a story and in this I try to reflect the mood of the season and the inner meaning of the festivals.

These stories form the basis for much that we do in our class work. We retell them in our own words, we enact them, we illustrate them. Thereby the children relive the events and make them part of their own experience.

I also read a great deal of poetry to the children, poetry which illumines the stories, encourages the children to look in the poetry anthologies we have in the classrooms for poems to read themselves and to each other, and leads them to try and write their own poetry.

As particularly important I regard the daily use of meditative verses with which we begin and end the day.

To indicate briefly how we experience together the course of the year I will mention some of the themes taken. In autumn, at the beginning of the school year, we hear about St. Michael and the angels, in Advent we decorate our classroom, have an Advent wreath and Advent calendars, and begin and end each day with carols, verses and stories by candlelight.

In the spring term we hear the Christ legends of Selma Lagerlöf concerned with the infancy and the Passion and, whilst the dark nights are still with us, I draw the attention of the children to the majesty of the night sky and the great constellations (Orion, for example), and tell them some of the Greek myths reflected in the heavens. In the summer we have a St. John's festival and hear much about nature.

Throughout the year, as their days come round, I tell the children the legends of the saints (such as Francis, Martin, Nicholas, Christopher and especially those connected with animals). We read and make up poems and verses about them, draw them and act little plays about them. For special festivals I usually arrange a table in a central place with flowers, pictures of the saint concerned and lighted candles.

According to Steiner the primary school age is the period of their lives when children can most readily accept and understand the picture of the Father-God as all-loving and all powerful. For

this reason one concentrates on the Old Testament rather than on the New Testament stories. In my experience, even teachers unacquainted with Steiner's ideas tend to avoid the New Testament and are happier with the Old Testament stories.

In preparing my lessons on Old Testament themes I use as my guide the excellent book prepared for the German Steiner Schools by Caroline von Heydebrand, *Und Gott Sprach.* Not only does it give the stories most suitable for use but it also gives, as interpolations, some lovely Jewish legends which help to illustrate the Bible stories.

If I find that the children already know something about particular stories or epochs in the Old Testament—usually through television programmes, children's magazines or newspaper supplements—then I elaborate and exhibit relevant pictures. For example, when we take the period of Joseph and Moses I tell the children stories of Isis and Osiris and of the Magic Book, and exhibit pictures of the Pyramids, Akhenaton, Tut-enkhamon and so on.

Since the children attend the assemblies of other classes and some children also attend church, one cannot entirely ignore the great festivals of the New Testament.

To me, however, religious education should be a continuous process in the classroom. If one is successful in one's approach in this sphere it will be evident in the behaviour and bearing of the children. One would expect them, generally speaking, to be kind, helpful and cooperative.

The school where I teach is in a New Town where there is little cultural life and materialism is rife. In many cases both parents go out to work and their interest in their children often seems limited to their purely physical needs. They seem to compensate for their lack of interest by giving over-generous pocket money and ostentatious toys (or transistor radios which tend to reduce the child's ability either to listen or to concentrate).

All this means that the responsibility of the teacher is very great. If he shows a real interest in his pupils ("concern" for them in the Quaker sense), then he establishes a relationship with them that becomes of paramount importance to these somewhat "deprived" children.

His actions and behaviour are educative and formative factors in the pupils' lives and no amount of intensive preparation of lessons or enthusiasm can obviate the necessity for him to live out himself what he believes in and "preaches".

A non-denominational approach

From 'social union' to self-awareness

J. DARRELL

STEINER'S pedagogical recommendations spring directly from the conception of man which he put forward in his anthroposophy or "wisdom of man". Anthroposophy itself is not a form of religion but a spiritual science, to give Steiner's alternative name for it.

Anthroposophy is capable, however, of arousing the profoundest religious feeling, throwing endless light as it does on all that religion is concerned with. It sees as the central event in earthly evolution, what it always refers to as the Mystery of Golgotha.

Teachers who, no matter what their subject may be, have found in anthroposophy the essential stimulus for their own efforts in human progress, have the possibility of awakening in their pupils, between the lines as it were, a response to life which is not only scientific and artistic but religious and indeed Christian as well.

Such a religious influence of teacher upon child will find all the more channels which are all the less encumbered when, as in Steiner schools, the curriculum, the methods of teaching, the account of man in the world, reckon with the universe as a work of cosmic art and with man as evolving (however slowly) towards his own creative maturity, his own modest place among the hierarchies of responsible spiritual beings.

There is no question here of teaching anthroposophy as such to children, but of freeing their best powers through the pedagogical inspiration which can be won from anthroposophy by the teacher himself. What tends to arise in this way in Steiner schools as an impalpable religious atmosphere is entirely of its own kind, for though it strengthens everything that makes the school community one, it has nothing to do with denomination and everything to do with the individual teacher and his striving for inner freedom.

* * *

The religious influence of Steiner education, however, is by no means wholly accounted for by what has been indicated. In addition to the celebration of the main Christian festivals (described in another article), religion lessons are also given, usually if not always by members of school's college of teachers. Services, moreover, are held by them each Sunday. There is, of course, no obligation whatever on the part of parents to send their children to

such lessons or services, and in the upper school the feelings of the pupils themselves play a decisive role. In the modern world this is necessarily and rightly so.

The religion teaching in Steiner schools actually arose in the founding school, the Waldorf School in Stuttgart, in 1919 out of a request to Steiner himself of parents who could not find what they wanted for their children in the existing churches.

The kind of instruction which Steiner then indicated was to be through and through pedagogical. Above all it was to have regard for the age of a child and his characteristically changing relationship to himself, to other people and to the world of nature around him.

Steiner emphasized especially in this connection the need to postpone turning the child's more conscious attention to the Christ-Being until he is ready for such a decisive step. When children come into the first class during their seventh year, they still have something of their infancy about them, and see themselves and the world as one.

* * *

They are still dreaming within what Burns called "nature's social union", a family circle which embraces themselves and all else. For the child at this age, the ground of all things is God; He is the Father. His own flesh and blood tells a child this is so, and it is the task of the teacher at this time to draw this hidden perception into the child's more conscious soul, and thus to warm it to the world so that it may say with Ecclesiastes: "This is the gift of God". In this way and as a matter of course children will learn essential gratitude, which is also a rare gift, at the root of all other virtues.

The child must become acquainted with separateness, however, before any feeling, however slight and diffused, can arise in it that it is something of an exile who must begin to find the way back again. This condition sets in about the age of nine.

In this period of life children are in a special relationship to their own respiration, and like the breath itself, the soul begins to pass now between two worlds, a public and a private, and to know the first beginnings of the mediatory struggle which this gives rise to. Only now are they ready to pass beyond what we may call the festival references to Christ, at Christmas for example, which is all they have hitherto heard, and to be told in detail of His life on earth, so that as rich a picture as possible is given to them of the divine being who united Himself with mankind when its destiny had become too difficult for it.

Of destiny the children hear a great deal in their religion lessons during the next three years, in the form of story, biography, historical incidents and the like. Their attention is drawn to the gifts and lacks which individuals bring with them to be the warp of their earthly life, to the experiences in childhood which so strongly influence later years, to the joys and sorrows which strengthen us and give us insight, to the heroic personal struggles which are sometimes outwardly fruitful, sometimes only so by spiritual measurement. Of much else, too, the teacher will speak in this connection, for the children at this central moment of their childhood have a specially perceptive feeling for the community of man with his own kind and with the guiding spiritual beings above him.

* * *

With the age of 12 a child's thinking begins to take on a more abstract quality, and to skirt at all levels around such basic concepts as those of cause and effect. Accordingly in the seventh class Steiner advises that one should begin to lead the way into a Christology, and give for example a picture of the historical situation of mankind at the time when Christ came down to the earth. Through this the children begin to concern themselves with the question of Christ's mission on earth.

Whereas, moreover, one has confined oneself as teacher before this simply to the telling of stories from the Gospels, one now begins to point out how the different evangelists approach the life of Christ with a particular interest in mind. Passages are chosen, such as the concluding paragraphs of the Gospels, which throw this all-important fact into relief.

This is important because to study a matter from different sides is to bring fresh life into intellectual thought. The Bible gives us the highest possible example of how thinking itself can be redeemed in such a way, and to introduce the example to the young human being when he is on the threshold of his own intellectual life can prove of endless value.

Another article in this issue of *Child and Man* deals with religion in the secondary part of a Steiner school, so in this connexion it must suffice to say here that, in my experience, the religion teacher of older pupils must prove himself to be a spiritually striving man if he is to be of help to them at all. How he relates himself to his truth is at least as important as the truth itself. It is in fact part of that truth.

Religion with adolescents

Experience survives joy and adversity

EILEEN HUTCHINS

IN non-denominational schools both state and independent in Continental Europe, it is the custom for ministers and priests of the different denominations to give religious instruction to members of their congregation. In the Steiner schools the children of anthroposophists receive religion lessons from specially chosen teachers.

Here in England, however, Biblical knowledge of a nonsectarian kind is taught to whole classes in the state schools, and parents generally take it for granted that in a Steiner school there will be a similar arrangement.

Such is the case at Elmfield, and we have rarely had any questions or comments. When first contacting the school, parents sometimes inquire about the content of the religion lessons. But even a Mohammedan and an agnostic socialist have expressed satisfaction that their children should be introduced to the human values of Christianity.

At first sight it may appear simple to give a general outline of the life and teaching of Christ and to tell stories that give moral uplift. Nothing could be further from the truth. The religion teacher can fulfil his task only if he ponders seriously on what the intention is of his lessons and on what faculties he is trying to awaken.

