A study of Albert Schweitzer's precept of reverence for life with some implications for education
by Ronald Lane Abrell

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
Montana State University
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Abstract:
The purpose of this study was to trace, through his own writings and with reference also to the related
literature, Albert Schweitzer's concept of reverence for life as it bears upon education. The problem
involved answering the two subordinate questions: (a) uncovering the meaning of the concept of
reverence for life as developed by Schweitzer, and (b) extrapolating and setting forth the educational
implications of Schweitzer's ethic of reverence.

The documentary method was used in securing the data, and the research was limited to Schweitzer's
precept of reverence for life and the ideas that have a direct bearing on it. The study was further limited
to clarifying what Schweitzer's principle of reverence for life implies as a general educational direction
in terms of which specific educational ideas and practices can eventually be developed.

Some of the more important findings and conclusions were: 1. Education is considered as a process of
assisting the individual to discover meaning and purpose in life.

2. The ultimate end of education is individual self-perfection. Immediate ends include growth,
liberation, self-responsibility, social cooperation, studious reflection, objective intelligence, and critical
thinking.

3. As it is related to culture, education is indebted to the best of the past, is in continual interaction with
culture, and seeks to reconstruct and perfect it by focusing on the perfection of each individual.

4. In regard to curriculum, education should underscore the teaching of live students, not lifeless
subject matter. The technological and vocationalistic should not be stressed at the cost of the aesthetic,
moral, and humanistic.

5. In regard to methods, education should stress private, reflective dialogue with the individual self,
scientific inquiry or the discovery method, a tender-hearted but tough-minded Socratic model, and the
teacher-as-paradigm model.

6. Education must become more aware of the physical environment which it creates for the learner.
Architectural design should be concerned along lines that will permit more individual privacy and quiet
for contemplation of the self.

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learners and staff. Organizational design should promote an overall atmosphere which is warm,
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8. In regard to teaching, education ought to place a heavy emphasis on the teacher as a helper,
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A STUDY OF ALBERT SCHWEITZER'S PRECEPT OF REVERENCE FOR LIFE WITH SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION

by

RONALD LANE ABRELL

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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1. Education is considered as a process of assisting the individual to discover meaning and purpose in life.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

When in 1915 I outlined the new ethics of reverence for life I asked myself what its destiny would be. I thought that maybe after my death some candidate who wrote his doctoral thesis on philosophy would discover my papers and say: That's not so bad; it deserves some attention.

The school will be the way! From the time they start school, young people must be imbued with the idea of reverence for all living things. Then we will be able to develop a spirit based on ethical responsibility and one that will stir many. Then we will be entitled to call ourselves a humanity of culture.

Albert Schweitzer

The doctoral dissertations that Schweitzer hoped would be written on his central ethical principle began to appear in many scholarly fields before his death.¹ The teaching of reverence for life has been nearly as appealing to the person interested in scholarly pursuits as to the practical man of action who confronts difficulties in taking care of the needs "of those who bear the Mark of Pain".² There have been well over one hundred studies pertaining to Schweitzer and his


²Note: Schweitzer used this phrase to refer to all of those who suffer in any way.
concept of reverence for life in anthropology, sociology, psychology, theology, history of civilization, and ethics. Those who have written on Schweitzer or made extensive and favorable comments on him include such figures as Winston Churchill, Arnold Toynbee, Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Albert Einstein, Werner Heisenberg, Adlai Stevenson, W. E. B. Du Bois, Norman Cousins, Dagobert Runes, and Bertrand Russell.

Less well known persons who have written on the versatile Alsatian currently hold positions of importance in areas such as education, religion, philosophy, journalism, medicine, science, and international relations.

Schweitzer's hope that the school would be the way by which the ethic of reverence for life would reach a large public and arouse sizeable numbers to ethical responsibility has yet to be realized. A distinct gap in Schweitzerian scholarship continues to exist in the field of education. Just why this should be the case is difficult to understand for several reasons. Education was a close concern of Schweitzer's during his entire life. In his family, teachers were common; and while attending the Gymnasium at Mulhausen, and later at the Sorbonne in Paris, he lived in the homes of relatives who were educators. A major

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portion of Schweitzer's early life was spent earning doctorates in philosophy, theology, music, and medicine at the Universities of Strasbourg and Berlin. From 1901 until 1906, Schweitzer served as Principal of the Theological Seminary (Collegium Wilhelmitanum) and from 1903 until 1912, he taught theology at Strasbourg University. At the turn of the century, Schweitzer began a series of lectures on German philosophy and literature which he delivered before the "Foreign Language Society" of Paris. Throughout his long career Schweitzer continued to return to the great centers of learning in Europe to deliver important lectures on a variety of subjects.

In view of his diversified educational activities, it is remarkable that no one has drawn upon his philosophy for ideas and implications that bear upon activities of learning and instruction. While the distinguished musician, philosopher, and missionary did not write any books or essays on education as such, he eagerly accepted many invitations to speak to school children as he was convinced that the future

6 Ibid., pp. 10-110.
7 Ibid., pp. 24-26.
8 Ibid., p. 28.
Furthermore, his autobiographical writings are rich with penetrating observations about the schools he attended, about his teachers, and about teaching and learning. The Nobel Peace Prize winner of 1952 viewed himself not only as one who possessed "much schoolmaster blood" with the "soul of a schoolmaster," but also saw one of his chief aims in life as educational. In his own words, "I . . . stand and work in the world as one who aims at making men less shallow and morally better by making them think."

It was Albert Schweitzer's firm conviction that the central mission of education should be the development of thinking, reasoning, free, and ethical individuals. He was especially concerned that "in the education and the school books of today the duty of humanity is relegated to an obscure corner." While progress in correcting this shortcoming has been slow, there is a movement currently underway in education to rectify this condition. It is also significant that the

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13 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 170.

ethic of reverence for life is beginning to be taught, however unsystematically, in German, Turkish, and Korean schools. A number of colleges and schools in various countries which have taken Schweitzer's name are utilizing his thought and spirit for the moral dimension of education.

A brief perusal of the themes that dominated Schweitzer's teachings will show how relevant his philosophy is to much that is new and revolutionary in education. Schweitzer foresaw, in the decadence of civilization in the Nineteenth Century, the severe crisis that the Twentieth Century is now experiencing. In his view that civilization was following a path of decay and degeneration, he was in accord with most critics of his age, for they too had recognized signs of cultural decline and the elements of self-destruction. Unlike most critics, Schweitzer believed that the underlying cause for the crisis was the lack of true ethics and that civilization could be rescued if the ethic of reverence for life could be implemented through the educational

16 Based on personal correspondence of November 14, 1971, between Dr. John D. Regester, former professor of Philosophy at the University of Budget Sound, author of several works on Schweitzer, and sometimes visitor of Dr. Schweitzer's jungle clinic at Lambarene, and the researcher.
17 The researcher refers the reader to the writing of such critics as Oswald Spengler, Pitirim Sorokin, Jose Ortega, Carl Jung, and others.
process. At least three modern movements in education--reconstructionism, philosophical anthropology, and existentialism--spring from the realization that the current crisis centers in the loss of personal and/or communal values. Schweitzer is one of the first thinkers of the Twentieth Century to underline the need for such an orientation, even though he does not strictly fall within any of these movements.

Schweitzer's recognition of increasing violence in life and his opposition to counter-violence nurtured a life-long campaign for the cessation of all violence, "All ordinary violence produces its own violence, for it calls forth an answering violence which sooner or later becomes its equal or its superior."

