

kings and statesmen with ease. I need not be unduly perturbed about wearing a robe into the presence of an His Honor.

I had, I think, been immobilized partly by a sense of my own failures as a human being. Here was I, still struggling with the meaning of my own life and standing, it seemed sometimes, on dead center. How, then, did I have the effrontery to question a whole way of life that had been evolved slowly and painfully through the ages by the accumulated wisdom of mankind? How could I presume to have so much of the truth that I would defy constituted authority? What made me so certain of myself in this regard? I was not certain. But it seemed to me that if I could see only one thing clearly, it was not necessary to see all things clearly in order to act on that one thing.

One pinpoint of clarity was that it was time for man to grow out of the short pants of barbarism, of settling things by violence, and at least to get into the knee breeches of honestly seeking and trying ways more fitted to his state as a human. To take life, especially in cold-blooded, organized fashion, seems to me to be the province of no man and of no government. In the end, no government can do it—it is only men who fire guns, drop atom bombs, pierce with bayonets. If an entity called government could slay another such entity, no great harm would be done and maybe even good would come of it—at least the destruction of files of papers. My repudiation of violence is not based on any conventionally or conveniently religious motivation. I cannot say that it is against God's will, since I do not know that there is a god, nor would I be able in any case to assume that I was conversant with his will. But I do not consider, either, that men are gods, that they should determine when another man should die. I do not consider that I am capable of such judgments, either of my own volition or at the

command of others. Such behavior in others I abhor, but may not be able to affect. I *can* control my own behavior. And I do not think that my participation in stupid or immoral acts can add to my stature as an individual—I think, rather, that it might detract, take me even further afield from the discovery of myself.

It may be that most people think it necessary, if wicked and perhaps self-defeating, to build atom bombs to drop on such races of devils as inhabit Hiroshimas. We must save our skin, protect our way of life. Let me first excise the horns from my own head, since it was made, I think, for something besides butting. Besides, I cannot accept any package labeled "way of life," only those particular values which seem to me worth protecting, and I must protect them in a way which seems fitting to those values.

Suppose, though, that most citizens eagerly pay their money into the government's war chest before the tax deadline, and some sacrificially give more than their share. I have decided that this is not the best depository for the fruits of my labor. But believing as I do, I must, it seems, comply in order to uphold the system of law and to act in concert with my fellows. Holding that law can be an aid but never a substitute for individual integrity, responsibility, and perception, I want immediately to know: In concert for what? If it seems that the purpose of the united action is to create misery, cannot, in fact, have any other effect, then I must decline my part in the performance. In order for men to live together, it seems efficient for them to work out bodies of regulations. But efficiency can in no way supplant morality. Is the height of man's being obedience to the common will? I think it a higher purpose to live in a creatively oriented relationship than to adopt a slavish attitude toward rules and regulations. I think it the worst part of folly to be so