

SKILLS OF DISCERNMENT

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(From a paper given to an Education Session of the World Assembly for Moral Re-Armament, Caux, Switzerland, July 1977 and published by Grosvenor Books.)

We wish to acknowledge our thanks to Grosvenor Books, 54 Lyford Road, London SW18 3J.I for kind permission to print this version of Dr. Waddy's paper.

Discernment, say the dictionaries, is keenness of perception, insight, the capacity to discriminate, to form judgements. It comes from a Latin word, *cernere*, to *sift*. It is what happens when you separate wheat from straw, gold from sand, and also when you distinguish good from bad.

Discernment implies a situation where the answer is not obvious: a half-light, a foggy landscape where visibility is poor. Today we live in the midst of such situations. To train the human faculties capable of exercising such discrimination, for use in a confused and troubled world, is a neglected side of education.

This was the conviction of a group of educators, from Europe and also from the Third World, who asked me to prepare a paper on the subject. Many of them in their professional work had some experience of strengthening the natural inner insights: the promptings of conscience, of warning, of direction. They wanted to review the possibilities of giving exercise to these elementary responses, in such a way that they be linked with a living faith and a life purpose. My paper was to provide background for these discussions.

I wrote it after four months spent in six Mediterranean countries — close to the homelands of all three monotheistic faiths. I drew on the experience of responsible men and women — in cabinet, in office, in school and university. They were living under great tension, and many of them voiced a sense of need, of inadequacy for tasks beyond the scope of their own foresight and experience. They left me with a penetrating question. How can we increase our ability to draw on a wisdom and discernment greater than our own?

Much could be added to this paper: from the wisdom of the East as well as from the monotheistic faiths; from the dissident's cell, the doctor's consulting room, the inventor's laboratory; from the negotiating tables of statesmen and industrialists; from classroom and home, and above all from the workaday experience of countless men and women in every walk of life. There is heartening evidence of an acceleration and a deepening in the search for a true discernment.

At the same time the factors militating against acceptance of the simple, straightforward practices of faith appear also to be on the increase. Today, the denials of the cynics combine with the distortions of the fanatics to discredit the sources of courage and right conduct on which man is privileged to draw, and which are part of his birthright. The strident claims of the apparently *mis*-guided make it all the more urgent that the proper equipment of heart and spirit — as well as intellect — should not be neglected.

Friendly Third World critics, such as the African statesman and poet Leopold Senghor, diagnose the malaise of our western societies in terms of "swollen heads" and "shrunken hearts". The coming of the computer revolution is likely to increase rather than lessen this imbalance. To redress it, it is important that thought and care be given to fostering qualities of character at present underestimated. The need is more acute, as the moral climate becomes harsher. The outline I have prepared may, I hope, play some part in the development and interchange of ways, new and old, to feed the hearts and spirits of the coming generation.

Powers of Perception

Man is richly endowed with perceptive powers: not only the senses that touch the material world, but others more profound that probe the deeper levels of reality. Neglect of these powers — not least in the field of education — has left millions spiritually illiterate. But in recent years there has been a remarkable change of attitude towards man's inner powers of

perception. On the one hand, there is a growing sense of need, an acknowledged hunger for a wisdom and direction beyond our own. On the other, "science" and "religion" — so often and so falsely set at enmity by the mechanical materialism of the nineteenth century — are no longer in facile contradiction, and are seen to offer insights into reality which complement each other.

I mentioned the question of "skills of discernment" to a young scientist. He said, "What an important subject. The inner promptings which men experience have been explained as the results of a rational brain storing up all it learns and processing the results. But it has long been debated whether there is some outside force pushing in, helping the process along." He put in simple terms one of the major shifts of thinking today.

Before he died, Arnold Toynbee published with others a book on *Life after Death*.¹ Reviewing it, *The Times* said, "The chief surprise is the recent convergence of the mystic and the physicist. The materialism which was the legacy of the nineteenth century is now largely untenable. We seem to be entering an age when the feeling of mystery is no longer confined to the religions, and begins to reappear in the sciences." Many scientists could be quoted in support of this: Sherrington, Hardie and Koestler among them.