The upsurge of violence in recent years has caused society to turn to education with its peaceful weapons as a possible means of controlling and eventually mastering violence. The teachings of Albert Schweitzer, who opposed violence with both words, and deeds, serve as a base from which new orientations towards human interaction could develop and have turned public attention towards the need for improved education.


Although he is seldom given credit, Schweitzer's continual concern for the preservation of natural life and his practice of reverence for all life anticipated many of the movements in Europe and America of the 1960's. The 1970's has become the Environmental Decade in the United States, and the nearly unanimous passage of the Environmental Education Act of 1970 makes our educational system responsible for environmental literacy. Enthusiasm toward respecting and preserving life through the aid of education appears to be gaining even more momentum:

President Nixon has announced a new awards program designed to stimulate high school students to undertake programs to protect the environment. The awards, with the theme, "Life--Pass It On," may be administered by each school in its own way. Environmental certificates of merit or excellence, with the Presidential seal, will be available for educational, community service, and public affairs programs.

Schweitzer was an early pioneer in working for the improvement of ethnic relations. He went to the heart of the racial problem long before other men thought or admitted that there was any problem at all. He worked in behalf of black people for some fifty-two years and at his jungle hospital in Lambarene, attracted and worked with all

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nationalities. In 1928, Schweitzer drew up a declaration of rights for
the minorities\textsuperscript{26} which preceded the "freedom explosion" and civil rights
movements by at least thirty years. Not only did he practice what he
advocated by administering to the medical needs of the Africans, but he
also taught lessons on the "brotherhood of all men" to the native chil-
dren attending the missionary school at Lambarène when time permitted.
Although belatedly, Schweitzer's concern for the elimination of con-
flicts among the races and ethnic groups is at last becoming a priority
of major importance in education. Major school systems have begun to
design new areas of study such as African Studies, Indian Studies, Black
Studies, and Ethnic Studies; are now teaching such specific courses as
"Human Relations," "Minority Groups," "Black Literature," and "Indian
Folklore;" and are celebrating Negro History Week, Spanish-American
Day, and Human Relations Month.\textsuperscript{27}

In his attempts to combine the thought of both the East and
West, Schweitzer anticipated much of what educators are now striving for
in international understanding. Today, Western educators are becoming
more interested in learning about Eastern thought in an attempt to
unify all knowledge and are making definite efforts to: (a) synthesize

\textsuperscript{26} Albert Schweitzer, "The Relations of the White and Colored

\textsuperscript{27} National Education Association, "Ideas for Teaching About
pp. 57-58.
knowledge, \(^2^8\) (b) codify knowledge, \(^2^9\) and (c) make knowledge interdisciplinary. A major problem for the educator of today is how he is to keep from becoming too narrowly specialized at a time when the knowledge explosion militates against obtaining breadth, depth, and accuracy of knowledge. Schweitzer recognized this problem in 1923 when he wrote:

> It is already noticeable . . . that education is carried on now by teachers who have not a wide enough outlook to make their scholars understand the interconnection of the individual sciences, and to be able to give them a mental horizon as wide as it should be. \(^3^0\)

Currently, educators are at work striving to bring together underlying principles of knowledge much in the same way that Schweitzer did in several of his works. Although he worked without the benefit of the computer's power of storage and retrieval, Schweitzer's *Indian Thought* was devoted to the purpose of creating a more comprehensive and perfect thought "to be shared in common by all mankind." \(^3^1\)

In the early 1920's, Schweitzer wrote of his concern for the development of collectivism, bureaucracy, and administrivia which was

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\(^3^0\) Schweitzer, *The Philosophy of Civilization*, p. 13.

\(^3^1\) C. E. B. Russell (trans.), *Indian Thought and Its Development* by Albert Schweitzer (Boston: Beacon Press, 1936), p. X.
accompanying the growth of organizations. Like many contemporary critics, he saw the effects of mass organization as impersonal and dehumanizing.

In administration, in education, and in every kind of calling the natural sphere of activity is narrowed as far as possible by rules and superintendence. How much less free in many countries is the school teacher of today compared with what he was once! How lifeless and impersonal has his teaching become as a result of all these limitations?

Not only has bureaucratization in education and attending dehumanization of learners become a topic of heated discussions and occasional grounds for student unrest, but it has also generated an entire new movement within education; namely, interpersonal relations or "Third Force" education. This movement replaces the all-too-frequent nonpersonal, "objectified", and professionalized teacher-student relationship with a personal, open, cooperative, and humanized teacher-learner relationship. This thrust in education can gain much from the man to

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32 The writer refers the reader to such critics as C. Wright Mills, Jacques Ellul, Roderick Seidenberg, Waldo Frank, Lewis Mumford, Herbert Marcuse, William H. Whyte, Jr., Aldous Huxley, David Riesman, Paul Goodman, and Erich Fromm.


whom the direct personal encounter meant so much. The face-to-face relationship was so important to Schweitzer that he was reluctant to use the telephone and telegraph when talking to another person, saying that: "I cannot speak to someone I cannot see."\textsuperscript{36}

Like many contemporary educators, Schweitzer was disenchanted with types of institutionalism which impose norms from without and breed conformity. The tendency of modern education toward "groupism" rather than individualism, toward standardization rather than differentiation, and toward the average and the common rather than the unique and individual is being challenged by numerous educators and learners.\textsuperscript{37} The "over-organization of our public life"\textsuperscript{38} and the loss of individualism due to institutional ascendancy were continuing concerns of Schweitzer. While he recognized the need for organizations, Schweitzer believed that in modern times "personality and ideas are . . . subordinated to institutions, when it is really these which ought to influence the latter and keep them inwardly alive."\textsuperscript{39} Although over-organization and the subordination of the individual have increased in many areas of public activity, there is a tendency for education to become more individually-

\textsuperscript{36} Anderson, \textit{The Schweitzer Album}, p. 109.


\textsuperscript{38} Schweitzer, \textit{The Philosophy of Civilization}, p. 16.

\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Ibid.}
centered in recent years. "Individualized instruction", "independent study", "individually prescribed instruction", and "personalized teaching" are rapidly supplementing if not altogether replacing the "group method" as an instructional technique. Many educators are now writing about and practicing what Schweitzer taught and committed to example; namely, that the subordination of the individual by the mass must be stopped.

Throughout his life, Schweitzer regarded rational thought and scientifically grounded knowledge as a foundation for one of the highest responsibilities that can be placed on man—"reverence for truth". Yet, he realized the limitations of science and was more concerned about putting evidence into action than in mere fact-finding. Always concerned with the education of the whole person, Schweitzer called for the development of both the non-rational and rational self. He saw the aesthetic, moral, and emotional self as being just as important as the scientific, rational self. Schweitzer's belief that the task of education is andragogical, not just pedagogical—in the sense that the development of the whole person, not merely intellectual growth, is the educational aim—is one which is beginning to be adopted by more and more educators. In


reaction to the widely accepted use of the scientific method as a major means for solving problems and the heavy emphasis on cognitive operations, educators are now opting for "confluent education". According to George I. Brown, confluent education:

... describes a philosophy and a process of teaching and learning in which the affective domain and the cognitive domain flow together. The term "affective"... refers to the feeling of emotional aspect of experience and learning... "cognitive" refers to the activity of the mind in knowing an object—to intellectual functioning.42

In view of Schweitzer's broad academic training in both the "hard" and "soft" disciplines, his perennial search for pure truth, his attempts to combine both subjective and objective knowledge, his continual efforts to fuse the scholarly and practical, and his ability to translate thought into serviceable action, he offers much that is pertinent to confluent or humanistic education.

