

Mr. Tubbs's excellent architectural exhibitions might be the model here. The painter's method of work should be illustrated by a series of exhibits, together with integrating captions, culminating in examples of finished pictures, and including the work of some good Sunday painters. Such an exhibition, in making certain facts about painting clear and understandable, would do much for amateur artists in the army and would help a much wider public to form more constructive judgments of painting.

SELECTED NOTICES

God and Evil. By C. E. M. Joad. (Faber. 8s. 6d.)

Man the Master. By Gerald Heard. (Faber. 22s. 6d.)

DURING times of distress and war, it is natural that people should re-examine the values on which their lives are based, and seek for better ones. The values of the modern world in which we live have failed to prevent two world wars happening within twenty years. The political solutions of political problems involve us in fighting the war and in, perhaps, being prepared to support revolutions in which there will be more mass murder. Therefore many people today, whether or not they accept violence as necessary, try to look outside the political process in which we are involved, to some system of values on which to found a less chaotic world.

In general there is today an awakening of 'spiritual awareness'. This is a vague term for a pretty vague awakening. One of the symptoms of awakening which I myself do *not* find, is a general return to past values, in particular to Christian ones. There are signs of this amongst the intelligentsia, but not among more ordinary people. Why?

People look back on the past and recognize that it was more well ordered than the present, though there were certainly wars and much misery. They attribute the comparative peace of the past, however, not so much to 'Christian values', as to lack of modern scientific inventions for killing, and, perhaps also, to a state of mind which was in some respects less ruthlessly commercial and materialist. For most people, a return to the past stands for something negative (lack of tanks and aeroplanes) rather than for something positive (churches and Christian values). It is only a small section of the intelligentsia who are seriously concerned with 'traditional values'. If these values are of importance to us in the future, the responsibility, then, of the few people who are so concerned is considerable.

There might be a religious revival, if many people were conscious of the following situation: that they had forsaken the one and true God for false gods and that instead of worshipping in Church they worshipped a golden calf. They are perhaps a little penitent about the golden calf (though they suspect their neighbours of being more devout and successful worshippers

than they themselves); but they are not conscious of having betrayed God. On the contrary, they suspect the good faith of those who believe in God and they probably regard their own leanings towards belief as a form of weakness. Why, again? Not because they believe in 'the values of science' as opposed to 'Christian values', but because they do not believe that they can attain knowledge of any part of reality whose existence cannot be proved by science. They do not, probably, believe that God has been disproved, but neither do they believe that His existence has been proved, by science. The scientist today is in the position of the doctor in the Temple who knows as much as is to be known of the ultimate nature of existence. To the ordinary man or woman, it is not enough for the doctor to say now that he can't prove that God doesn't exist. He must definitely provide God with a Life Certificate, if there is to be a popular religious revival. A weighing up of the pros and cons, with a slight tendency to accept the pros for subjective reasons, of the kind that Joad provides in his new book, is not enough.

Intellectuals often feel a need for discipline in their lives, because they find that they are incapable of dealing with their own freedom. The autobiographical part of *God and Evil* is interesting in this respect: without a belief in God, Joad found himself incapable of discovering reasons for restraining his appetites, and singularly lacking in a sense of guilt. This seems to me a little unusual, because I find that one's relationship with other people provides one with very good reasons for behaving considerately and even virtuously, and the feeling that I have betrayed the trust that others put in me gives me many pangs of conscience a day. I mention this, because it seems to me sensible, and because I can scarcely understand anyone not feeling it. One's lack of virtue is a strain on those who love one, and it adds, even if very slightly, to the difficulties of all one's contemporaries.

Poor people do not feel the same need of discipline as the intelligentsia, because they are pretty well disciplined from an early hour in the morning until late at night by their environment. If they are unemployed and therefore in a sense 'free', they blame the social system, and established religion gets some of that blame.

The majority of people, in their humble ignorance, demand, as people have always done in the past, a basis of literal truth, guaranteed by the learned men of their time, before they accept metaphysical mythologies on which to build their values.

It is only for intellectual people that the myth, and the values and order based merely on the myth, are all-important. People who say that they are Christians because they accept the 'Christian myth', or because they think that, as one recent writer puts it, 'all other things being equal, a Christian writer should write better poetry than a non-Christian'; these are 'highbrow' in a sense which certainly distinguishes them from the majority. For them Christianity is true because it enables them to order their lives, because it gives them an insight into their fellow beings which they lack from experience, and an understanding of human history far greater than is provided by a political theory, or by scientific doubt. They require a hypothesis. The meaning of the fable is more important to them than the question whether it is literally true.