It looks as if the sharp division between the material and the spiritual which has structured the thinking of the West for centuries past is disappearing. Reason and revelation, which parted company in an age dominated by science, may yet reach a rapprochement. Some scientists are also mystics: for instance, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Harvard-trained Doctor of Science as well as Sufi. He speaks of science as embracing the qualitative aspect of things, as well as the quantitative, and he reaches out towards (lie "travail of thought" needed, he says, "to find once again a sacred foundation for science itself."²

The scientist's probing and the mystic's vision are not so far apart as we used to think. The ordinary person like myself, however, seeks a simpler range of experience, of attention to the "inner voice", the guidance of God. This is an area of personal experiment, in which each individual is privileged to find his or her own way. No one can hear God's word in your heart for you. But this is not all there is to say. It is a challenge to a person like myself, who started the practice of a morning quiet time as a young graduate and has continued it through fifty years of strenuous working life, to think out what that first hour of (lie day is meant to hold. And beyond this, its relevance to the affairs of men and nations. If one believes in God, how is the wisdom and love of the Creator of the world to find its way into the actions of men? Is a willing heart, open before God at the beginning of the day, one of the channels through which this mighty process can take place?

My own experience has been of a very ordinary nature. It has centred in the use of that unemotional hour in the morning when, like it or not, one has to get up. No tongues of flame, no flashing lights; the cooling and direction of passion, rather than the rousing of it. I have lived a normal life, with personally little of the dramatic or traumatic to report. Perhaps the normality of the sense of inner direction that has accompanied it is the notable point. For this unromantic experience has been lived in circumstances far from ordinary.

The events of the past decades have been extraordinary in every way: the terrors of war, the fall of empires and the rise of nations; the struggle of ideologies, the gathering speed of communications, the shattering of known securities. My generation have undergone a rapidity of change greater than any other in history, and the stress on the human spirit has been great: witness the soaring figures of suicide, alcoholism, drug-taking, divorce.

Through all the varied conflicts of these years, I can say that the inner experience of God's guidance, and the pattern of life it represents, have made sense. In air raid shelters and food shortage, in company and isolation, in professional work and household chores, in the humdrum and the hair-raising, the way of life that I chose when I was twenty-two has proved to be valid. It has never been easy, but it has worked. It has a good record of durability in the harsh tests to which the turbulence of the twentieth century has put it.

We live in a world where numbers are spiritually deprived. Neglect of the normal produces the abnormal. It should be normal living for people to take in a healthy mental and spiritual diet. Mind and spirit need to be treated with as much respect as the body: to be fed, cleaned, exercised, nourished. Instead of this, what do we find? A steady intake of dirt and depression leads to strange forms of revulsion. Professor Theophil Spoerri talks of people who "hate what is ordinary and turn to dangerous ways of escape into the extraordinary."³ Many today are left without hope, without purpose, and without the equipment for a healthy discernment into what goes on around them. Then rescue work is needed: but the real answer lies in developing the skills of discernment that are essential and enriching to a normal life.

In this paper I shall indicate three areas of perception where training has been shown to enhance the powers of the individual.

1. The capacity to listen.
2. The sense of right and wrong.
3. The sense of purpose.

Listening

The capacity for speech is rightly regarded as one of the distinctive characteristics of *homo sapiens*. The twin capacity for listening, for absorbing words and meaning, is at least as important and has received less attention. To hear is to perceive with the ear. To listen (says the dictionary) is to pay attention, to make an effort to hear. This is a basic skill, capable of the most subtle development.

Listening is important professionally. A headmistress who became a pioneer of social work in her country, Malta, found that she needed to develop her capacity to take in what the other person was saying. In re-training, one exercise used was 'a three-sided discussion. The first person spoke on a controversial topic for three minutes. The second repeated what was said. The third commented on the accuracy of the repeat. Not until Number One was satisfied that her argument had been fairly understood, could Number Two have her say. At first this took some time. The tendency to distort, and to put forward one's own view, were delaying factors.

The convener of a varied group of thirty, from a number of Mediterranean countries, made the same point. "There is just one thing we need to do. Listen to each other. I ask you to give your whole attention to what each one says. Then we shall find ourselves of one mind." Judging by the ripple that went round the room, I was not the only one who had been thinking more of what I was going to say myself, than of what was actually being said by the person speaking.

The capacity to take in what the other person is saying is an essential element in all relationships. I suppose the most widely felt division in the divided human family is that between *them* and *us*. One universal attribute of *them* — whoever *they* may happen to be — is that they do not listen. They are unable or unwilling to hear what *we* want to say. This is an irritant in every single dispute. Children say, "I cannot talk to my parents, they never listen to me." Parents say the same. So do management and labor. Each side in international disputes says, "We try, we make reasonable proposals, but there is no response." Black and white, American and Russian, Arab and Israeli, at least have this in common.