Schweitzer's belief that unbridled nationalism would lead to catastrophe and that education should take a stand in favor of internationalism is now being shared by educators throughout the entire world.43 Like many contemporary educators, Schweitzer held that education should galvanize its intellectual and aesthetic resources in behalf of peace


43 See the writings of Harold Taylor, Theodore Brameld, Frederick Mayer, and Frank Klassen.
and world civilization. Always the teacher as exemplar, Schweitzer's life was living proof of his commitment to a single world civilization on the basis of a single ethical system with provision for cultural pluralism and individuality.

Finally, Albert Schweitzer's later teachings are particularly important to education as the latter is moving from a subject-centered to a problems-centered curriculum. As a social thinker, a student of comparative cultures, and an interpreter of civilization, Schweitzer set forth much that is pertinent to the major problems of our time. He consistently spoke to such problems as the rapid pace of change in nearly every area of life, the threat of war, the possibility of nuclear annihilation, the plight of the oppressed, the technologization of life, the "obstructive erudition" in scholarship, and the demands raised by students, faculties, and citizens for a greater correlation between life and education. These and other problems with which he dealt are not only receiving increased attention in the classroom, but also are forces which affect the whole conception of education itself.

It was Schweitzer's desire that his "literature, methods, conclusions, and name" would be used to facilitate education and scholarly inquiry. That he hoped others would push his reverence for life

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45 Phillips, op. cit., p. 178.
further as it relates to education is obvious—"It is my sincere wish that no scholar will stop where I have left off . . . I will expect students of the future to go further and to get a clearer vision."46

Since a singular lacuna in Schweitzerian scholarship is found in the field of education, it is the desire of the researcher to fulfill the following aims in writing this dissertation:

1. To provide a fund of knowledge for those who wish to know more about what Schweitzer's thought, with special reference to reverence to life, suggests for education.

2. To offer a work which is completely new and original to the field of professional education.

3. To produce a work which will be of value to those who seek to do something about enhancing life by means of education.

4. To stimulate further thinking, experimentation, and practice of a new general view of education based on the precept of reverence for life as conceived by Albert Schweitzer.

THE PROBLEM

The problem of this dissertation is to trace, through his own writings and with reference also to the related literature, Albert Schweitzer's concept of reverence for life as it bears upon education.

46Ibid.
A systematic approach to the solution of this problem involves answering two subordinate questions:

1. What is the meaning of the concept of reverence for life as promulgated by Schweitzer?

2. What are some of the educational implications of Schweitzer's principle of reverence for life?

PROCEDURES

Specifically, five major procedures will be used for securing data for this investigation. They are:

1. Documentary research. In spite of the fact that Schweitzer was a man of action and labored in a jungle climate that did not lend itself to writing, he must be considered a prolific writer. In fact, the literary fecundity of Schweitzer in a variety of fields is nothing short of amazing. This being the case, the central sources for this research are the basic writings of the man himself. The most fruitful sources which are relevant to the solution of the problem under

47Note: In 1965, this researcher began a concentrated effort to read the English translation of Schweitzer's books in their entirety. A little later, the writer began a search of other writings by Schweitzer; in addition, he attempted to discover and peruse commentaries by others on Schweitzer's life, work, and thought. This endeavor has taken the writer to many interesting people and places throughout the United States. The researcher has collected over one hundred documents of works by Schweitzer himself, or by someone else who has written about him.
consideration include Schweitzer's: *Memoirs of Childhood and Youth*, *Out of My Life and Thought*, *On the Edge of the Primeval Forest*, *The Teaching of Reverence for Life*, *The Philosophy of Civilization*, and *Indian Thought and its Development*. This procedure seems especially appropriate in that Schweitzer himself made it clear in 1954 how one may come to know more about him: "Read my books! No one can express the ideas of a man so well as he has expressed them himself in his writings!"

Inasmuch as the number of books and articles written about Schweitzer number well over two hundred, it seems reasonable to make use of competent secondary sources when these prove appropriate. Four secondary sources of such significance which merit special mention here are George Seaver's *Albert Schweitzer: The Man and His Mind*, Oskar Kraus' *Albert Schweitzer: His Work and His Philosophy*, John D. Regester's *Albert Schweitzer: The Man and His Work*, and *Safari of Discovery: The Universe of Albert Schweitzer* by Herbert M. Phillips.

2. Letters of inquiry to some of the persons who knew and/or worked with Schweitzer, such as his daughter Rhena, Norman Cousins, and Erica Anderson.

3. Personal interviews with those who have firsthand knowledge of Schweitzer's thinking and his work. Dr. Herbert M. Phillips, who is

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a practicing dentist in Chicago, Illinois, will be the primary source person utilized in this study.

4. A trip to the Albert Schweitzer Friendship House and Library at Great Barrington, Massachusetts, which has been recently established as the center for advancing the work and thought of Albert Schweitzer in the United States. The purpose of such a trip will be to examine Schweitzer memorabilia with the intent of discovering unfamiliar but relevant material endemic to the problem at hand.

5. Personal experience based on the researcher's attempt to practice reverence for life as expatiated by Schweitzer. Although he is aware that such an attempt can erode the objectivity of the study, the writer is willing to gamble that the consequences are likely to be the product of increased objectivity when the latter is supplemented and balanced by cautious subjectivity. As Aldous Huxley once put it, those who refuse to transcend the facts rarely get as far as the facts. To be sure, Schweitzer himself ultimately came to the conclusion that unadulterated truth is the result of both objective and subjective knowledge. This particular procedure also lends itself to the desire of the writer to produce a study in which what is written is not completely devoid of all feeling. Whether we like it or not, there appears to be truth in an old Hebrew saying which suggests that that which is written from the heart often goes to the heart. Or as Schweitzer would put it, "One must speak to the heart of the individual; only then does one feel
the power of the idea.\textsuperscript{49}

\section*{LIMITATIONS}

1. The scope of this dissertation is limited to Schweitzer's concept of reverence for life and the ideas that have a direct bearing on it.

2. The study is further limited to clarifying what Schweitzer's precept of reverence for life implies as a general educational direction in terms of which specific educational ideas and practices can eventually be developed. The study is not an effort at translating Schweitzer's concept of reverence for life into precise recommendations for various and specific educational situations. This is not to say that certain areas of educational practice will be ignored; in fact, certain areas of educational practice, such as teaching, will be used in an effort to express Schweitzer's thought along educational lines and in educational terms. Realism compels the researcher to admit the validity of the declaration of William James that a question of significance and worth can never be exact. In brief, this study attempts to focus on underlying values and assumptions in education which guide the making of more specific educational choices and decisions. The nature of the study and perhaps some justification for its thrust may be seen by the\textsuperscript{49}

\begin{itemize}
\item Anderson, \textit{The Schweitzer Album}, p. 38.
\end{itemize}
following remarks selected from the preface of one of Theodore Brameld's more recent books:

The dominant concerns of most educational spokesmen today are not usually those which I discuss in these chapters. They are concerns of emergency means much more than long-range ends. They are concerns of a practical and instrumental nature: programmed instruction is a conspicuous example. The voices of audacity and creative excitement that characterized American educational theory a quarter century or more are now muted voices. 50

DEFINITION OF TERMS

This study does not attempt a semantic analysis of the terms in Schweitzer's thought. It does stress certain key terms, which, along with other related terms in the thesis, will expedite reading and understanding. As used in this research, certain key terms are defined as follows:

Andragogy. The term andragogy is taken from the Greek word "aner (with the stem andr-) meaning man". 51 Related to, but different from, pedagogy, andragogy may be defined as the art and science of assisting human beings to learn. Andragogy goes further than pedagogy in the sense that the development of the whole person or complete Man—both individual and communal—is the central aim of education.