All that is given in the way of vague idealism or moral instruction will be likely to fade when pupils move on into life and have to adapt to the demands of a materialistic civilization. But perhaps some essential quality in their inmost being can be strengthened so that they do not lose their bearings.

In the following paragraphs a brief account is given of some experiences in religion teaching in the upper school of Elmfield. They are offered only as indications. With other pupils in other surroundings quite different methods might be equally or more effective.

First of all, it seems to me, the teacher should aim at awaking in his pupils an awareness of the true nature of man. It is a help if the religion teacher also takes the history of literature or of art,

as the main lesson periods give pupils the chance of experiencing fully the changing nature of human consciousness through the ages; in these subjects poetry and art speak for themselves, and the substance of the lesson does not appear as the subjective creed of the teacher.

The religion teacher can, however, always build upon what has been given in other lessons. He can as it were spotlight certain contrasting pictures. He can, for instance, show that all races have their version of the Fall, and how man once lived in harmony with a world order and did not need to act out of his own initiative. At a turning point of time he withdrew from this wise guidance in order to develop independence.

Primitive man

It is here possible to illustrate from the life of existing primitive tribes. Laurens van der Post in *The Lost World of the Kalahari* describes the Bushmen and their nature wisdom. Out of an innate sympathy with their surroundings they are able to tell where the hidden streams flow deep beneath the desert sand, and even at a distance can be aware of what is happening to other members of their tribe.

Western man has drawn away from this kind of sympathetic intercourse with his surroundings. He has taken over the conscious guidance of his affairs, but, with all his cleverness in asserting his power over nature, he has brought about many disasters. Illustrations can be given from books like Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* or Robert Jungk's *Tomorrow is Already Here.*

It would not do, of course, to bring only a negative picture of modern achievements. Another contrast can be given between the primitive and the self-conscious way of life if we consider Prince Modupe's *I was a Savage* in connexion with the biography of such a character as Nansen. Modupe describes the life of a primitive African tribe before contact with Western civilization. There was a highly developed religious life and a strict order of conduct. He tells how as a boy he witnessed the execution of a member of his tribe who had stolen something and told a lie. Such lapses could not be allowed to corrupt the social customs. Later, when Modupe received a Western education, he found that many people treated such faults very casually.

At such a point an interesting discussion with the class can often take place. The children can be asked whether they feel it right for the virtue of a race to be preserved in this way. If not, how can law and order be preserved so that the innocent may not suffer?

Modupe gives an enlightening account of his relationship with

his tribe. To prove his attainment of manhood he had to go alone into the forest and overcome some wild animal. Before the event there was a religious ceremony in which he was assured of the prayers of his family, and from that moment he felt he could go forth to his ordeal filled with their strength.

He also tells us that it would be as unthinkable for anyone to seek a destiny apart from his tribe as it would be for the leg of a millipede to detach itself and walk away on its own. From this account pupils can realize that the primitive tribesman does not experience himself as an individuality.

In the life of Nansen, on the other hand, we see a character who acted entirely out of his own initiative and who had the courage to do what had never before been done. In his conscious thought life he could not accept the religious teaching of any church, but held that the ideals for which man must strive are the search for truth and love of one's neighbour. Nansen's youthful quest for adventure became transformed in later life to service for his fellow men, and he showed the same courage and independence in his campaign to feed the famine-stricken in Russia as he did in his exploring of Greenland and his voyage in the Fram.

The Bible

Bible readings in the upper school can go hand in hand with this theme of the transformation of man. The early chapters of *The Acts* are a clear illustration of the change from the old Mosaic way of life to an order inspired by Christ.

Again, passages from the Apocalypse, which always arouse interest, give the teacher an opportunity to gather together memories of history lessons in the middle school when pupils heard the legends of India, Persia and Egypt. What was then received in a dreamlike way can now be raised to consciousness. They can follow the turning away from the spiritual vision of the early Indians to interest in life on earth and the building of outward forms of civilization.

In dealing with the culture epochs as described by John in chapters 6, 7 and 8 of *Revelation,* the teacher can show how a period of civilization can be viewed in many different ways. We look back upon the time of Greek ascendancy as great and glorious. John represents it by the picture of the pale horse "and his name that sat on him was Death". The period which was outwardly most splendid was the one where knowledge of the spirit world was lost and life after death was no longer a certainty.

We are proud of our modern achievements, but John describes our present fifth epoch as the one where the souls of them that

were slain cry "with a loud voice, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" We need only think of those who suffered in the concentration camps or were destroyed in the gas chambers to realize the truth of this description. A discussion of these passages can open the door to an understanding of many modern problems.

Especially important in the opening chapters of *Revelation* is the description of Christ. In the middle school children have become familiar with His life and teaching, but they have been aware of Him more as a divine being living as man on earth than as a cosmic power. Here He appears as the centre of all earthly existence. Most pupils are moved by the words of John, "His eyes were as a flame of fire", "His voice as the sound of many waters", "out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword", and "his countenance was as the sun shining in his strength". When possible it is good to dwell on these and call forth a realization of the mighty powers of fire and water, of the all-life-giving force of the sun, and of the words that can pierce the heart.

In religion lessons I have always encouraged the use of the Authorised Version. It was composed when the English language was a medium of expression for the Zeitgeist. Today, however conscientious and precise a translator may be, speech has become intellectualized and barren. It is not all-important for children to understand everything they hear, but it is vital that language should be alive. In the upper school it can, of course, be helpful for modern versions to be introduced.

Although pupils can be moved by the beauty of passages from the Bible, there is always the danger that under the influence of modern materialistic thinking they will cast aside these impressions as belonging to an idealism which is no longer connected with everyday life. It is on that account helpful to illustrate also from contemporary events.

Evil

Young people in their teens begin to be assailed by many problems about which they are silent and reserved. They are often too much absorbed in their own difficulties. Girls can imagine themselves horribly unattractive or infected with mysterious diseases. Boys can cover their doubt and uncertainty with aggressive behaviour. It is a relief to them when their attention is turned away from themselves to wider problems.

Indignation at injustice or cruelty, and grief at the seemingly undeserved sorrow of those who are dear, strengthen the growing adolescent. But some assurance needs to be given that suffering

is not in vain. There are countless helpful examples in contemporary biographies.

Perhaps for young people today the greatest problem is the prevalence of evil. It is difficult to have faith in a moral world order when there are so many examples of hideous cruelty. Yet many life stories show that where evil is most prevalent good is correspondingly active. A good example is the story of Felix Kersten, Himmler's masseur. The story is well told by Joseph Kessel in *The Magic Touch.* Kersten acquired such ascendancy over his patient that he was not only able to save many individual lives but also able to prevent the deportation of the whole Dutch nation.

A similar illustration could be given from Liam Nolan's *Small Man of Nanataki.* Kiyoshi Watanabe, a Japanese Lutheran minister, risked torture and death during the last war, when as a camp interpreter he smuggled medical supplies and food to the suffering prisoners. He was loyal to his own country but considered the teaching of Christ higher than patriotism.

Almost as difficult as evil for young people to accept is the apparent ruin brought by illness or misfortune. Yet often through some blow of fate a person is directed to a new calling and can find his true life task. This theme can be illustrated from Douglas Keay's *Always Another Door* or Lord Fraser's *The Story of St. Dunstan's.* In both cases the central characters not only overcome disability to find much fuller lives but also meet their life partners.

Tragedy can awaken new powers of perception. When outward pleasures are taken away, the human being who is undaunted can find entirely new realms of experience. In *The Lost Footsteps* Silviu Cracuinas describes how after periods of torture and solitary confinement he became aware of a deeper level of his being.

It seemed to him that a Brahmin came day after day to his cell and conversed with him, teaching him the meaning of suffering. At last the Brahmin said, "You want to know who I am. I am your spirit. Put your trust in my strength." Cracuinas says this was a turning point in his existence. He discovered an inner calm and the warders were astonished at his transformation.

David Smith in *And All the Trumpets,* an account of his experiences in a Japanese prisoners-of-war camp, speaks of "the matchless dignity of the human soul in distress". Sorrow opens the heart of one human being to another, so that even enemies can be moved to compassion.

Janina David in *A Touch of Earth* tells of her life during the war as a Jewish child sheltered by nuns in a Polish convent. She hated the German invaders with all her heart, but she learned that

not all Germans were evil. A small group of German soldiers billeted in the convent showed more tenderness to a dying boy than the religious community that had admitted him. When Janina herself found an elderly German alone in the forest, mourning the death of his family in an air raid, she felt "an overwhelming urge to run and kneel at his side and weep with him for all who had died".

Death

One of the most difficult problems to approach, it seems to me, is the question of death. In England people avoid the subject entirely or veil it in sentimentality, and pupils are not often willing to discuss it openly. In the shock of sudden loss they tend to throw away the comforts of religion. The teacher therefore needs to consider whether there is any way of preparing them. Natural conversations can grow up if the subject of death is introduced indirectly.

After studying *Everyman* and *The Dance of Death* in a literature course, for example, a certain class IX was anxious to have an account of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. They were prepared to consider that there might be some reality in the idea of a period after death in which the soul has to be purged of its faults, and they were attracted by the description of the planetary spheres as the abodes of those who have died.

Another group of children had seen the film of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. It was possible to tell them some of the most beautiful parts of the book which could not be brought into the film. These were the experiences of Prince Andrew and of Petya as they approached death.

Then the question arises whether under any circumstances it is right to court death. In this connexion pupils will often contribute comments on what they think life is about and why voluntary death may or may not be justified. These comments may not be very wise but they serve to stimulate thought.