There is, however, a difference between religious and other fables. Religious teachers demand (to a varying extent certainly) that one should believe their fables not only metaphorically but also literally. To some minds this does not seem to offer any difficulty. If Christian values appear to them higher than those of 'Communists, the B.B.C. and Mass-Observers' (to paraphrase another recent writer), then they believe in all that Christians are expected to believe. To other minds, this presents an insuperable difficulty. If *Macbeth* were Holy Scripture instead of a fable of great moral truth written by a poet of genius, then we would be expected to believe literally in the witches, the ghosts, and Banquo's ghost. Moreover, scholars and critics, instead of trying to explain and correct the text from a literary viewpoint, would do so from the point of credibility. This attempt to reconcile moral truth with literal fact would of course consider the poetry of the play as less valuable than its claims to be historically true. At the same time, *Macbeth* would have an added significance for millions of people, because they would believe that it was an account of something which had really happened.

It seems to me that the moral truth of religion provides those values which we must distil from the past and inject into the creed of the future on which we base our institutions. The trouble is, though, that the necessity of doing this is not apparent to people unless they believe the myth to be literally as well as poetically true. Intellectuals tend to ignore this important fact. C. E. M. Joad, in devoting so much of his book to discussing the question of the existence of God, therefore performs a real service. Yet these arguments tell us more about the existence of Joad than of God. Joad first of all deals with the reasons for and against the existence of God; the result of this argument is really inconclusive, but he at least succeeds in demonstrating that God has not been disproved by science, so he is therefore free to choose to believe in Him. Having chosen to believe, he then chooses what sort of God to believe in. He arrives, for example, at the conclusion that he is 'unable to believe that God is a person' in the sense of the word that much Christian doctrine entails. He is unable to believe this, not because of his knowledge of God, of which he has none, but because of his knowledge of the way in which his own mind has been conditioned by science, by anthropology, and by the reasoning faculty being 'too much on the alert'.

It may be objected to Joad's arguments that for him to believe in God at all is such a jump outside the province of science and logic that he is hardly in a position to apply his reasoning faculty to the definition of God. What he does is arbitrarily to accept the idea of God and then to apply the limitations of his own reasoning to this proposition. The theological critics who have discussed his book say, with sensible confidence, 'having gone so far, we expect Dr. Joad to go much further'.

Sometimes Dr. Joad's logic leads him into absurd situations. The passage in which he protests against Christ's 'anti-intellectual bias' is an example. Obviously he has not the slightest idea what Christ meant by telling people to 'become as little children'. He definitely did *not* mean 'Only the boys in the first form get into the Kingdom of Heaven. No professors admitted.' A variation on this Christian theme is contained in Wordsworth's *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*.

Experience of beauty, appreciation of art, recognition of virtue in other people, seem to Dr. Joad to be forms of religious experience. At the end of the book there is a passage in which he describes the beauty of Lincoln Cathedral, and the sense of majesty which it arouses in him. 'For what was the faith felt? By what were the emotions aroused?' he asks. The answer seems to be either by the sense of a reality which is God, or by nothing at all.

Surely there is another answer to these questions. The æsthetic sense can be aroused without its proving either that there is a God, or alternatively, that 'there is nothing worshipful, nothing worthy of our reverence and awe', in a universe which 'contains nothing of the sacred or of the sublime'. It occurs to me that there are several incontrovertible truths about life which are always worthy of reverence and awe, without their having to prove anything. I think that Joad is wrong if he thinks that the æsthetic sense is a form of the religious sense. A point about the æsthetic sense is often, surely, that it simply asserts existence.

The following facts about existence are impressive enough to fill the minds of non-Church goers, I feel:

(1) The situation of humanity in relation to the universe. This involves us in considering the relationship between life limited in time, of human beings who cannot think of existence except in terms of having an end and a beginning, to the universe of which it is equally impossible to conceive either the beginning or the end.

In other words, existence itself, quite apart from life, is a supreme mystery, because it is impossible for us to imagine non-existence, and yet we are constantly measuring our own lives against this timeless universe.

(2) Human life, and the deep involvedness of the lives of human beings one with another, and with the past; the crucial need of humanity for love, and the great misunderstandings caused by the breaking up of life into separate personalities and separate consciousnesses.

It seems to me that to indicate the above facts is sufficient to account for the sense of awe. These facts of existence are known to everyone and they are the instruments on which artists play, undoubtedly. They are also the realities on which all religions are based. Amongst other things, God is the name for an existence whose beginning and end are equally impossible to imagine.

The religious sense derives from our sense of our position in the universe, and the moral sense from our need of love. The Church has far more truths to say about all this than any individual can possibly say. That is why, in a way, Joad's preoccupation with the question of God's existence, and his lack of understanding of the teaching of the Church, makes his book a little superficial. All the same, it bothers me that the hypothetical mythology and imagery set up by religious thinkers in order to explain man's position in the universe has to be taken literally, and that one is expected to know the truth about things of which it is obviously impossible to know the final answer.

Joad is very worried about evil. As many people today do not even believe in the existence of evil, this is interesting. He tends to identify evil with pain. Pain is certainly sometimes evil (when it inhibits moral growth), but was Beethoven's deafness evil?