Differing from traditional pedagogy, andragogy gives close attention to and stresses the use of the learner's self-concept, his own reservoir of experiences, his readiness to learn, and application of knowledge.

**Civilization.** As one who knew both French and German, Schweitzer used Kultur and civilization interchangeably. He worked with and defined the term "civilization" in a primitive and general way. In Schweiter's own words: "Civilization I define in quite general terms as spiritual and material progress in all spheres of activity, accompanied by an ethical development of individuals and of mankind." For Schweitzer, civilization is universal progress with the highest value being assigned to the ethical. Specifically, he writes that:

We may take as the essential element in civilization the ethical perfecting of the individual and of society as well. But at the same time, every spiritual and every material step in advance has a significance for civilization. The will to civilization is then the universal will to progress which is conscious of the ethical as the highest value for all. In spite of the great importance we attach to the triumphs of knowledge and achievement, it is nevertheless obvious that only a humanity which is striving after ethical ends can in full measure share in the blessings brought by material progress and become masters of the dangers which accompany it.

**Education.** Unless specified otherwise, the term education as used in this study refers to the formal educational process. Formal

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education is any effort to nurture, modify, change, and/or develop human conduct or behavior in accordance with desired ends which occurs in an organized school situation.

Ethic. According to The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, this term is defined as "a principle of right or good conduct." 54

Lebensanschauung. Throughout this study, the term Lebensanschauung refers to the subjective viewpoint of any human being as to what his life means to him and what purpose he desires to give his life.

Principle. According to The Oxford English Dictionary, this term means "that from which something takes its rise, originates, or is derived; a source; the root." 55 Or, as The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language defines it in a simpler fashion, "a basic truth, law, or assumption." 56

Precept. Webster's New International Dictionary defines this


term as "a command or principle intended as a general rule of action", or "a commandment enjoined respecting moral conduct".\textsuperscript{57}

Reverence for Life. Throughout this study, the phrase reverence for life is regarded as an attitude, not a logical proposition which is true or false. As developed and committed to living example by Schweitzer, it is a single and constant attitude toward life that holds that all life is to be maintained, furthered, and elevated to its "highest value in every respect".\textsuperscript{58}

Weltanschauung. This term indicates "world-view, perspective of life, conception of things".\textsuperscript{59} As Schweitzer defines the term, it is the "sum-total of the thoughts which the community or the individual thinks about the nature and purpose of the universe and about the place and destiny of mankind within the world."\textsuperscript{60}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{58}Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 126.
\item \textsuperscript{60}Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 68.
\end{itemize}
SPECIAL CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS

Every thesis is written out of a certain anxiety; the anxiety that one is not equal to the task of doing the subject justice and the certain uneasiness that critically important areas of concern will be left untouched. This study is no exception! A study of Albert Schweitzer and his thought is at once indescribably frightening and irresistibly challenging. To strive to do justice to a man of Schweitzer's caliber is fascinating but enormously challenging for several reasons.

One reason why Albert Schweitzer's educational significance has not been dealt with to any great extent is the fact that he is generally acknowledged to be very difficult to understand. A major difficulty in understanding Schweitzer is that he writes about life as a dynamic process and concerns himself with the qualitative aspects of life, both of which do not lend themselves to a common universe of discourse. Also, Schweitzer does not concern himself with definitional problems in a way that makes for precise and accurate interpretation. In addition, there is the artistic strain in Schweitzer which manifests itself in his writings; that is, he frequently writes prose in a poetic way which tends to communicate an embellished image of life to the reader. While Schweitzer is always interested in helping the reader gain an intellectual grasp of what is being discussed, he believes that such a grasp will be strengthened if he can involve the reader in an emotional way.
Schweitzer is most anxious for the reader to get the "feel" for what he is trying to communicate. Although such an approach persistently renders conceptual understanding difficult, Schweitzer nevertheless does supply the vital material for developing a conception of life and education.

To uncover the thought of Schweitzer with accuracy is further complicated because it is frequently and disconcertingly unsystematic, is laden with overgeneralizations, contains certain prejudices, and its terminology is often emotive rather than entirely objective. Moreover, his amalgamation of subject matter areas in general—especially philosophy and religion—adds to the problem of wading through Schweitzer's jungle of ideas to the clearing of clarity and coherence. Hopefully, a trip through the thicket of Schweitzer's thought for the purpose of extracting its educational significance can be accomplished without becoming entangled and lost in his poly-disciplined forest of works.

Schweitzer's unusual versatility is particularly challenging in that few researchers are equipped with the type of background which enables them to take full and accurate measure of the man. While Schweitzer is internationally acknowledged to have made original and distinct contributions in theology, philosophy, musicology, and medicine, his works extend considerably further into such areas as history, Eastern thought, colonialism, education, world peace, atomic bomb testing, race relations, biography, autobiography, and the world of nature. As
suggested earlier, this writer will attempt to wrestle with this chal-
lenge which Schweitzer presents by focusing on only that material which
is relevant to the problem being investigated. Although he has perused
the whole range of Schweitzer's literary productions, the researcher
does not find it necessary to have an in-depth understanding of all of
the many-sided efforts of the subject to arrive at what he means by
reverence for life and what some of its implications for education are.

Finally, the secondary sources dealing with Schweitzer present
a challenge inasmuch as they tend to be written out of a prejudicial
frame of reference. While Schweitzer came neither as a High Priest nor
True Believer, many of his biographers have attempted to make a saint
of him. On the other hand, there are those who are severely and
scathingly critical of the man and his thought. Indeed, Schweitzer was
a center of bitter controversy during much of the 1950's. His own
position on the matter is quite clear as he is on record as being
unalterably opposed to hero-worship and had little time for criticism.
In his own words, "I have never bothered with criticism . . . I did
what I considered to be correct on the basis of my knowledge."61 In
order to transcend the prejudice that pervades so much of the work
about Schweitzer done by others, the researcher will: (a) use
Schweitzer's own works as much as possible, and (b) use only those

61 George N. Marshall, An Understanding of Albert Schweitzer
secondary sources which purport and, in fact, appear to be objective materials.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

Immediately following this Introduction, the second chapter concerns itself with some aspects of Schweitzer's understanding of life and the importance of education. The third chapter presents the thoughts of Schweitzer concerning reverence for life as a foundation for values. The next chapter deals with education and some fields of knowledge. The fifth chapter speaks to education and self-perfection. The sixth and final chapter is comprised of the Summary, Conclusions, and Criticisms.
Chapter 2

EDUCATION AND LIFE

What I desire above all things—and this is the crux of the whole affair—is that we should all recognize fully that our present entire lack of any theory of the universe is the ultimate source of all catastrophes and misery of our times, and that we should work together for a theory of the universe and life, in order that thus we may arrive at a mental disposition which shall make us really and truly civilized men.