Rare indeed is the ability to give full attention to an opinion that differs from our own. An official from a much criticised country said, "We do not expect you to agree with us, but we do wish you would give us a hearing." The willingness to consider different points of view is at the heart of democratic practice. A Senator, who has chaired innumerable committees in his country, found on several occasions after speaking in favour of one alternative that a subsequent speaker persuaded him to the contrary. He astonished the public by voting against his own speech. As chairman, he found that if he listened to what each person honestly thought was best, the committee usually reached a consensus on the necessary action.

Training in a respect for other people's opinions and customs can start at an early age, and where there are mixed communities — as today in Britain's cities — it is vitally important that it does so. A plea for this comes from an experienced Manchester teacher, Mr. Habibur Rahman, Chairman of the Manchester Muslim Parents Association. "When you talk with your neighbours of a different culture, make sure you tune in to the same frequency. If you are to understand, and be understood, you must find the same wavelength."

The importance of silence to the spirit of man is widely recognised, yet many grow up deprived of it and therefore afraid of it. Many parents and teachers realise the importance of an experience of silence for children. The capacity to be quiet and still is essential for the most sensitive forms of listening, for instance the appreciation of music. A piece of modern music which I heard was written for five wind instruments. Each of the short movements consisted of a few notes, followed by a long pause. The sounds were a frame for the silence. It was an original idea. And silence itself is a frame, a setting in which the whispers of the heart can make themselves heard. Silence is the condition for the inner promptings to reach the conscious mind of man.

If this seems strange to modern, western man, it is because he has forgotten his heritage. Laurens van der Post writes of the tribes of bushmen in the Kalahari Desert. He says that

these almost vanished "first people" of Africa have their voices: the "tap-tap" in their hearts, and the sound of the stars. "Can't you hear them?" his Bushman interpreter asked. "Do listen to what they are crying. Come on! You are not so deaf that you cannot hear them."⁴ One is impelled to think that the capacity deeply implanted in man for communication with the divine is an instrument of greater subtlety than any radioscope. It remains one of the most mysterious and least explored aspects of human nature, whether it "hears" the sound of the stars, the promptings of conscience, the warnings of danger, the "still, small voice" that spoke to the Prophets, or opens the mind to new truths as some scientists — Einstein among them — have thought.

Every religious tradition respects this inner voice in the heart of man. But no study of the deepest manifestations of man's power to listen can afford to neglect the prophets of the monotheistic religions. From Abraham onwards, throughout the Old Testament and the New, there is a wealth of teaching and experience concerning the ways in which God makes His will known to men. In the Qur'an there is a clear distinction between the direct "inspiration" given to the prophets, and the leading or guidance which everyone has the capacity to receive — and the duty to pray for. Strong words are said in all three holy books on the fate of those who refuse to listen.

There is a definite relation, too, between our ability to hear our neighbour and to hear the word of God. St. John says we cannot expect to love God, whom we do not see, if we do not love our brother whom we do see (1 John 4:20). In the same way, the person who is too self-absorbed and inattentive to listen to his neighbour is no more likely to pay attention to the inner voice in his heart. Training in either form of listening will help the other.

The Sense of Right and Wrong

The clearest promptings in the heart of man are those of what is generally known as conscience. Some of the cleverest brains of this and earlier centuries have done their best to argue away this sense in man that some things are right, and some wrong: that there is a straight path from which he deviates at his peril. But conscience is a fact of life, a rudimentary discernment in the human heart. Every human society has framed some rules which are partly an extension of this sense of right and wrong. The point I want to make is that this process of lawmaking is essentially an advance in liberty, not in restriction. It extends the range of man's capacity to think and feel and act. Take the Ten Commandments, for instance. A society in which murder and adultery, robbery and envy, go unchecked is a very restricted one for the individual. He has to spend much of his time on protecting his life, his wife and his property. If the commandments which deal with these matters (numbers six to ten) are respected, he will be much freer to explore the service of God and his neighbour, with which numbers one to five are concerned.

If a man has no code of conduct he is confused by every petty decision. For a full and healthy life, man needs some standards to which, if even for his own self respect, he adheres. Every great religion supplies such guide-lines. Moses was given the Ten Commandments. Christ taught the Sermon on the Mount. The Qur'an calls on man to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. The Buddha taught the Eight-fold Path.