An important consideration to bring before pupils, if it can be done naturally, is the relationship between the living and those who have died. A number of superficial articles and television programmes on the subject of spirit communication have appeared lately which tend to rouse mockery in young people. It is good if the teacher can answer this with some true experiences.

Rosamund Lehmann's *Swan in the Evening* can be recommended here. She gives a moving account of her awareness of the presence of her dearly loved daughter who had died unexpectedly.

Conversation can play an important part in bringing different

reflections into perspective. Pupils can be encouraged to recall their earliest memories. They will find that these were often connected with sudden shock or pain, or they may look back on their childhood as a sort of golden age but remember their childish ambitions with amusement. They will realize how much they have changed in a short span of time. They can then be asked whether they can picture themselves and their classmates in ten years' time. Sometimes those, who in class seem the most brilliant, turn into unadventurous grown-ups. Others, the apparent ne'er-do-wells, may make their mark. Every human being is a mystery. We cannot plumb the hidden impulses that lead people to find their profession and place in life.

Before pupils leave at the end of their school course they are told something of Steiner's work and thought. There is no attempt to persuade them to accept his teaching. Truth can be found only by those who seek for it; no one can fully experience it at second hand.

In the choice of biographies for use with a class, I recommend that some should illustrate the outlook and way of life of nations that are very different from ourselves. Pupils from 14 to 17 will understand more from hearing the lives and experiences of human beings than from any lessons in comparative religion.

A film showing the life of Tibetan refugees gave us the chance at Elmfield of reading extracts from the life of the Dalai Lama. I have used Norah Murray's *I Spied for Stalin* to show that beneath the ruthless Communism in Russia entirely different human qualities are being developed. The problems of human survival will be solved only when people of different creeds and nations can come together out of a common ideal of man.

Teenagers and Tolkien

Parents have their uses

MARGARET HEITLER

IN these last years of the '60s not all the distress of the middle-aged is due to coronary arteries and rheumatism. Not a little of the pain arises from the ever-present nagging sense of failure to earn the love, respect or even old-fashioned rebellion of their own young. They feel themselves only too often to be just "written-off", as no longer relevant to a reality the youngsters hug to themselves.

Reams are being written by both parties about the generation gap. This has mostly only exacerbated the situation by creating aunt sallies, the knocking down of which can bring momentary relief, but which both parties feel dimly to be put-up protective devices.

One older voice does, however, seem able to span the abyss, the voice of J. R. R. Tolkien as heard in his fantasy trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*. This great tale of an ancient world, so like our earth and yet so other—what has it got that it can become almost a cult to the young people and be treated with the kind of awe that once was given to Holy Writ?

One treads carefully when asking the young about Tolkien, for here is sacred ground, and one's middle-aged well-shod feet could do untold damage if they trampled heedlessly. One must respect young persons' reticence about this trilogy that seems able to give them support they are hard put to to find elsewhere. To ask for explanations might be to destroy the power. One can, of course, pick up hints and can always go through the experience of reading Tolkien oneself. But to endeavour to put this experience through the analytical process that for most adults passes as thinking would be to kill its life-giving magic.

It can, however, be described. It is a gradual awareness of familiar situations being seen in a new light. There is all the fabric of romantic legend. Noble men and lovely ladies; elves, "dwarves" and trees that walk; and above all "hobbits", the distinctive creation of Tolkien.

The hobbit seems to carry all the gentle, homely, simple virtues of ordinary humanity—plenty of sound commonsense, lots of laughter, and a hearty appetite—but when the occasion demands

possessed of a dogged determination that just keeps bravely on and on and on. Within this setting a quite new kind of conflict with evil is worked out.

The story revolves around the Fellowship of the Ring, a little company of unlikely companions. Tolkien's world bears, in hierarchical yet equal order, elves, "dwarves", men and hobbits and many other strange beings left over from earlier ages. In this fellowship it is the hobbit Frodo who through a strange complication of destiny has to bear, but never to wear, the Ring.

With a wizard to help, the fellowship sets out on a quest that is unlike any other quest, inasmuch as the aim is not to seek for something but to give something up. This something the books call the One Ring, which to its wearer gives mastery over every living creature but, since it was made by an evil power, in the end corrupts him utterly.

The One Ring has to be destroyed, but how? The evil Lord Sauron who made it is waxing strong again and seeks it, and it can only be destroyed in the fires out of which it came—the volcanic fire of Mount Doom which is in the heart of the enemy country.

* * *

That is the plot in outline, but the play between evil and good is the real matter of the tale. What terrific forces of will an act of renunciation demands. Some of the company never come through to the understanding of this.

All are tempted to use the Ring in a time of need. To use it, for example, to preserve for just a little longer the good and beautiful and noble, although they sense that these as they exist at present are already doomed.

The climax of the tale lies in the moment of destroying the Ring. For in the end it is the inexorable power of evil working itself out to the bitter end that brings about the saving and destroying act.

With the end of the Ring an age also ends. For the light Rings of the Elves are bound strangely with the dark Ring and their power of beauty and light passes away from the earth also. Here is seen the strange relationship of the good, the beautiful and the true to their dark opposites.

Often we get these hints that things are not always as they seem. There is a high morality hidden in the tale. There is great complexity, yet all is woven into a harmonious open-ended whole. Here is a world with no beginning and no end and yet complete in itself.

The books were written in the years 1936 to 1949. In the foreword to the American edition, the author maintains that "the real war of those years does not resemble the legendary war in its process or its conclusion. If it had inspired or directed the development of the legend, then certainly the Ring would have been seized and used against Sauron" (the Dark Lord).

A fictitious but completely credible language has been created for the books by the scholar that is also Tolkien. The use of vowel and consonant varies delicately in the different ranks of the beings who use them. The elf tongue has a gay, light liquid sound by its frequent use of "l"; the "Lady Galadriel of Lórien whose people are the Galadrim" is the great elf queen.

The dwarf world, on the other hand, is described as the many pillared halls of Khazad-dum. Ugly both to look at and to read aloud are the combination of letters that make up the tongue of the evil world. "Ash nazg durbatulúk, ash nazg gimbatul, ash nazg thrakatulúk agh burzum-ishi krimpatul" says the inscription on the Ring.

Many pages are devoted to the pronunciation and the spelling of the languages. A consistent history of all events mentioned in the main narrative is worked out in detail and a calendar given. There are maps and family trees. A work of great labour and love.

What are the teenagers like to whom the trilogy is meat and drink? They tend to be the older end of the age group, and include the "way-outs". Some university students find common cause with them.

* * *

If this world of Tolkien is indeed the world our teenagers are seeking, let us rejoice, for it contains seeds for the future. Let us see beyond the long-haired boys and booted girls, beyond the seeming rudeness, the sexual freedom, the apparent instability. There could be a breakthrough coming. Opting out of society may not be always running away from responsibility. It may be a Tolkien quest. The going-off of boy and girl alone may be a search for each other's higher self and not only a bedding together.

Let us be generous and not just censorious, or should one say envious? This hard, brash, affluent society, in whose rat race some of us feel ourselves trapped, may have its uses. Someone has to earn the daily bread. Perhaps it is the older generation's task to keep the world's wheels turning so that the young may be free to go forth on their "quests". Are we missing our cue?

Festivals and seasons — paths to religious experience

Seasons are forms of rhythm

DAVID LANNING

"EDUCATION," said Rudolf Steiner to the teachers who were about to found the original Waldorf school, "will have to consist in teaching the child to breathe rightly."

Breathing, most of us would think, is at least one thing a child could manage on his own without help from adults. Among the spate of new ideas, methods and techniques with which the educational world has recently been flooded, there is no mention of breathing, nor any attempt (perhaps fortunately) to institute a G.C.E. O or A level in breathing. Yet the breathing of a young child is not the same as that of an adult; the relation between it and the heartbeat takes some time to establish itself. There seems to be little doubt that Steiner wanted teachers to concern themselves with this, and to be conscious of the effect of their lessons on the breathing of their pupils. In view of the interest of some prominent members of society in Yogi, however, it should be made clear that Steiner schools are not establishments where direct instruction in breathing is given.

Natural rhythms

The idea of breathing need not be limited to the inhalation and exhalation of air. In a sense we breathe out the soul and spirit when we go to sleep, and breathe it in again when we awake. This is a diurnal rhythm connected with the daily rhythm of the earth. The breathing of air, too, has its connexions with cosmic rhythms, and the number of breaths we take in a day corresponds with the number of years in a Platonic Year. Recent research, stimulated by some of the problems of travel in a jet age, has shown that a number of bodily rhythms, like body temperature and sugar balance, have close connexions with rhythms in the heavens.

If we turn out attention to the transformation of the world of nature throughout the seasons of the year we are at first struck by the contrast between the abundance of life in the summer and its relative paucity during the winter. During the summer months the light-filled air teems with life, insects are a-buzz, butterflies a-flutter, and the song of birds is everywhere. Even in the upper

atmosphere pollen grains are floating. Not only the surface of the earth, where luxuriant plant growth drives the point home, but the whole atmosphere is alive.

In winter this is all below the surface in the form of dormant seeds, eggs and cocoons. Only the warm-blooded animals have to some extent emancipated themselves, but even so many of them hibernate, and all of them have their breeding cycles determined by the seasons of the year. The earth, too, breathes out its soul in summer, and draws it in again in the winter.

Traditional festivals

The traditional Christian festivals are only fortuitously seasonal, but the festivals celebrated in Steiner schools are firmly connected with the seasons. Christmas and Midsummer on the one hand, and Michaelmas and Easter on the other must be understood as opposite poles of the breathing process, and to have opposite and complementary characteristics.