The ultimate knowledge that we strive to acquire is knowledge of life.

Education consists in this, that the entire domain of human knowledge is comprehended in its basic outlines and that this should form a single world view bringing the individual into conscious relationship with his surroundings and determining his opinions and his activities.

Albert Schweitzer

Albert Schweitzer repeatedly stresses in The Philosophy of Civilization that education obtains its reality and purpose from its connection with life. It is from life—with its promising possibilities as well as its inhibiting conditions—that the art and science of education is generated to help man systematize his activities, enlarge his experience, understand himself, and cooperate constructively with others toward mutual improvement.¹ For Schweitzer, any discussion of education must arise from deep reflection of the purpose and meaning of life. Indeed, Schweitzer maintains that without a philosophy of life no

education is possible.\textsuperscript{2}

Schweitzer's central teachings broaden our view of education because they are directed at all those aspects of life which educators must think about if they are to help learners "come to terms with the entities of real life".\textsuperscript{3} It is the purpose of this chapter to uncover Schweitzer's general theory of life and to show why he believes that education is essential to the improvement of life.\textsuperscript{4}

ALBERT SCHWEITZER'S GENERAL PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

Even as a youngster, Schweitzer was fascinated by the mystery of "Force or 'Life'",\textsuperscript{5} and by the age of seven or eight he had come to the conclusion that all life was sacred.\textsuperscript{6} In his continual engrossment with the meaning of life, its worth, and the necessity of bringing "it to its highest value",\textsuperscript{7} Schweitzer was one of several who made life the central target of their investigations. He undoubtedly was influenced

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 305.
\textsuperscript{4}Ibid., p. 310.
\textsuperscript{6}Ibid., pp. 46-53.
\textsuperscript{7}Schweitzer, \textit{The Philosophy of Civilization}, p. 310.
by the Philosophy of Life Movement (referred to under such rubrics as Vitalism, Lebensphilosophie, and more recently, Philosophical Anthropology). It is certain that he was familiar with the works of Friedrich Nietzsche, Henri Bergson, Alfred Fouillée, Jean Marie Guyau, Wilhelm Stern, and Hans Driesch—all of whom may be categorized as exponents of the Philosophy of Life. In particular, Bergson attempted to explain the nature of life as being due to a vital force (elan vital), while Schweitzer alluded to the "creative force" in the mystery of life—a similarity too obvious to be overlooked. About the time Schweitzer discovered the ethic of reverence for life as well as during the time he was developing his "fundamental principle of morality", such persons as Alfred Adler, Felix Adler, Rudolf Eucken, William Ernest Hocking, Herman Keyserling, and Alfred Warthin were contributing to thought about the value of human life and its appropriate treatment. Yet Schweitzer was original in his concern for life in that he attached unique worth to all life from the single cell organism to man and developed reverence for

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for life as a basic principle actively devoting his life to maintaining, promoting, and enhancing life.\footnote{Joy, op. cit., pp. 259-260.}

Schweitzer's Search for a Lebensanschauung and Weltanschauung

Albert Schweitzer was an erudite activist who loved life. He was intensively involved in living and experienced personal meaning from reflecting on the purpose of life, writing about it, and promoting all living things. In his many sidedness, the great Franco-German offers an excellent example of the totally involved person who could not segregate analysis from explanation, could not divorce thought from action, and could not separate life from meaning. In his search to find meaning in life and to give meaning to his own life, Schweitzer was driven to fundamental questions:

... we try to find an answer to the elementary question with which each one of us is newly confronted every morning, namely, what meaning and what value is to be ascribed to our life. What am I in the world? What is my purpose in it? What may I hope for in this world? I do not want to consider my existence merely as one which rises and perishes among the billions of billions of beings which constitute the universe, but as a life which has a value, if I comprehend it and live it according to true knowledge.\footnote{Ibid., p. 210.}

In his efforts to find elemental answers to these questions, Schweitzer believes that man needs to "find the world- and life-
confirmation, and the ethical system which we need for that serviceable activity which gives our life a meaning."\textsuperscript{12}

Schweitzer's attempt to work out a general philosophy of life is unique in that he chooses a method that reverses the course which philosophy has traditionally attempted to follow. In his "struggle for a philosophy of life,"\textsuperscript{13} Schweitzer argues that we must relinquish all hope of successfully interpreting world happenings as meaningful or purposeful. He believes that "the essence of the universe is full of meaning in its meaninglessness, meaningless in its fullness of meaning."\textsuperscript{14} Furthermore, Schweitzer contends that:

\begin{quote}
All thinking must renounce the attempt to explain the universe. We cannot understand what happens in the universe. What is glorious in it is united with what is full of horror. What is full of meaning is united to what is senseless.\textsuperscript{15}
\end{quote}

Although science has enabled man to gain increased accuracy in measuring, predicting, and describing natural phenomena in the world, it has only added to the mystery. Science or any other external knowledge cannot tell man the meaning of the universe. Try as he may, man cannot explain the anguish, suffering, pain, and senseless death that fills the universe.

\textsuperscript{12} Schweitzer, \textit{The Philosophy of Civilization}, p. 73.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p. 75.
\textsuperscript{15} Joy, \textit{Albert Schweitzer: An Anthology}, p. 5.
With the belief that "the mystery of life is always too profound for us", Schweitzer considers himself to be "the first among Western thinkers who has ventured to recognize this crushing result of knowledge, and the first to be absolutely skeptical about our knowledge of the world without at the same time renouncing belief in world- and life-affirmation." With this, our attitude toward life is made independent of our attitude toward the world. Since Schweitzer believes that it is impossible to bring the one into line with the other, he thinks that we must put the former above the latter. It is self-supporting because "it is rooted in our will-to-live". What is given to us in this will-to-live—by which Schweitzer means a volition to preserve, encourage, and advance all life—goes far beyond our knowledge of the world.

What is decisive for our life view is not our knowledge of the world but the certainty of the volition which is given in our will-to-live. The eternal spirit meets us in nature as a mysterious creative power. In our will-to-live, we experience it within us as volition which is both world- and life-affirming and ethical. Our relation to the world as it is given in the positive certainty of our will-to-live, when this seeks to comprehend itself in thought: that is our world-view. World-view is a product of life-view, not vice-versa.

Inasmuch as Schweitzer sees an "elemental philosophy of life"


17Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 76.

18Ibid., p. 77. 19Ibid., p. 78.

20Ibid., p. 83.
growing out of a life-view that is prior to a world-view—despite the opposing teaching of preceding philosophers—he turns his attention to life itself. In order to understand the meaning and value of his own life and the life of mankind, Schweitzer resigns himself to the view that there is no way through history, science, or metaphysics of finding complete answers to elemental questions. While he by no means abandons thinking in an intellectual manner, Schweitzer increasingly resorts to a sort of reflective dialogue with himself.

Schweitzer's reflections start with the conviction that he is required to affirm the world and life because "world- and life-affirmation are given in our will-to-live". He elaborates further by writing that the volition which is innate in our will-to-live transcends any knowledge we have of the world, and that:

> The simple world- and life-affirmation which is within me just because I am will-to-live has, therefore, no need to enter into controversy with itself, if my will-to-live learns to think and yet does not understand the meaning of the world. In spite of the negative results of knowledge, I have to hold fast to world- and life-affirmation and deepen it. My life carries its own meaning in itself.  