Personally, I have found the summary of the Sermon on the Mount, under the headings of Absolute Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness and Love, a simple and invaluable test. Hard though it sometimes is to discern the right course of action, I dare not treat these values as relative, otherwise the compromises and twists my devious mind can suggest are innumerable. Relative to what? To other people's conduct? To variations of affluence or poverty, security or danger? We are dealing with something deeper and more lasting than any circumstance. These four standards of conduct represent universal moral values held in common by all the great faiths. They went into my head like a bullet when I first heard them — I was twenty-one — and argue as I might I could never get them out again. If my conscience is uneasy — a not infrequent occurrence — I refer back to them to pin-point what has gone wrong.

But they are more than a reference point. They are pointers along the road to a new society. A world in which they become the norm will be a very different place. For one thing, corruption will disappear. For another, it will become normal to think of the other person's needs as at least as important as one's own. Even these two obvious possibilities open the way to settling quite a number of difficult questions.

The rebellion against conscience goes very deep. Here is a passage which relates conscience to what happened on Good Friday. "That day's deeds are a revelation of all that guides men into sin. No evil has ever happened which does not originate in this will of men to

slay their conscience and extinguish its light. The events of that day do not simply belong to the annals of the early centuries. They are disasters renewed daily in the life of every individual. Men to the end of time will be contemporaries of that memorable day ... The same darkness will be theirs until they are resolute not to transgress the bounds of conscience." That assessment is not by a Christian. It is the insight of a Muslim writer. Dr. Kamel Hussein, in *City of Wrong*,⁵ his remarkable study of the motives of men who could bring themselves to decide to do away with Christ.

Professor Spoerri describes the "inner compass" in the heart of man, with its four compass points of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love. The promptings and thoughts that come into our minds need to be referred to this yardstick of conscience. To keep the lines of communication clear, there must be a regular putting right of what is wrong, a purifying of motive; a moral centre. The exercise of conscience is one of the most essential areas of training.

The Sense of Purpose

Some form of rudimentary sense of direction is, I believe, observable in the most primitive forms of life. But in man we find this developed to a very high degree. He is capable of forming a life purpose and pursuing it against great odds. How is such a purpose formed? For lack of it, people live small and boring lives, and walk down dead-end roads. They may even lose the will to live. The psychologist Viktor Frankl⁶ based his work on his experience in Nazi death camps. Under terrible stress, he says, those who had some sense of purpose survived. Those without any aim died.

It is one of the mysteries of modern life that in a world so dangerous, so fascinating, so full of potential, apathy and boredom should be problems. I begin to understand this when I find myself thinking too much about myself. This is of course sometimes necessary. But on the whole I find myself a narrow and depressing topic: there are more interesting things to think about. For many people, their education has not provided the necessary avenues out of themselves into the lives of others and into the world. They stay inside the walls of self, and miss the fascination and the need around them. They miss their destiny, and a needy world misses the contribution they were meant to make.

With an aim comes a certain discernment as to the means of achieving it. If it is a big aim sooner or later I shall meet opposition. If it is an aim that affects the world, I shall find myself involved in the battle of ideologies that is perhaps the major feature of our times. There are a number of people with differing aims for our world, and they come into collision. Not always openly. The simplest disputes are surrounded by confusion, often because forces of ideology have another use for the dispute than settling it.

Jesus Christ expressed His aim in the Lord's Prayer. It was that God's will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. That, and nothing less, is supposed to be the life-purpose to which Christians are called. It is a universal aim, which excludes no one, and in which everyone can find a part. It cuts across many lesser, sectional aims, and threatens vested interests of corruption. It is therefore a fight, and once you engage in it you find the need to develop what the New Testament calls a sense of what is vital. A sense of purpose becomes an instrument of perception, an addition to the skills of discernment.

Discipline

We have looked at the skills of discernment in terms of listening, of conscience and of purpose. There is another ingredient to be added if training is to be effective. Discipline. The world accepts rigorous training for sport, for music, and for certain professional skills. It shies away from a similar discipline in other fields. Yet every one of the great traditions of faith calls for discipline, not least the Christian.

Prayer is one such discipline. I have stayed in many homes in various countries where the parents are regularly up before dawn for the first prayer of the day: Christian, Muslim and Hindu alike. Fasting is another. A young diplomat said to me, "I thank God I am not the slave of any habit. I feel myself a free man. Fasting is a good discipline in self-control. If I had children, I would teach them to say no to themselves, and fasting is one way of learning this." He was a Muslim. Fasting has dropped out of the practice of most western Christians. It may not be everyone's way, but we need to think out how people can become free of the compulsions of desire and greed — the drive to take what I want when I want it — which keeps many in life-long chains.