In pre-Christian times the celebration of religious festivals was also seasonal, and it could be argued that the loss of the connexion of religious experience with nature has resulted in the gulf between science and religion, and the consequent atheism of those for whom the scientific world picture represents the only reality. Even for those for whom it does not, the difference is a matter of feeling rather than knowledge, and there follows a reliance on a blind faith which does not come easily to modern man. If we take seriously Christ's words: "By their works shall ye know them", how is it that by the study of His works, we do not learn to know Him?

However, to deplore the effects of the loss of the connexion between religion and nature is not sufficient ground to advocate the return to a sort of druidical nature worship. Steiner placed the incarnation of Christ centrally in his world picture, and we should be the last to assume that the nature worship of our forefathers should continue unaltered to the present day, as though Christ had never become man on earth.

Christmas

The Festival of Christmas was nevertheless also the Festival of the Unconquered Sun, when the sun—seen less and less by pre-Christian men—at last showed that it was not going to depart for ever, but to return. It was the time of the birth of Mithras, as well as of Jesus.

When men felt the death of outer nature much more acutely than we do today, it was the dawn of hope. Was it merely an accident

that Christ was born in midwinter? Can we indeed assume that anything connected with so momentous an event was an accident, when the very geography of His birthplace was significantly in the deepest part of the world below sea-level, and centrally between the main continents?

The Festival of Christmas, entirely from its Christian aspect, is made much of in Steiner schools, even to the extent of postponing the Christmas holidays as late as possible so as to get as much of the Christmas season into the term as can be managed. The festival starts with an Advent Festival, usually one of the most beautiful in the school calendar, when the youngest children bring their gifts to the mother Mary to help her weave a cloak for the infant Jesus; but the gifts come from nature, from the four elements, and the sun, moon and stars.

Carols are sung in all classes at the beginning of each day during the Advent season, culminating in the visit of the senior class to each of the younger ones in turn, to sing carols and distribute sweets. The boarding houses will invariably have celebrations in their individual ways at the end of term.

The birth of the child Jesus is portrayed in three separate Christmas plays acted by the staff before the whole school. The first tells the story of Adam and Eve and the expulsion from Paradise, and the second, as though following from the first, tells of the birth of Jesus, and the revelation to the shepherds. Another play, on another occasion, tells the story of the star and the proclamation to the three Kings or Magi, and shows the violence of Herod. This play is performed only to children of 10 years and more.

The mood of Christmas is a social mood, and brings an implication of the spiritual origins of man, a thought grasped, perhaps, by Wordsworth in his *Intimations of Immortality*. By the end of the Christmas term the children have been saturated thoroughly with this mood.

Easter

Easter presents something of a paradox. The younger children can well appreciate the joyousness of the bursting forth of spring, and the resurrection of nature, as the world breathes out again the breath it held in at Christmas. The paradox of the death of a God in the midst of dawning life is rather for the older ones, though probably the younger are nearer to an understanding of His resurrection.

No God had previously experienced death, but having been through death, Christ was able to enter hell and overcome the adverse powers who were seeking to thwart the course of man's

evolution. In spite of St. Paul's admonition, "If Christ be not risen, then is our faith vain", it is only too evident that, while man has eaten of the Tree of Knowledge, he has not eaten of the Tree of Life, and it is Good Friday rather than Easter that we understand.

The Easter Festival, which is usually celebrated for the upper school, must be a strong stimulus to thinking to lead to a resurrection of knowledge. "We have crucified Christ in a special sense to-day," said Steiner, "we have crucified Him in the field of knowledge." The festival should also lead to the feeling, perhaps best reached through dramatic art, of death in Christ leading to resurrection.

Midsummer

At Midsummer, when the earth has breathed out to the full, we can enjoy the abundance of nature. Our own psyche is also to a certain extent drawn out; inner consciousness is not quite so strong, as we abandon ourselves more to the outer world. Shakespeare, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* captures the spirit of a dreamy, fey experience.

While drama is fitting for Easter, music, poetry and song express the mood of Midsummer. As Carl Kovacs describes in *The Golden Blade,* the sun, like a stone thrown upwards, hovers between ascent and descent, and the festival, in Steiner schools, centres around the lighting of the St. John's fire as symbolic of the lighting of a sun in our own hearts in response to the sun in the heavens. It could be seen as a pagan festival, but its Christian aspect is the Festival of John the Baptist. As the sun in the heavens begins its descent we are reminded of the words of John the Baptist: "I must decrease, but He will increase", and we come to know that we must be more than nature-beings.

Midsummer, too, has its connexion with Christmas when the golden light of the sun is transformed inwardly into a gold that can be offered as a gift to the Christ Child in midwinter.

Michaelmas

If the Midsummer Festival is an ancient festival, resuscitated and given a Christian emphasis, the Michaelmas Festival is something new. The traditional Christian festivals all fall into that half of the year when the sun is ascending; from the seasonal point of view there must be an autumn festival if only for the sake of completion. But this reason alone will not suffice, and Steiner attached great importance to the Michaelmas Festival as a festival of the future. In old agricultural England, Michaelmas was a time when contracts

were renewed; labourers would gather in the market place, advertising their trade, and seeking employment. It was a time for the renewal of work, and it would seem that the tradition in England of starting the school year at Michaelmas stems from this practice.

Michaelmas centres around the mighty imagination of the fight of the Archangel Michael with the Dragon. As the world breathes out, and as we abandon ourselves to external nature, there is the opportunity for the animal nature within us to take hold. This is symbolized in the Dragon, which, as the meteors flare earthward from the skies, is overcome by Michael, in order to prepare the way for the coming of Christ at Christmas. If Easter is the festival of the resurrection of a God, Michaelmas is the festival of the resurrection of man. It is a festival of courage and initiative, of bringing thinking into the will.

The festivals should be a joyous experience, for as such they will be remembered. When the children leave school, and much of their school life is forgotten, the festivals, if properly celebrated, will remain in their memory. It is right that they should thus be "festivals of remembrance", but they are much more besides. The experience of each festival must be lived through afresh. "If Christ be born a thousand times in Bethlehem", said Angelus Silesius, "but not in thee, then art thou indeed forlorn".

The festivals imply, as has been suggested, that we are not forsaken by God as works of His creation, that He has not merely retired into the heavens to watch the universe running down according to the Second Law of Thermodynamics. But, more than this, they show Christianity as the fulfilment of the religious experience of our ancestors.

* * *

Religion and food

Are they poles apart?

JOAN RUDEL

IN the days when the great earth mother, Nerthus, was worshipped in Britain, it would have been too obvious to deserve comment that religion had a connexion with nutrition. Agriculture for the ordinary people was a religious activity directed by the priests and accompanied by cultic observances at every point of the year.

In all the ancient civilizations, in fact, man looked in awe and worship towards the sky god and the earth goddess, and knew that only from their harmonious union and working together could he receive the food he needed to maintain life in an earthly form. He knew, too, that not only the sun, but the moon and the stars exercised an influence on plant and weather conditions.

Right on into the 19th century relics of the round-the-year religious agricultural festivals and practices persisted. But in our time practically the only reminder is the harvest festival, where the sheaf of corn and the best of the fruit and vegetables brought into the church express the last vestiges of man's feeling of the bond between the divine and the earthly in food production.

* * *

What has brought about this remarkable change in our attitude to the surrounding world? No longer do we feel ourselves one with the world that surrounds us, subject to both celestial and terrestial influences, part of the wide-flung web of existence. Rather are we aware of ourselves as isolated individuals, single units in the social machine, separate islands of consciousness. It is a seeming paradox that this feeling of isolation has grown stronger in the same period of time, namely during this century, when means of communication have increased.

Something else, however, has come to a swift unfolding during this same period, and that is the power of the human intellect. In both theoretical and applied mathematics, science, medicine, history, geography—to mention only a few fields of knowledge—our intellectual grasp has been immeasurably widened.

Real understanding (as opposed to factual knowledge)—between individual and individual, nation and nation, man and the surrounding world—has nevertheless not increased, and, seen from

some aspects, has noticeably lessened. It is the intellect in man that is the great divider, the separating element, the analysing agent, as opposed to the synthesizer.

It is this element, too, that has gradually led to lack of understanding of what constitutes a healthy form of nutrition at different stages of life. Faced with the rising statistics of many different diseases, dieticians and doctors have been hard at work.

Some tell us that in order to lessen the risk of heart disease we should not eat butter, others affirm that the real cause is the consumption of refined white sugar and flour, still others speak of the lack of trace elements in our diet, or draw a connexion with plane and car travel.

Yet heart illnesses continue to increase, and even the recent ingenious feats of surgery are, after all, no real solution to the problem. Where can we look for certainty? Can the intellect alone find the answers to the riddle?

* * *

Let us turn from the theories on nutrition to the actual practice. In this realm mere opinions seldom exert much influence. Diet is mainly the result of two factors. We consume, firstly what we enjoy eating, and secondly what helps to make life easier and more convenient.

We may recognize in our thoughts that smoking is bad for health, but we continue to smoke. We may know that coffee overstimulates the heart, but we continue to drink it because we like it. Even if we feel better when we eat fewer starchy foods, we nevertheless indulge in potatoes and sugar because they make a strong appeal to our appetite.

The second motive, achieving ease and convenience, is also strong. Theoretically we may be convinced that fresh vegetables are more nutritious, yet we continue to eat tinned or frozen food because it saves trouble and we do not have to "waste" time preparing vegetables or cooking meat. Looking in this direction, too, we have reason to doubt whether impulses of will and natural inclinations solve the problem of finding a healthy form of diet.