If we are to be true to our will-to-live and if we are to become united with the "Universal Will-to-Live" which is the essence of all things, then we cannot negate, ignore, or escape world and life. To the contrary, we are committed to affirm them! This is truth taking hold of man, rather than man taking hold of truth. World- and life-
affirmation are not based on rational reason and cannot be verified by any amount of historical, scientific, metaphysical knowledge now available. They are facts that come from within and are direct and immediate.

In an attempt to give a more solid foundation to his developing philosophy, Schweitzer turns to the nature philosophies of the West and to the philosophies of China and India. He was attracted to Indian thought because of its concern with all living beings, because of its concern with how man can achieve spiritual union with "infinite Being", and because it is by its nature, mystical. Through the exploration of these philosophies, continual observation of nature, and reflection about his own existence, Schweitzer confirms his basic assumption that all life is dominated by a will-to-live. This is the life urge, the primal, the elemental that is dominant in man and is evident in all forms of life. It is this that leads Schweitzer to renounce cosmic optimism and turn to the belief that the universe apparently has no special interest in us, that there is no cosmic evidence for the love of God. At the center of things, he finds only the will-to-live. While Schweitzer freely admits owing a debt to Schopenhauer and Nietzsche in this area of his thought, he also seems to have been influenced by the evolutionistic optimism of Herbert Spencer and the voluntaristic thought so prevalent

in much of the Nineteenth Century. Nevertheless, Schweitzer asserts that he arrived at the significance of the will-to-live on his own through his own observations. His observations regarding the will-to-live are of two kinds: observations based on science and objective facts, and those based on individual, reflective experience and subjective knowledge. Thus, we see that Schweitzer's lifelong lust for unadulterated truth would not permit him complete intellectual agnosticism which so many have accused him of.

As one who had intensively studied the natural sciences in preparation for becoming a physician, Schweitzer had developed a reverence for those "truths which embodied realities". Moreover, as a practicing doctor of medicine at Lambarene in the great "Laboratory of Nature", he had watched the development of all forms of life and as a surgeon had almost daily viewed and worked with the very sum and substance of living matter. Finally, the intellectual climate of the time in which Schweitzer lived was dominated by the biological school of thought. It is not surprising then that Schweitzer turned to biology to give support to his beliefs about the will-to-live. In "a private discourse on ethics" with Dr. H. M. Phillips at Lambarene, Schweitzer clearly reveals his position on the matter.

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All of my studies and all of my years of experience have served only to confirm my fundamental convictions concerning the reality of 'will' in the universe, the centrality of 'will' in the life process, its supreme role as human self-consciousness, its rational connection with all good and evil in human relations, and its singularity as a sovereign value worthy of universal human reverence.  

According to Schweitzer, the entire universe is composed of matter and will; hence, the entire universe is "alive". Will grows more and more prevailing in the life process, and matter in the life process becomes more subordinate to the will.  

The impulse to action is characteristic of all species. From the primitive impulse that moves the free cell to activity, on up the evolutionary ladder, each individual specimen acts freely as a self-determining agent. "A mysterious 'will' affirms and directs the behavior and activity of the community of chemical materials that compose the cell or 'society of cells'". While the will is not measurable, its existence is known by its unique effects on the association of chemicals in living matter. "The will in the simplest cell sparks life just as an unknown enzyme force induces millions of instantaneous reactions in higher specimens."

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27 Ibid., p. 103.  
28 Ibid., pp. 103-104.  
29 Ibid.
Schweitzer states that the will has evolved, and describes the process as follows:

... will in the phrase 'will-to-live' has been carried forward in evolution for two billion years by countless billions of individual animate specimens of life. Looked at objectively, this 'will' is manifested in all subhuman specimens of life as an affirmative thrust. The behavior appears to us like an ego-centric, self-centered drive. It is raw, naked, elemental, direct self-devotion... The result of evolution is that man, too, inherits the ceaseless self-affirming urges to subjugate natural forces and subdue natural rivals, but this ancient impulse to self-devotion is somewhat altered by the growth of reason. 30

Certainly, Schweitzer is convinced that he can make a good case for the reality of the will-to-live on the basis of factual knowledge which science can give us. Even so, the clinching support for his argument he finds in "knowledge on a higher plane". 31 As suggested earlier, higher knowledge for Schweitzer is reflective knowledge.

The knowledge that results from the recording of single manifestations of Being remains ever incomplete and unsatisfying so far as it is unable to give the final answer to the great questions of what we are in the universe, and to what purpose we exist in it. We can find our right place in the Being that envelops us only if we experience in our individual lives the universal life which wills and rules within it. The nature of the living Being without me I can understand only through the living Being within me. 32

When we begin to reflect on our existence, if we follow Schweitzer's thinking, the most immediate fact of consciousness is the

30 Ibid., p. 104.
31 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 85.
32 Ibid.
will-to-live. It is the one fundamental thing that we can realize and do know about ourselves. We are will-to-live in the midst of other life which wills to live.\(^{33}\) "All knowledge grounded in experience only leads deeper and deeper into the great mystery that all that is is Will-to-Live."\(^{34}\) All nature is filled with life and seen from a cosmic perspective, all life is valuable; we are a part of it and at one with it. All life endeavors to maintain itself, to live itself out, and to propagate itself. The nature of all life is to will to live.\(^{35}\)

While scientific knowledge can tell us that the will-to-live is present everywhere, "it can lead me only to the mystery of life, which is essentially in me, however near or far away it may be observed."\(^{36}\) Schweitzer sees true knowledge—a realization of the mystery of life—as nonrational and enthusiastic in nature in that it cannot be the result of knowledge about the universe, but emerges from the reflective experience of the will-to-live. Thus, we leave knowledge of the head behind us. When followed to its ultimate destination, reason leads us to mysticism.\(^{37}\) In the final analysis, it appears that Schweitzer

\(^{33}\) Ibid., p. 125.

\(^{34}\) Schweitzer, *Indian Thought and Its Development*, p. 263.


\(^{36}\) Ibid., p. 251.

resolves the problem which he refers to as epistemological "dualism of emotional (willing) and rational (knowing) truths" by combining the two.

From my youth onwards I have felt certain that all thought which thinks itself out to an issue ends in mysticism. In the stillness of the African jungle I have been able to work out this thought and give it expression.

For Schweitzer, mystical insight into the will-to-live leads to a profound world- and life-affirmation. Just why this is so is rather nebulous. He seems to imply that with the acceptance of one we accept the other. According to Schweitzer, "deepened" world- and life-affirmation is the most direct and at the same time the profoundest achievement of the will-to-live. It is the result of the intuition that the inner life gives us because we see reflected in ourselves what we know to be the goal of all will-to-live. The goal of all will-to-live is to expand, extend, develop, and live itself out. Schweitzer is convinced that we identify with and experience other life in our own. This knowledge is experiential and is direct and immediate. It is mysticism which certifies, authenticates, and justifies itself.

The highest knowledge is thus to know that I must be true to the will-to-live. This it is which plots the course for me that I must follow through the night without a chart. To live out one's life along its true course, to exalt it, to enoble it, is natural.