The prophets have much to say about discipline. It provides the framework in which

listening, conscience and purpose can operate. It is the road-building type of activity. Isaiah talks of building a highway for God in unpromising terrain, and says it means making the crooked straight. A great exponent of this road construction in the hearts of man was John the Baptist, whose destiny it was to prepare the way for Jesus. In the *Fatihah*, the prayer which opens the Qur'an and which is used many times a day, the Muslim prays, "Guide us in the straight path." Discipline of this kind frees the mind and will from a lot of unnecessary clutter, and enables one to go faster and farther towards a given goal. It is only in the absence of a goal that it becomes burdensome.

The Gita, too, speaks of "listening", and makes very clear the hindrances to it.

"Let him (man) give up all thought of I, of force, pride,

Desire and hatred and possessiveness;

Let him not think of anything as 'mine'...

Give up in thought to Me all that thou dost,

Make Me thy goal . . .

Thinking on me, thou shalt surmount

All dangers by My grace.

But it through selfishness thou wilt not listen,

Then wilt thou (surely) perish."⁷

Conviction that is rooted in discipline reasserts itself under stress: the onslaught of fear or passion, pain or catastrophe. Last time I was in danger I learned something about fear. It is a deep-seated warning, but it inhibits, paralyses, makes you shrink away. It is often a liar, and is a very poor guide. A sense of danger is different. It alerts you, and turns you towards the wisdom and direction you need. Most of us know stories of war-time danger, when such guidance meant survival. One man I know was in a tank when shells began to fall. Momentary panic changed to a search for God's guidance. A clear thought came. In gunnery practice, the aim is first beyond, then behind the target, then the direct hit. The safest place therefore is where the last shell fell. He and his crew zigzagged for hours — and are alive today.

Few of us go through life without at some point desiring something we cannot immediately have. It may be a possession, or a position, or a relationship with a person. If we try to manipulate or wangle our way to get it, we lose our self respect. Whether or not what we want proves to be right or wrong, the issue at stake is a different one. Are we to be absorbed and possessed by what we desire? Or are we to be free men and women? The outcome of this battle for freedom may be determined by the disciplined set of the will towards God's purposes. I learned something about this from a woman who said to me, "I cannot trust my heart. I have to search for something deeper. God is greater than my heart."

Years ago I was in conflict myself about a decision concerning my career. My excellent education had not equipped me for decision-making. Someone said, "Face honestly what your human will is, and lay that down before God. When you are willing to let it go, you will know what God's will is." I have never forgotten that prescription. People talk about the criteria for decision-making. Practice in this kind of honesty and choice, where God's will cuts across my will, is a helpful preparation for the crisis points of decision that come later. Often the willingness to let go what I want is beyond me. It needs a power greater than mine, the grace and love of God, to enable me to do so.

Catastrophe can strike a man or a family overnight. In our world thousands find themselves refugees, without home or possessions. In Cyprus in 1974- 1975 one Greek family spent thirteen months in a refugee camp. "At first we were shattered," says the father, "but we kept faith. We were sleeping on the floor, one room and thirty people: yet how rich we were, with the plus of listening. We were trying for people to regain their faith, and not to blame others. The power of God enables us to forgive. We realise that we Greeks have made mistakes also, and the Turks have suffered too."

The God Who Speaks

In recent years there has been a remarkable change of attitude towards man's inner powers of perception. Fifty years ago, in the writer's experience, the side of prayer which is "listening" was widely regarded as "dangerous" (by many religious people) or odd (by the general public). Today the practice of silence is widely cultivated, and in very varied ways — some of them strange indeed, and others unrelated to any form of faith in God. Personally, I am grateful that when the challenge of a morning time of quiet reached my needy young soul

it was in the form of a straightforward proposition, open to experiment: "When man listens. God speaks." B. H. Streeter's authoritative *The God Who Speaks*⁹ published in 1936, was one of the first of many books which have since explored the work of the Holy Spirit: not as something "way out", but as a normal part of a sane existence. Streeter dealt with the ancient truths of God's calling as a philosopher and a theologian. Meanwhile his friend Frank Buchman, initiator of Moral Re-Armament, helped to bring these same truths to life in the disciplined practice of thousands of ordinary citizens.