If then both the intellect and the will are in themselves unable to bring us to a real knowledge of what man needs for his body's maintenance, what human faculty can we call on to lead us to a more realistic approach, an approach that will help to heal some of the modern ills?

Francis Bacon, looked on by many as the father of modern science, counselled that in order to come to know the material world, one must collect and observe as many facts as possible

connected with the object of one's study, and by induction from them discover the natural laws. But does this path really lead to the grasp of truth? Does one not need to develop the kind of inner faculty of vision Blake expresses when he says:

"To see a world in a grain of sand,
A heaven in a wild flower,
Is to hold infinity in your hand,
Eternity in an hour."

It is difficult for a modern mind, brought up on "facts" promulgated by an unending stream of books and by radio, television and the live lecture, to understand such an inner experience as that of Blake. It is still more difficult to approach what Plato meant when he spoke of the living world of ideas, the material expression of which is but a shadowy reflection.

* * *

Almost any inner experience in fact is looked on today as "subjective" and "illusory". It can be so, but there is nevertheless an inner activity or faculty, a kind of thinking-feeling, that leads to a deeper understanding of man and the world, to a more realistic grasp of things, and to a sounder basis for nutrition, than our superficial factual knowledge.

Observe the world of plants in an openminded way, free of preconceived ideas, and with the freshness and wonder a child has, but with an adult consciousness of self. Think of the root, dull-coloured and hard, resting in winter in the darkness of the earth.

Then think of the flower and its attributes. The soft petals, bruised by a touch, expand in the warmth of the sunlight. The warmth-giving element of sugar is present in the nectar, the forces of creating new life in the stamens and pistil. The flower's volatile, almost immaterial scents and evanescent colours form an opposite picture to the root.

Between these two poles are the stem and the leaves with their sphere of activity in the elements of air and water. The substances of the air are transformed into matter and circulated in the plant fluids to all parts of the plant. Water becomes less material and is given off in an invisible form into the air. This central system of the plant is continually engaged in breathing and circulatory activity.

If we now observe man in the same "naïve" way, we see a certain similarity and certain differences. Man, too, in his physical body has two poles, and a mediating element. His head is hard and filled with the physiologically dying brain-substance. His

digestive system is warm and composed of relatively soft tissue, closely connected with the forces of reproduction and regeneration. In the midst lie the heart and lungs continually engaged in rhythmical activity with air and the flowing blood.

Considered in this imaginative way, it is easy to grasp why doctors and herbalists since long before the beginning of the Christian era, right on into medieval times and, in isolated instances, even later, knew that flower substances were a medicine in digestive disorders and root extracts helpful in disturbances of the brain and nervous system, while leaf and stem had their effect more on the respiratory and circulatory system.

In his herbal Culpeper says of *tussilago farfara* (coltsfoot), "The fresh leaves, or juice thereof, is good for a hot, dry cough, or wheezing, and shortness of breath". Tea made of flowers of the wild camomile, is helpful for the digestion, and dill-seed "is used in medicines that serve to expel wind, and the pains proceeding therefrom". A "decoction of the root of hemp (*cannabis sativa*) allays inflammations of the head . . . eases the pains of the gout, the hard humours of knots in the joints".

In his *The World of the Senses and the World of the Spirit*— and other books Steiner speaks of this special relationship between man and plant, and has pointed to the fact that in the nutritional realm this knowledge can be used to heal disturbances and disharmonies. Children who tend to be absentminded and dreamy can be helped to become more awake in their thinking by eating radishes or a little raw grated carrot at breakfast.

Children who are too awake to sense impressions of the surrounding world and therefore nervous and restless, can be smoothed and quietened by sweetened fruit juices and warm flower tisanes. A tea containing among other things lavender and mallow flowers helps over-active children to sleep.

* * *

These are a few examples from a wide field. Much more could be said in detail about the practical application of this kind of knowledge of the relationship between man and the world of nature. But the theme of this article is not nutrition only, but nutrition and religion. Why religion? Because it is with something akin to religious feeling penetrated with clear thought that one has to approach anew in our time the relationships of man and the surrounding universe. Shall we manage to do so?

The pros and cons of Steiner schools

The viewpoint of an old scholar

DAVID STEDMAN

THERE is only a handful of old scholars of British Steiner schools who, like myself, are now aged 40 or over. It is thus rash to attempt any assessment of what the 12-year course of these schools offers. But it is important to try to do so. Important, because Steiner schools suffer just as much as most other bodies in England from bad communication. If Britain rejects Steiner education it will be sad; if it were to pass it by out of ignorance of it, it would be folly.

For half a century people have talked about Steiner education, and what it could and should do. Soon we shall have to measure the promise against the achievement, the benefits against the disadvantages, the "this-is-what-we-aim-to-do" alongside the "this-is-what-we-have-in-fact-achieved".

The comment is sometimes made that conventional education is getting "nearer" to that of Steiner schools. This, in my opinion, is nonsense. There may be certain surface resemblances. But the vital thing about Steiner's educational ideas is that they are based on a fundamentally new appreciation of the child and of man and the world.

Steiner education will, in fact, stand or fall by whether or not it succeeds in using these ideas effectively in education. Education is not just a philosophical exercise; it is a business venture too. A perfect pedagogy can no more succeed without good teachers and administrators than can, say, an ideal agricultural system without good farmers.

Some of the advantages of a Steiner education are as obvious, even to the layman, as they are foreseeable in theory. The lack of specialization, for example, or of prestige attaching to sport; the enhanced status given to art. Other obvious good points are the class teacher system; the (now commonly accepted) coeducation and the enlightened (though still fumbling) attempts at coeducational boarding; the absence of cramming and of undue competitiveness; the underlying respect for "Mr. So-and-so" rather than a grudging acceptance of "the Beak".

These are the things which impress the newcomer, but they are

only signs of something deeper. To talk about "something deeper" without using jargon is not easy, but has to be attempted if one is to break through the communication barrier.

So let me just mention some of the attitudes which the school in my day succeeded in fostering, and doubtless still does. First, an appreciation of the dignity of man. Not "man" with a capital, but the man who delivers the milk, and calls out bingo numbers, and stands for Parliament, and the woman, too, who brings up a family with care, or lives with gracious dignity in spinsterhood or widowhood.

Again, we got a feeling for the dignity of work. Not just one's vocation but the dirty jobs, the menial jobs, the jobs of those who serve. There is a sanctity about childhood; a mystery about adolescence; a wisdom that comes with years; a fallacy in the thought that evolution, or progress, is an automatic process. The appreciation of these things, I am sure, was nurtured at my school.

Fine thoughts indeed. But how does a Steiner school present them as realities in the lives of children? In my mind arise cameos of incidents (today they would be called "teacher-child relationships") which are more illuminating than yards of canvas depicting theories in abstract form, and which indicated the presence, on classroom floor level, of teachers who had sufficiently absorbed Steiner's ideas to have made them their own, and to act accordingly.

Would I send my child to a Steiner school? A pointless question, unless we all knew the child and the school and the circumstances. Am I in favour of a child receiving a Steiner education? Yes, if his parents try to understand what is involved and will support the education; if they can afford it (with 12 years ahead to consider); and if there is a suitable school handy.

A suitable school nearby? I personally would want to feel that a school was "right", whatever its label, and to know that the staff were competent and considerate, whatever their beliefs.

Assuming you do finally decide to send your child to a Steiner school, what is "involved"? The child (I refer only to the child who runs the full 12-year course, not to those who are sent for a year or two's "finishing off"), in a word, will be turned upside-down. He may well leave feeling either out-of-step or that he is the only one in step. His parents will need to be patient if for a time he is slower than the others in certain "surface" attainments (e.g. reading).

They will also have, later, to resist the temptation to look over his shoulder to see if he is going to be a good business man like his father. In a world which is brash and "get-up-and-go" he may well

seem dreamy and "sit-back-and-consider", or arrogant as a result of trying to hide his uncertainties.

Your child's prowess at sport or examinations (or, indeed, at anything) will not be encouraged if it is to the detriment of all-round development. While his contemporaries elsewhere are lining up for themselves lucrative openings, he will probably be thinking of "knocking around the world a bit", and then perhaps settling down to something that interests him.

He is likely to be predisposed to nonconformity, to be a non-joiner who takes little for granted in the world that is presented to him. He will probably want to do something "creative"—perhaps teaching, medicine, civil engineering, pure science, art, or a small business.

Are those who went to Steiner schools glad or sorry or indifferent? All three—it depends whom you ask. Some are glad to have found the world more challenging and in some cases more rewarding. Others have been disappointed to find they lacked certain passports to careers, or a certain savoir-faire of which other schools boast. Others wear their school—like blue eyes—without questioning it. But most do not say, and many do not know.

One generalization one might venture about Steiner school old scholars is that the proportion who gamble is probably below the national average. Life for them has enough imponderables to make artificial thrills superfluous.

More seriously, they are likely to be "late-developers". And this for two reasons. The education is (rightly) unhurried. And a period of adjustment to "the world" is needed. It might be argued that some of us will, in consequence, miss the boat. It can also be argued, on the other hand, that by waiting one is more likely to select a seaworthy vessel.

Progress at Emerson College

L. FRANCIS EDMUNDS

IN the article "An Adventure in Adult Education" (CHILD AND MAN, Winter Number, 1966) there was mention of the need for Emerson College to find a new and permanent home. We are happy to report that in September, 1967 the college moved into Pixton Estate, with Tablehurst Farm attached, a property of some 250 acres in all.