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38 Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, pp. 77-79.
39 Ibid., pp. 79-80. 40 Ibid., p. 78.
Every diminution of the will-to-live is an act of insincerity towards oneself or a definite symptom of ill-health.\textsuperscript{41}

Schweitzer's observations of animals, his work with the African natives, and his discussions with some of the leading scientists throughout the world confirm his belief that it is the basic nature of the will-to-live to thrust itself forward and upward, to live itself out to the fullest, and to strive toward its own highest perfection.\textsuperscript{42} When the will-to-live becomes conscious of itself, when it becomes thought within us, we experience a compelling urge to treat every form of life with respect and lift it to its highest level. In Schweitzer's own words, "If man affirms his will-to-live, he acts naturally and honestly. He confirms an act which has already been accomplished in his instinctive thought by repeating it in his conscious thought."\textsuperscript{43}

To summarize, Schweitzer thinks he has grounded world- and life-affirmation in both intuition and rational thought. He contends that both insight and reason require us to affirm life. His "elemental thinking" enables him to arrive at a Lebensanschauung upon which a Weltanschauung is constructed. The latter is the result of reflection upon the life situation; it is largely the result of "elemental reflection" rather than "sophisticated fact-collecting". It is mainly

\textsuperscript{41}Joy, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 253.
\textsuperscript{42}Schweitzer, \textit{The Philosophy of Civilization}, p. 282.
\textsuperscript{43}Schweitzer, \textit{Out of My Life and Thought}, p. 125.
affirmative, optimistic, and life-centered rather than negative, pessimistic, and world-centered.

**The Meaning of World- and Life-Affirmation**

For Schweitzer, world- and life-affirmation is the spiritual act by which man ceases to live unreflectively and begins to devote himself to his life with reverence in order to raise it to its true value. "To affirm life is to deepen, to make more inward, and to exalt the will-to-live."\(^{44}\)

Once the will-to-live is brought to full consciousness and developed, it becomes apparent that life is intrinsically good, that it is infinitely worthwhile, that man can dominate the forces of nature, and that life is to be affirmed in a constructive way. Schweitzer specifically believes that world- and life-affirmation exists when:

... man regards existence as he experiences it in himself and as it has developed in the world as something of value per se and accordingly strives to let it reach perfection in himself, whilst within his own sphere of influence he endeavors to preserve and further it.\(^{45}\)

Schweitzer gives emphasis to the meaning of world- and life-affirmation by describing what it is not. World- and life-negation, comments Schweitzer, exists when man views:

\(^{44}\)Ibid., p. 126.

existence as he experiences it in himself and as it is developed in the world as something meaningless and sorrowful, and he resolves accordingly (a) to bring life to a standstill in himself by mortifying his will-to-live, and (b) to renounce all activity which aims at improvement of the conditions of life in this world.  

Schweitzer sees world- and life-affirmation as natural, optimistic, and practical. It "unceasingly urges men to serve their fellows, society, the nation, mankind, and indeed all that lives, with their utmost will and in lively hope of realisable progress."  

Life-affirmation motivates men to construct rather than to destroy. It activates men to approach life with zest and to go about their work in a productive, functional way rather than in a mechanical manner. It causes men to purposely act in ways which lend themselves to the growth, unfolding, and positive development of all that lives.

Finally, Schweitzer declares:

In the profoundest form of world- and life-affirmation, in which man lives his life on the loftiest spiritual and ethical plane, he attains to inner freedom from the world and becomes capable of sacrificing his life for some end. This profoundest world- and life-affirmation can assume the appearance of world- and life-negation. But that does not make it world- and life-negation: it remains what it is—the loftiest form of world- and life-affirmation. He who sacrifices his life to achieve any purpose for an individual or for humanity is practicing life-affirmation. He is taking an interest in the things of this world and by offering his own life wants to bring about in the world something which he regards as necessary. The sacrifice of life for a purpose is not life-negation, but the profoundest form of life-affirmation placing itself at the service of world-affirmation.  

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46 Ibid., pp. 1-2.  
47 Ibid., p. 2.  
48 Ibid., pp. 6-7.
Ultimately, intense world- and life-affirmation becomes reverence for life. The simple, instinctive world- and life-affirmation possesses value only when it is brought to consciousness and nurtured. If our lives are to have meaning, then:

There are two things which thought has to do for us; it must lead us from the naive to a deepened world- and life-affirmation, and must let us go on from mere ethical impulses to an ethic which is a necessity of thought.⁴⁹

In attempting to explicate a philosophy which would be equal to the tasks of life, Schweitzer believes that he brings this two-fold function of thought to fruition. With the assertion that deepened world- and life-affirmation manifests itself in reverence for life,⁵⁰ he adds:

At the same time the man who has become a thinking being feels a compulsion to give to every will-to-live the same reverence for life that he gives his own. He experiences that other life is his own. He accepts as being good: to preserve life, to promote life, to raise to its highest value life which is capable of development; and as being evil: to destroy life, to injure life, to repress life which is capable of development. This is the absolute, fundamental principle of the moral, and it is a necessity of thought . . . Reverence for Life arising from the Will-to-Live that has become reflective therefore contains affirmation of life and ethics inseparably combined. It aims to create values, and to realize progress of different kinds which shall serve the material, spiritual, and ethical development of men and mankind.⁵¹

In summation, Schweitzer concludes that "men and mankind" require an ethic of life-affirmation. All life is will-to-live, and

⁴⁹ Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 278.
⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 283.
⁵¹ Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, pp. 126-127.
therefore affirmation. However, this primitive affirmation is mainly destructive and injurious as "one existence holds its own at the cost of another." At this stage of development, instinctive affirmation possesses no clear-cut ethical directions. As a result of reflective thought which leads to mystical insight, man comes to the appropriate deepened form of world- and life-affirmation—reverence for life. Reverence for life contains the important ethical requirements of affirmation and optimism which Schweitzer believes are grounded in "elemental" thought.

The Emergence of the Philosophy of Reverence for Life

The concept of reverence for life, as developed by Schweitzer, appears to have emerged from a combination of his search for meaning in his life, his service in Africa, and his grave concern over the decline of civilization. Because World War I interrupted Schweitzer's work in his jungle clinic and brought about his and his wife's internment at Lambarene mission station, he was given an opportunity to pursue the question of civilization which had long been on his mind. The coming of a war he had long predicted was just another sign of the collapse of civilization which Schweitzer believed to be imminent unless man changed

52 Ibid., p. 126. 53 Ibid. 54 Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, pp. 78-79.
directions. Sickened by the terrible war, depressed with being prevented from doing his active medical work, and saddled with excessive free time as a war prisoner, Schweitzer began to translate his thoughts on the decay of civilization into a book which he originally called "We Inheritors of a Past". Although Schweitzer was allowed to return to his heavy schedule of medical activities at Lambarene, the constant thought of those who were lying and dying in the trenches motivated him to find time to continue the book. In the early summer of 1915, Schweitzer decided to supplement his criticism of civilization with a plan for the restoration of civilization. Thus, he turned to the question that was to occupy him in one way or another for the rest of his life, "Is it at all possible to find a real and permanent foundation in thought for a theory of the universe which shall be both ethical and affirmative of the world and of life and on which civilization depends?"  

As Schweitzer labored on what was finally to become The Decay and the Restoration of Civilization, he began to see a connection between civilization and the attitude toward life. He "recognized that the catastrophe of civilization stemmed from a catastrophe in this attitude."  

In wrestling with the problem of how civilization might be

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55 Ibid., p. xiv.