In the midst of all the divisions that mark our age, there are signs of a shift of emphasis towards unity, a reaching out for

integration. One of these is the ecumenical movement between men of different churches and different faiths. On other levels, scientists speculate about "a cosmic continuum of the physical and the supraphysical," and philosophers talk of the correspondence between the intimate and the global. Buchman linked the personal and the communal in a way that made sense, and provided a motive beyond self for daily seeking God's direction. "If you want the world different, the best place to start is with yourself. As I am, so is my nation." His vision was of a world governed by men who are themselves governed by God.⁹ This means not only presidents and cabinets, but the whole machinery of government: civil servants, tax collectors, police, councillors and the rest. I am optimistic enough to believe that enough people are going to accept the challenge, and pay the cost of living unselfishly, to enable nations to move in to a new era. Such a rise in the *quality* of life might help to achieve some of the miracles urgently needed in raising the *standard* of living among the poor of the earth.

To raise up such men and women, who will lead nations in the paths of righteousness and peace, is the urgent and inescapable task of education. The disciplines we have outlined are an essential part of the equipment for such leadership.

The headmistress who spoke to me about professional listening spoke also about her own time of morning quiet. "A piece of paper and a pencil is a good help. God is talking, I am listening: He and I between us, getting myself straight. Take the pieces and let God put them together. If you have a quarrel, what the Gospel says is important — go and make it up." Often busy people like her have great demands made on them, and nobody cares to feed their spirits. They need guidance about simple things, time to live. To clarify simple and obvious points may be the key to a mind at peace, which can reach wise decisions during the business of the day.

A Muslim mystic, from Alexandria, once said, "He who is negligent awakens in the morning by considering what he is

going to do: and he who is wise by considering what God will do with him." And finally I quote the insight of an early Christian writer, the great Egyptian Saint Antony. "Not at one time only did God visit His creatures; but from the foundation of the world whenever any have come to the Creator of all by the law of His covenant implanted in them. God is present with each one in His bounty and grace by His Spirit."

"Taught by the Spirit, the mind becomes our guide to the labours of body and soul, showing us how to purify them ... The Spirit has a loving partnership with the mind."¹⁰

Every single person who enters into that partnership is on the frontier of human progress and is shaping the new age.

Footnotes

¹ A. J. Toynbee et al. *Life After Death*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1976, reviewed *Times* 3/6/76

² S. H. Nasr, *The Encounter of Man and Nature*, Allen and Unwin 1968, p 15 (Paperback reprint, *Man and Nature*, The Spiritual Crisis of Modern Man, Unwin Paperbacks, 1976)

³ T. Spoerri, *Dynamic Out of Silence*. Grosvenor Books, 1976 p 11

⁴ L. Van Der Post, *The Heart of the Hunter*, Penguin edition 1983, p43

⁵ M. K. Hussein, *City of Wrong*, A Friday in Jerusalem, trans. K. Cragg, Bles, London 1959 p 3

⁶ V. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, Hodder and Stoughton, 1963

⁷ *Gita* xviii 53, 57-58, R. C. Zaehner, *Hindu Scriptures*. Everyman, Dent 1966, p 323

⁸ B. H. Streeter, *The God Who Speaks*, (Warburton Lectures 1933-5), Macmillan 1936. Among recent books, J. V. Taylor, *The Go-Between God*. SCM Press, 1972

⁹ F. N. D. Buchman, *Remaking the World*. Blandford Press 1961

¹⁰ *Letters of St Antony the Great*, trans D. J. Chitty, Fairacres, Oxford 1975pp6,2-3

Questions

1. Aids to discernment are listening, conscience and purpose. Is due consideration given to the development of these skills in present-day schools and colleges? How can we improve the education of our pupils in these areas?
2. Should such education be compartmentalised? And/or should it be integrated with other subjects?
3. What is the distinction between "hearing" and "listening"? Should, for example, "listening" be described as active, as passive or as receptive?
4. How does belief or non-belief in a God Who speaks affect one's conception of listening, conscience and purpose?
5. Many crimes have been committed by people who thought they were obeying their conscience. How can the appeal to conscience be validated?
6. How can education give children a sense of inner authority which they understand and freely accept for themselves?
7. Can we give moral guide-lines to aid in the growth of integrity and discernment?
8. How far can the word "Absolute" be justified to describe such guidelines? Conduct is often determined by what is admired — the sort of person I would like to be. Strong, brave, bold, open, attractive, friendly, capable of loving and being loved ... What diet will nourish the innate idealism of youth, and hitch their longings to a satisfying, stimulating aim?
9. Moral standards and listening to the Inner Voice are common ground for people of many faiths. What part can they play in developing mutual respect and united action? How can practice in the application of moral standards and "listening" help to bridge the gap between belief and conduct?