The property includes a main Regency building, a number of cottages, and various large outhouses which have been adapted, and offers space for every foreseeable development as the needs grow. Site plans have been drawn up to include laboratories, art rooms and workshops, lecture rooms, a workshop theatre and other amenities, and these plans have been approved by the Local Authorities. It will be a question, therefore, of following up growing demands and, of course, of finding the necessary means at each stage to carry through the building plans required. The most urgent need just now is for laboratories.

The year began with 75 students, once again drawn from almost the whole world, from Hawaii to India, and from the Scandinavian countries, through Europe and Africa, to New Zealand. These students with their different backgrounds and professional trainings, have as in previous years quickly formed into an active group, concerned with the same fundamental question, how to reach to an understanding of man which can inspire life with meaning and purpose.

There is a vigorous School of Education, and the activities in the Schools of Sculpture and of Speech and Drama, newly opened this year, have made a strong and promising beginning.

In the spring of 1968 the college took over Tablehurst Farm and there, too, plans have been formed, offering a progressive policy for developing the farm as a biological unit, and for advancing towards a school of bio-dynamic training. Thus the "Idea of the College" as originally conceived is beginning to find clearer and fuller expression.

For the purposes of this report we may underline three main goals concerning the life and work of Emerson College. The first is to serve towards a renewal of culture out of a knowledge of man as a being of body, soul and spirit according to the teachings of Rudolf Steiner.

The second goal, by assembling trained people in various call-

ings and professions for a central study of man, is to help counteract the limiting effects of over-specialization.

The third is to bring men and women together from all parts of the world for closer fellowship and understanding of one another out of the new insights gained into the nature of man and the meaning of human destiny.

The college is still young, being in its sixth year only, yet the experiences gathered so far give positive evidence that its aims have a wide appeal amongst searching young people, and the work achieved offers every encouragement to expect still further growth and development as the years go on.

Answers to Questions on 'Running a mixed school hostel' *

A. LEWERS

Question *Are the children given responsibilities? Do the older children have any share in dealing with the younger children? Do they help in garden or household?*

Answer To speak of "children" in connexion with responsibility of the kind implied in this context suggests a middle or lower school approach to an essentially upper school matter. It is a mistake that is often made and, almost as often, results in failure to sound the right note which can awaken a warm response of mutual understanding, in the mind or heart of young people.

In a Steiner School, having grappled with puberty, there are no children. There are boys and girls each with an individual potential to develop into a man or into a woman which will unfold in its own way and in its own time.

In a Steiner school, having grappled with puberty, there are no there is no system whereby senior boys and girls become permanent prefects. The system that has been in use for a long time is to give temporary responsibility for specific tasks or duties.

For example, more than 20 years ago mixed parties of boarders used to go into the nearby city for evening private lessons in ballroom dancing. The housemaster in charge of the upper school

**Child and Man,* Winter 1967.

dining room would announce that a mixed party of from 12 to 20 would be going in joint charge of a boy and a girl, and that while on duty their instructions would carry the housemaster's authority.

The two in charge would eventually report the return of the party and there the responsibility would end. The arrangement worked most satisfactorily, and over the years there were many independent reports of good behaviour. Those appointed were varied as much as possible, sometimes involving all the seniors, but there were naturally occasions when a sense of discrimination had to be exercised.

The older boarders do indeed have a share in dealing with the younger ones, often with great success. Appointments would be made on the lines already discussed, but discretion must be exercised to ensure that the appointee be not "used" to an extent which would have an adverse effect on his school work or health.

Boarders also help in household and garden. Duties would include making beds and tidying bedrooms, and evening washing-up. At weekends, sometimes voluntary and sometimes as a task, such work as hedge cutting or general tidying in the garden is done.

Q. *Do the young people themselves get up entertainments and create their own cultural activities?*

A. Where the "children" are concerned, reading and storytelling occur every day except when staff and vocationally minded senior boarders are not available. Boarders in the upper school have a fair amount of homework, and those who are interested make full use of a good school library.

In the Michaelmas and Easter terms most Sunday evenings are the occasion for an illustrated talk. A concert or an instrumental recital and special events are arranged for the Advent Sundays prior to Christmas.

Among lower school boarders what entertainment they make for themselves depends largely on there being creative artistic spirits either among the boarders or among the staff, and such activities vary accordingly. "Authority" welcomes and encourages them, but they cannot be produced by a machine and must depend on the human element.

Q. *Someone had the impression that "the young do nothing but loll about on sofas and improve each other with sex talk"!*

A. In any primitive town people live in houses on the surface of the earth and the drains and sewers run down the streets. In the more advanced townships the houses are built up from the surface of the earth and the drains and sewers run well below the surface

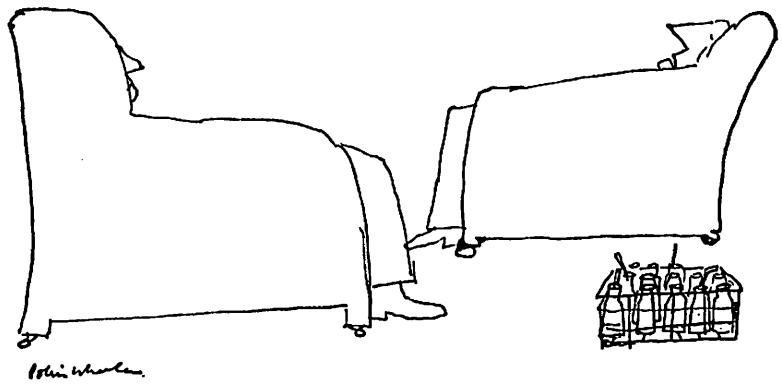
and are more efficient. *The upbuilding activities in life have been separated from refuse control.*

Healthy life, almost by definition, includes an appropriate proportion of sex; the condition where this is absent is pathological. Sex is so vital that it is adaptable both to all that is upbuilding for the soul faculties and strengthening for the spirit and to all that is morbid and weakening.

Steiner schools, which are perhaps unique in that the education they offer is intimately linked with both the spiritual and the physiological development of the young person, have no need for special sex lessons. The explanation of this must be sought elsewhere, but the point here is that where boarders have such an education in their daily life the buoyancy of the healthy side of sex over the morbid side is most marked.

When there is a tendency for the flow of life to run into an unhealthy backwater, those in authority reset the course, and can evoke a response in boys and girls out of their whole school background which would not be possible without it.

Generally speaking, after a long experience, I have never found morbid sex to be a strong line in a hostel except temporarily in specific cases. In an article (January 19, 1968, *Daily Telegraph* colour supplement), Ronald Duncan had many good things to say in this connexion.



"Of course there's got to be private education or where will the educationists send their children ?"

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Primacy of Speech

Thoughts on modern language teaching

R. LISSAU

THERE were two camps in modern language teaching 50 years ago, at the time the first Waldorf school was established. One was the grammar-and-translation camp; the other consisted of those who insisted, Steiner among them, on the primacy of the spoken word.

Today a dialogue between the two camps is not only possible but indeed necessary and helpful. The recent publication of *The Teaching of Modern Languages* (University of London Press, 37s. 6d.) can serve as a peg for initiating such a discussion, and the book is in itself worthy of a prominent place on the teacher's bookshelf.

The newcomer is based on the experience and opinions of over 100 teachers of modern languages working in different types of schools all over Britain. When their conclusions do not coincide the various views are fairly and fully stated. In addition there are useful chapters on methods of avoiding fatigue (in teachers), careers for linguists, and which modern language to teach. There is also advice on foreign travel and school libraries, and many useful addresses.

In this article I propose to compare Steiner's ideas with those behind contemporary practice in modern language teaching. We shall find there is wide agreement, as well as certain important lines of division. We shall finally come to certain areas where the Steiner teacher—if I may go by my own, fairly long experience —can learn from modern theory and practice.

First, the area of agreement. To start with what we all agree is wrong: "There is general dissatisfaction with modern language teaching. The dissatisfaction is international . . . What can be done in our schools . . . is as sharply limited by the shortness of the course . . . as it is by an unhappy examination system".

Some teachers "believe that the establishment of the C.S.E. is a measure born of public lust for certificates. If certificates are to be awarded, they believe that schools can well do this themselves". Most teachers "say they would teach differently were it not for the G.C.E.; the probability is that they would teach better". There is no case for encouraging a pupil to take his examination early.

On the positive side we all agree: "In the welter of mechanical aids to teaching one simple fact tends to be overlooked. Teaching implies the relationship of teacher and taught, "and no amount of machinery can replace this relation". There can therefore be a place for the enthusiastic non-specialist and for the class teacher.

Throughout the book, moreover, special stress is laid on the primacy of speech, "Many would insist that the spoken word should always precede both the written word and grammatical analysis". We ought to start early. For "psychological evidence has been produced suggesting that children reach the peak of their language-learning ability at the age of about nine years".

Examination requirements

What should be taught in these vital early stages? "Obviously the matter must be well within the comprehension of the children. Centres of interest must be chosen which belong to the children's real world: greetings, home, family, school, parts of the body, clothes, holidays, etc.

"Numbers in particular can be used functionally in easy arithmetic, such as telling the time, giving dates, doing shopping, etc. Acting is one of the most enjoyable forms of activity at this stage, and one of the most successful ways of drilling structures and intonation is to have small groups of children—in costume if possible—reheasing little plays.

"Songs in the foreign language are always popular, and can be normal musical practice throughout the school. Games of all sorts can play a large part as can cutting out, colouring and handwork. The new language is much more attractive when it is used as a tool—in recipes, or instructions for making things."

There is little value, we read and concur, in streaming. "We totally condemn this system under which the weakest linguists are transferred early to a separate set". Some teachers would separate O level candidates from the rest; others contend that there is "no essential difference between the methods suitable for the intelligent and the very dull".