When we leave Joad for Gerald Heard, we begin to feel a respect for the

dogmatic side of religions. Religion deals with such fundamental mysteries and makes such daring assertions that it is a danger in the hands of enthusiastic individuals. Such individuals are liable to become heretics, and although they may discover particular truths, once they break away from the central doctrine of traditional teaching, they certainly fall short of it in many respects, and the more they consider themselves divinely inspired, the more dangerous they become.

Gerald Heard has an extremely heretical mind. He is essentially religious, and he is completely devout. His convictions are so deep, and his crusading zeal so fervent that there are no historic or scientific facts that he will not twist to illustrate his preachings. The world of phenomena and of knowledge exist for him simply as a paintbox of colours to be arranged at will to paint his Message with the most dazzling possible brightness. A typical Gerald Heard argument is the following: he wants to prove that the Dictators will Fail. At the same time he is a pacifist, so he has to ignore the various armies, navies and air forces which are at present helping them to do so. He therefore says that the Dictators will fail because, in order to increase their own efficiency, they have to have great numbers of technical experts: now these experts in acquiring technical knowledge will also be in a position to judge the phoney political creeds of the Dictators. So the Dictators will be hoist with the petard of their own technical advisers.

However, if allowance is made for the many careless and exaggerated statements in this book, and occasional flights of fantasy (e.g. 'There is a real danger that the consistent pacifist . . . will be summoned and requested to help save the State'), there are interesting and important ideas. Gerald Heard sees one thing clearly which politicians and most other people fail to see. That the world has reached a stage when it is not enough merely to introduce social improvements, and changes on the political scene, but when man himself has got to take a great step forward in consciousness. Heard's theory is that this will happen through the emergence (already taking place) of a type of man willing to submit himself to a discipline which will make him a 'seer'. The point of this discipline is that he will become detached from the aims of wealth and power, and he will be in touch with the subconscious.

The idea of a new priesthood of men who are willing to concern themselves with government, but who are not caught up in interests of power and wealth, is suggestive. The trouble with Heard, in his books at any rate, is his vagueness. Although he talks about 'an emergent type' he does not give a single living example of such a person. Reading the book, one has the impression that an esoteric type of pacifist is growing up in America who is compensating for a sense of his own inferiority caused by being outside the war by developing a cult of his own world-importance.

The work of several recent artists illustrates much of Heard's thesis. The chief symptoms of this kind of art are: (1) An anticipation of the complete breakdown and disorder of existing social systems. The surrealists have certainly expressed this. (2) The search for a non-personal, non-individual human type which yet is expressive of human suffering, aspiration and love. This type of art goes much deeper than surrealism, which exists really on the level of sensational headlines in the press. These inhuman-human faces of a

passionate, suffering, unconscious humanity 'waiting to be born' are present in the recent work of Picasso, and in the drawings of Henry Moore.

However, artists are not political leaders, and Heard is right in thinking that politics need some kind of leadership by men who are not merely in touch with political parties and economic arrangements, but also with the subconscious needs of humanity. The politician-who-does-not-think-only-in-political-terms is needed (I do not mean the National Government candidate who Stands above Party). Heard is probably right in thinking that such a non-political politician would also require a special kind of self-discipline, since his function must really be selfless in a way in which men have forgotten to be for several generations.

Unfortunately, though, Heard himself does not seem to have discovered any such discipline. If he had, I feel that his mind would work more clearly than it does either in *Man the Master* or the interesting little interpretation of Christ called *A Dialogue in the Desert*. His proposal for an immense caste system of seers, technicians and artists, and workers, is peculiarly horrible to me. In this new world, the seers are completely ascetic, the workers work and have sexual intercourse. It seems to me that a little manual labour and sexual intercourse amongst the seers might bring them to their senses. At the end of *A Dialogue in the Desert* the Christ-Heard hero says: 'I know that my mission is not to a sect of eremites but to ordinary mankind.' One of the lessons of the modern world surely is that if one's mission is to ordinary mankind, one can only have one of two things to say to them—'learn to be free', or 'learn to be a slave'. The sanity of the world rests ultimately on our being able to achieve the freedom of the majority without all past values being destroyed in the process.

STEPHEN SPENDER

LA BONNE CHÈRE EN ANGLETERRE

'A CONCISE ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF GASTRONOMY'¹ was a brave and, but for the War, timely undertaking on the part of the Wine and Food Society. Qualifications will follow, but it is just to call the achievement brave too, from an estimate of the first five volumes now on sale; and to applaud without hesitation the typographical performance of the Curwen Press.

Doubtless some original announcement proposed the scope of the Encyclopædia; but no existing sub-title explains the whole work, and perhaps its why and how are best indicated by an oblique statement: of the public it will reach. At one end is the Silver Ladle pier-party. Readers of current cooking literature will know what is meant: there is apt to be blue blood, roguishness and whimsical pictures. 'Lady Ada Random's cook told me, while she was plunging a poor live lobster into boiling water (such low forms of life feel *nothing*, but it does seem dreadful), how she makes her superb *potage*

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