Higher up there should be free composition instead of translation, or only a minimum of translation. Vocabulary lists are "practically useless except when employed to systematise what has already been well studied".

All this is very close to what is done in Steiner schools. Nevertheless there are pertinent differences. A Steiner teacher would probably point out first that, for all the protestations of the book, teachers still allow themselves to be governed much too much by examination requirements.

The amount of formal grammar necessary to pass A level German, for example, can (as experience shows) be condensed to 12 pages. There is no need for translation into the foreign language before the year of the first examination, while translation from the foreign language needs to be done only in the last few months before A level, and even then only occasionally.

Finally, if real precedence is given to the spoken language and later to rapid reading, the course book can be completely dispensed with. "Your method is good. Why distrust it in the year of the first examination? Throw your course book away", an H.M.I. once said to me. I followed the advice and never regretted it.

The second difference lies in the choice of material. Words and phrases are and admittedly should be chosen by their frequency, situations by their practical use. Fine, provided this is not all. The Steiner teacher is concerned not so much with teaching French, as with educating his pupil by teaching him French. He will therefore lay for greater stress on certain imponderable factors: the moral, aesthetic and social significance of his material, and its compatibility with the psychological age and peculiarity of the class concerned.

Mechanical Aids

Thirdly and lastly, the Steiner teacher will be adamant about the use of mechanical aids. The value of a language laboratory (cost: £5000) remains unproven. The teachers cited in the book are more guarded on this point. "Few of the newer aids to language teaching have caused more inconclusive controversy than the language laboratory. Unless the teacher adds considerable variety, he "will create at least some boredom and this certainly appears to be true of teaching by machines". In the audio-visual approach "critics can justly talk of parrot learning". The line "between familiarity and boredom is a very thin one".

In other words only a good teacher can make mechanical aids work. But he is the one who rarely needs them, if at all. The best that can be said for mechanical aids is that they save the teacher's time and nerves, and that the pupil in some cases can learn better French than the teacher can speak.

The worst that can be said is that such a way of teaching "must concern itself with conditioned responses to carefully chosen and graded stimuli". In other words, the pupil is reduced to the level of an animal or a machine. In a Steiner school, the attempt is made to base each lesson on a living and largely spontaneous interrelationship which fosters alertness, initiative and individuality.

Comment

WE have already had occasion to refer to the Schools Council's proposals concerning university entrance and the character of work in the sixth form. We considered they went in the right direction, but were too timid. So we welcome the revised proposals now under discussion for the promise which they hold. If guarantees can indeed be obtained from the universities that no account will be taken of more than two A levels, schools will be free to devise interesting courses of their own in line with their fundamental policies and the possibilities of their staff.

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THE new proposals of the Schools Council are thus a definite advance over last year's. But they still do nothing to change the early specialization in the grammar schools. Even the outspoken remarks of the former Minister, who pointed out British isolation in this respect from the main trend of western education, failed to make their mark. Early specialization seems to be one, if not the main, cause of the dearth of good-quality students in the sciences. Instead of making demands for ever fuller A level science syllabuses in the sciences, demands which in any case not enough candidates can meet, universities would do better to ensure that every student does some science throughout the school. If a final choice could be postponed until the age of 17 and science courses became less specialized and of greater cultural significance, the number of good candidates for scientific studies could hardly fail to rise.

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"IF recognition is to mean accepting the standard of the grammar or public school," says A. S. Neill in a letter to *The Times Educational Supplement*, "I do not want it." Steiner schools, some of which are recognized, while others are not, would share this view. The problem is urgent, for before long all independent schools are likely to need recognition in order to exist. On them certainly depends some at least of the welfare of the next generation. But their contribution is bound to be impaired, as Neill points out, if it is measured by a pedantic and academic yardstick. To be effective education needs an integrated environment and a particular way of living which can be built up only by a group of responsible men and women, never by a non-committed officialdom.

THE value of mature entrants to the teaching profession is being increasingly recognized. If a person of between 30 and 45 years of age (the significant age group) leaves his (or her) former job and takes up teaching, he knows much better than the school leaver what he is doing. He is not likely to be disappointed, he will normally not marry within two or three years, and his judgement will be more profound. Still more important, he will bring to his new job a depth of experience which more often than not the man who has always looked at life as a schoolmaster lacks. From the national point of view such a person is a good investment.

* * * * *

EVER since their foundation Steiner schools, in fact, have looked for mature teachers. The idea that a man *is* a clerk or a waiter, a teacher or a chemist has an old-fashioned ring about it. The future is likely to need persons capable of changing their job at least once in a lifetime. To learn something in one's youth, and to perfect and widen one's knowledge of it, form a worthy pursuit. But in middle age boredom easily sets in and the close of one's career may prove sheer routine. At this age many people feel a psychological need to hand over what they have learned to a younger generation. So why should the father who takes his son angling, not also enjoy teaching his biology to other young people?

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HOW can one do other than reject programmed learning? Steiner education stands for the education of the whole man, while programmed learning sets you in a groove and determines in an impersonal way what is and what is not to come within your compass. It functions in a dehumanized situation. If one points out these and other shortcomings of the new way of instruction, one is immediately labelled a reactionary. But what do other people think of programmed learning today? It seems that it has good possibilities for the instruction of adults in strictly limited technical and business skills. It appears that some mathematics can be profitably taught by it. It is not cheap. It does not materially affect the shortage of teachers. It limits a pupil's creativity. It is useless for the majority of subjects. If there were no organized pressure groups or vested commercial interests, the future of programmed learning in schools (as distinct from industry, business and private study) would not be bright. As things are, it is likely to be around for quite a few more years.

Book Reviews

THE EXPLORING WORD. By David Holbrook. Cambridge University Press. 15s.

THIS excellent book offers a reasoned criticism of present-day methods of training teachers of English, and proposes an alternative syllabus for such training.

It is also even more important for another reason. David Holbrook cannot detach his seemingly specialized plea from a general statement of what education is or should be.

This alone puts *The Exploring Word* in a class apart from the hundreds of books published every year dealing with a tiny segment of educational theory or practice and never bothering to ask any fundamental questions.

For those who do not know Mr. Holbrook's other books on the teaching of English[1] or his frequent letters to *The Guardian,* let me attempt a summary statement of his views, implicit or explicit. Life is, he holds, a process of maturation that should lead to a man's full awareness of his total nature, and education should give him the starting point, the stimulus and the means for this life-long quest.

As in our industrialized world the family often fails to do this and as the mass media seem designed to hinder human growth, the main task of the school must be to set the young on the path of self-discovery. This means a preoccupation with questions of value, and with moral and psychological questions. Teacher and pupil meet in the spoken, and to a lesser degree in the written, word.

Three forms of experience combine to make this main task of education possible: the teacher's own awareness of himself and his search for understanding; the pupil's experience as revealed in his questions, his creative writing and his other contributions to the work of the class; and the experiences of others, greater than we, which are distilled in poetry and prose.

The creative writer is he who explores the human position, offers us new insight, and is thus a help on our way and that of our pupils. Becoming sensitive to the meaning of a poet is essentially the same process as becoming sensitive to the imaginative life of a child as expressed in his written and oral work. Exploring the work of a poet is basically the same for teacher and child, and starts with the shared experience of hearing the poem or prose passage read in a sensitive manner.

For such teaching to become possible, new methods of training teachers are obviously necessary, and are suggested in the book under review. Most if not all of the suggestions—whether they concern general aims, teachers' training or classroom practice—will be most welcome to Steiner schools.

Holbrook's personal approach to teaching with its stress on the feeling life and the moral strengthening of the pupil, its wholesome affirmation of life, its abhorrence of intellectualism, mechanization and the facile gush of the mass media, is based on modern depth psychology.

R. L.

[1] *English for Maturity, English for the Rejected,* and *The Secret Places.*

IN NEED OF SPECIAL CARE—A Venture in Curative Education By the Teachers of St. Christopher's School, Bristol. 8s. 6d.

THIS is the story of 21 years' endeavour which has flowered into a fully-fledged Rudolf Steiner curative school. It describes how the school started, the sort of children it takes, the curriculum it follows, and some results achieved.

There are chapters on the medical approach, the Class Teacher period, curative eurythmy, painting, drama, music, and crafts. In the chapter on religion it quotes the visitor who said (significantly, in view of this issue), "There doesn't seem to be any orthodox religious teaching here, and yet it is implicit in every lesson and classroom I have visited."

Workers in this field are usually so busy doing their job that little has been written about it. Yet for the many who ask about this branch of Steiner education, this readable and well-illustrated handbook should provide a valuable insight into the problems of the handicapped child.

A. J. M.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE — *The Awakening Self.*

An international anthroposophical conference, to explore the situation of the individual in the critical conditions of the world today, will be held at Michael Hall, Forest Row, Sussex, from 25th July to August 1st. For full details write to the Conference Secretary at Michael Hall.

NOTES ON OUR CONTRIBUTORS

J. Darrell. Read history at Cambridge (1925-28). Has worked at Michael Hall School since 1928, mainly as class teacher, but also takes religion, Latin and (with examination classes) history.

L. Francis Edmunds. Principal of Emerson College. Active in Waldorf education for the past 35 years. Was a teacher at Michael Hall School from 1932 to 1960, and directed the Steiner Teacher Training Course from 1935 to 1960. Founded Emerson College (an adult school based on Rudolf Steiner's concept of man) in 1962.

Peter Heathfield (45). After 12 years in commerce in London, took Home Office training course in child care. Hostel housefather and part-time teacher (1956-58) at Michael Hall School and the New School. Attended (1958-59) seminar of the Christian Community, in Stuttgart. Two years' teaching and helping to run hostel at Freie Waldorfschule at Engelberg in Germany. As "mature student" (special field: divinity) took teacher training course in London. Since 1964 primary teacher in Stevenage, Herts.

Margaret Heitler. She had to rewrite part of her article, because her teenage son, while approving it otherwise, felt she had given away too much of the plot of *The Lord of the Rings* and thus risked spoiling it for the new reader. Also has a teenage daughter. Has taken a youth leaders' training course. Lodges and boards first-year Bristol University students in a large Victorian house.

David Lanning. Joined Royal Navy on leaving school, and served mostly in submarines. In 1948 went to Oxford and read zoology. Taught at King's School, Canterbury, and then went to Michael Hall. Now teaches class 5, O and A Level chemistry, religion, and runs the school sailing club.

Joan Rudel. A graduate of Leeds University (honours English). Worked and studied for several years at Sunfield Children's Homes at Clent. Founded Peredur Home School for Maladjusted Children 16 years ago, and is co-principal with her husband, Siegfried Rudel.

David Stedman. In his fortieth year. Spent 13 of them at a Steiner school in England. Left the London School of Economics to do social work in the east end of London, and subsequently worked in the City. Now bursar of a tutorial college. Married (not to an old scholar). Edits his school's old scholars' *News Sheet*. Hobbies: writing and ruminating.

LIST OF STEINER (WALDORF) ALL-AGE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS

GREAT BRITAIN

Michael Hall, **Forest Row,** Sussex.
Wynstones School, Whaddon, **Gloucester.**
Michael House School, **Ilkeston,** Derbyshire.
Elmfield School, **Stourbridge,** Worcs.
The New School, **Kings Langley,** Herts.
Rudolf Steiner School, 38 Colinton Road, **Edinburgh 10.**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Rudolf Steiner School, 15 East 79th Street, **New York.**
Waldorf School, Adelphi College, Garden City, **New York.**
Green Meadow School, Threefold Farm, Hungry Hollow Road, **Spring Valley,** N.Y.
Kimberton Farms School, **Phoenixville,** R.D.2, Penn.
Highland Hall, 11615 Riverside Drive, **N. Hollywood.**
Waldorf School, 3600 Fairoaks Boulevard, **Sacramento 25.**
High Mowing School, **Wilton,** New Hampshire.
Detroit Waldorf School, 2550 Burns, **Detroit,** Mich.
Mohala Pua School, 350 Ulua St., **Honolulu 16,** Hawaii.

AUSTRALIA

Dalcross Kindergarten, 2 King Edward Street, Pymble, **Sydney.**
Glenaeon School, 5 Glenroy Avenue, Middle Cove, Pymble, **Sydney.**

NEW ZEALAND

Queenswood Rudolf Steiner School, Nelson St., **Hastings.**

SOUTH AFRICA

Waldorf School, 26 Park Road, Rondebosch, **Cape Town.**
Waldorf School, 24 Junction Ave., Parktown, **Johannesburg.**

Non-English speaking schools

ARGENTINE

Colegio Rudolf Steiner, Warnes 1322, Florida, **Buenos Aires.**
Colegio St. Jean, Calle Baunes 2316, **Buenos Aires.**

BELGIUM

De Vrije School, Charlottalei 29, **Antwerp.**

BRAZIL

Escole Higienopolis, Rua Job Lane, 341, **Sao Paulo**

DENMARK

Rudolf Steiner Skolen, Strandvejen 102, **Aarhus.**
Vidar Skolen, Brogardsvej 49, Gentofte, **Copenhagen.**

FINLAND

Rudolf Steiner Koulu, Lehtikuusentie 6, **Helsinki.**

FRANCE

Ecole Perceval, 5 Avenue d'Eprémesnil, **Châtou,** S. & O.
Ecole Rudolf Steiner, 22bis Rue d'Alésia, **Paris 14e.**
Ecole Libre St. Michel, 67 Rt. des Romains, **Strasbourg.**

GERMANY

Freie Waldorfschule, 3034 **Benefeld** üb. Walsrode/Hann.
Rudolf Steiner Schule, Auf dem Grat 3, 1 **Berlin 33.**

Rudolf Steiner Schule, Hauptstr. 238, 463 **Bochum.**
Freie Waldorfschule, Holler Allee 22, 28 **Bremen.**
Freie Waldorfschule, 7061 **Engelberg** üb. Schorndorf, Würt.
Freie Waldorfschule, Friedlebenstr. 52, 6 **Frankfurt.**
Freie Waldorfschule, Holbeinstr. 7, **Freiburg** 78.
Rudolf Steiner Schule, Wandsbeker Allee 55, **Hamburg 2.**
Rudolf Steiner Schule, Elbchaussee 366, **Hamburg 2.**
Freie Waldorfschule, Rudolf v. Bennigsen-ufer 70, **Hanover 3.**
Freie Waldorfschule, Friedrichstr. 64/I, **Heidenheim.**
Freie Waldorfschule, Brabanterstr. 47, **Kassel 35.**
Freie Waldorfschule, Kaiserstr. 61, **Krefeld 415.**
Freie Waldorfschule, Ockershäuser Allee 14, **Marburg 355.**
Rudolf Steiner Schule, Leopoldstr. 17, **Munich 8.**
Rudolf Steiner Schule, Steinplattenweg 25, **Nuremberg 85.**
Rudolf Steiner Schule, Amtshof, **Ottersberg** Bez. Bremen.
Goetheschule Freie Waldorfschule, Schwarzwaldstr. 66, **Pforzheim 753.**
Freie Waldorfschule, Nobiskrüger Allee 75, **Rendsburg 237.**
Freie Georgenschule, Moltkestr. 29, **Reutlingen 741.**
Rudolf Steiner Schule, Landschulheim, Schloss **Hamborn** b. Paderborn.
Freie Waldorfschule Uhlandshöhe, Hausmannstr. 44, **Stuttgart 1.**
Freie Waldorfschule am Kräherwald, Rudolf Steiner Weg 10, 7 **Stuttgart 1.**
Freie Waldorfschule, Wilhelmstr. 63, **Tübingen 74.**
Freie Schule Ulm, Romerstr. 97, **Ulm/Donau 79.**
Hiberniaschule, Holsterhauserstr., **Wanne-Eickel 468.**
Rudolf Steiner Schule, Haderslebenerstr. 14, **Wuppertal 56.**

HOLLAND

Geert Groote School, Hygieaplein 47, **Amsterdam Z.**
Vrije School, Hoflaan, **Bergen.**
De Vrije School, Waalsdorperweg 12, **The Hague.**
Rudolf Steiner School, Wilhelminastraat 43, **Haarlem.**
Rudolf Steiner School, Langebrug 87, **Leyden.**
Rotterdamse Vrije School, Vredehofweg 30, **Rotterdam-0.**
Zeister Vrije School, Burgemeester v. Tuyll-laan, **Zeist.**

ITALY

Scuola Pedagogico Steineriana, Via Francesco Sforza, **Milan.**

NORWAY

Rudolf Steiner Skolen, Villavei 5, **Bergen.**
Rudolf Steiner Skolen, Flyvn. 2, **Oslo 3.**

SWEDEN

Järna Waldorfskola, Logsjovagen 19, **Järna.**
Kristofferskolan, Danderydsgatan 4, **Stockholm C.**

SWITZERLAND

Rudolf Steiner Schule, Engelgasse 9, **Basel.**
Rudolf Steiner Schule, Eigerstrasse 24, **Bern.**
Rudolf Steiner Heimschule, **Chamby-sur-Montreux.**
Heimschule Schlossli, **Ins,** Bern.
Bergschule Avrona, 7553 **Tarasp.**
Rudolf Steiner Schule, Plattenstr. 39, **Zürich.**

RECOMMENDED READING

L. F. EDMUNDS
Rudolf Steiner Education—the Waldorf Impulse 10s. 6d.

A. C. HARWOOD
The Way of a Child 10s. 6d.

ROY WILKINSON
Questions & Answers on Rudolf Steiner Education 4s.

URSULA GRAHL
The Wisdom in Fairy Tales 3s.

F. VON BOTHMER
Gymnastic Education 2 *vols.* (Illus.) 24s.

M. SCHINDLER
Goethe's Theory of Colour (Illus.) 45s.

E. M. GRUNELIUS
Early Childhood Education & the Waldorf School Plan 11s. 9d.

WERNER GLAS
The Waldorf Approach to History 8s. 6d.

H. VON BARAVALLE
Geometric Drawing & the Waldorf School Plan 13s. 3d.
Teaching of Arithmetic & the Waldorf School Plan 20s.
International Waldorf School Movement 13s. 3d.

R. HAUSCHKA
Nutrition 55s.

catalogue of books by Rudolf Steiner and other related authors on application.

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38 MUSEUM STREET
LONDON WC1

T. G. Norris & Son Ltd., 4 Carmelite Street, London, EC4

Steiner Schools Fellowship

Constituent Schools:

Michael Hall, Kidbrooke Park, Forest Row, Sussex

Elmfield School, Love Lane, Stourbridge, Worcs.

The New School, Kings Langley, Herts.

Michael House School, Heanor Road, Ilkeston, Derbyshire

The Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School, 38 Colinton Road, Edinburgh

Wynstones School, Whaddon, Gloucester

Among other interests. the Fellowship is also responsible for the following educational activities:—

The Teachers' Training Course

The financing of Rudolf Steiner Educational Conferences

The publication of "Child and Man"

The translation and publication of educational literature

Educational exhibitions and lectures

Legal and administrative matters concerning the Steiner method of education