56 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 118.
restored, he gave an indication of his progress as of late summer of 1915, in *Out of My Life and Thought*:

> With my apparently abstract yet absolutely practical thinking about the connection of civilization with philosophy, I had come to see the decay of civilization as a result of the inexorable weakening of the traditional modern attitude of ethical affirmation toward the world and life. It had become clear to me that, like so many other people, I had clung to that attitude from inner necessity without troubling at all about how far it could really be proved by thought.\(^{57}\)

According to Schweitzer, only an ethical affirmation toward world and life grounded in thought can produce a will-to-progress sufficient to restore civilization.\(^{58}\)

The comparative silence of the primitive jungle gave Schweitzer the opportunity to engage in reflective thinking that he so thoroughly believed in and, in fact, advocated for the whole of mankind. Always a keen observer of nature, he could see nature at its best and its worst. At Lambarene, where nature was all and man was nothing,\(^{59}\) Schweitzer saw concrete examples of mutual aid in action in ways flagrantly absent in the Western world. It came to his attention that by some sort of mutual agreement feeding birds would by design leave ample food for their crippled companions, that monkeys of even the worst sort of temperament would be most eager to "play mother" to infant stray

\(^{57}\)Ibid., p. 123.  \(^{58}\)Ibid., p. 122.

monkeys, and that an entire flock of wild geese would wait on any of its injured members for days before flying on. Although the behavior of Western man was life-negating in many ways, Schweitzer found himself thinking with increased confidence that all life was linked together, mutually dependent, and immeasurably valuable. Likewise, he observed that in many ways the native of Africa was more concerned about his fellow man—albeit in comparatively different ways—than the typical European. In his book concerning the early years in Africa, On the Edge of the Primeval Forest, Schweitzer repeatedly paid homage to the "child of nature" for his real interest in the "elemental" questions of life and the nature of good and evil.

These and similar thoughts occupied Schweitzer's mind for some time. His enthusiasm as well as disenchantment may be captured by what he later wrote in 1929, while on his third journey to Africa:

For months on end I lived in a continual state of mental excitement... I was wandering about in a thicket in which no path was to be found. I was leaping with all my might against an iron door which would not yield.

Although Schweitzer was unusually well-equipped with formal knowledge to successfully investigate the matter with which he had become preoccupied, everything he had learned in history, philosophy, religion, science, medicine, music, and theology was painfully

60 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, pp. 113-116.

61 Ibid., p. 123.
inadequate to solve the riddle at hand. Exhausted and discouraged, the answer he was seeking came to him when he least expected it and in a somewhat surprising way. In September of 1915, Schweitzer was forced to make a long journey up the Ogowe River to secure medical help for the wife of a friend. As the boat made its way forward slowly and laboriously, he was making productive use of his idle time by writing casual thoughts upon sheet after sheet of paper. Suddenly, what he had been furiously searching for had at last been discovered. The discovery was described by Schweitzer in the following words:

Late on the third day, at the very moment when, at sunset, we were making our way through a herd of hippopotamuses, there flashed upon my mind, unforeseen and unsought, the phrase, "Reverence for Life". The iron door had yielded: the path in the thicket had become visible. Now I had found my way to the idea in which affirmation of the world and ethics are contained side by side! Now I knew that the ethical acceptance of the world and of life, together with the ideals of civilization contained in this concept, has a foundation in thought.62

For Schweitzer, the discovery of reverence for life was all that he needed for a true understanding of what was necessary for the rescue and restoration of civilization. Throughout the rest of his life, the thought and work of Schweitzer was dominated by the belief that ethical action based on reverence for life could solve man's philosophical, moral, and religious problems.

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62 Ibid., p. 124.
The Meaning of Reverence for Life

While reverence for life is a simple, emotionally loaded phrase which to some may mean everything and at the same time nothing, Schweitzer believed that it possessed both power and profundity. He was aware that many would think the phrase a gross oversimplification and a vague generality, writing that:

It may seem, at first glance, as if Reverence for Life were something too general and too lifeless to provide the content of a living ethic. But thinking has no need to trouble as to whether its expressions sound living enough, so long as they hit the mark and have life in them. Anyone who comes under the influence of the ethic of Reverence for Life will very soon be able to detect, thanks to what that ethic demands from him, what fire glows in the lifeless expression.\(^{63}\)

Although the major significance of reverence for life for Schweitzer was ethical, he used the term in a polysynthetic way giving it several dimensions. To Schweitzer's way of thinking, reverence for life is more than just an ethic; it contains an insight into the nature of man as he exists in the world.

From a biological point of view and in its most primitive expression, reverence for life represents a desire for survival as man affirms his own life by the fact that he is will-to-live.\(^{64}\) Schweitzer refers to this as "instinctive reverence for life" and says that it is the nature of all organisms to try to preserve themselves. He summarizes

\(^{63}\)Ibid., p. 180.

\(^{64}\)Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, pp. 278-280.
the matter in the following way:

Thus, if we ask, "What is the immediate fact of my consciousness? What do I self-consciously know about myself, making abstractions of all else, from childhood to old age? To what do I always return?" We find the simple fact of consciousness is this, I will to live. Through every stage of life, this is the one thing I know about myself. I do not say, "I am life"; for life continues to be a mystery too great to understand. I only know that I cling to it. I fear its cessation—death. I dread its diminution—pain. I seek its enlargement—joy.65

As a psychological expression, reverence for life means a desire for self-realization. In Schweitzerian language, this disposition toward self-fulfillment is described as: "The impulse to perfection",66 "the urge to self-perfecting",67 "the higher self-maintenance",68 and "profound self-realization".69 By his nature, man is not content to merely exist; he must strive toward something more than he is at any one particular time. This is a heightened reverence for life and "bears in itself the impulse to realize itself to the highest possible degree of perfection."70

In a sociological sense, reverence for life suggests a natural tendency toward relatedness, gregariousness, and empathic concern for

66Ibid., p. 250.
68Ibid., p. 314. 69Ibid., p. 315.
70Joy, op. cit., p. 250.
other lives. Schweitzer's declaration that the first fact of man's consciousness is, "I am life which wills to live, in the midst of life which wills to live" suggests interpersonal relations and social interaction. By nature, man possesses "the mystery of what we call 'taking an interest'. We cannot live alone. Though man is an egoist, he is never completely so." Ultimately, man's interest in others leads to the development of societies. While man's relations are often antagonistic to one another, they are not always so. More often than not, man's relatedness to and concern with others' lives leads him to join hands with his fellow man in efforts to improve general conditions.

Going further, still, reverence for life entails reflection and thought. Man, unlike the animals, cannot survive or promote his welfare, unless he analyzes the forces that operate upon him, weighs alternatives in action, and criticizes ways of doing things that lead to unfruitful results. In a word, man must not simply feel or intuit or desire; he must also think.

It is here that reverence for life comes into contact with education at a time when "there is an absence of thinking which is

71 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 125.
72 Joy, op. cit., p. 250.
73 Ibid.
74 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 177.
characterized by a contempt for life," man must develop the "highest rationality." Reverence for life requires and produces a mental set which is characterized by a "critical attitude." Schweitzer believes that reverence for life is powerful and profound enough to give individual men and civilization itself a solid intellectual foundation from which progress can emanate and flourish. It requires that man abandon the present fragmentation of thought and Schweitzer thinks that general education should direct itself toward integrating the academic disciplines to accomplish this. If progress is to occur on any level, man's life must be harmonious in feeling, belief, and action. This can come about only through the unity of thought in which education must play a leading role.

Reverence for life represents an ecological concern in that man is not only concerned with his own life and other human life but also is sensitive to and manifests genuine concern for all life. For Schweitzer, there exists a solidarity among all living beings. Reverence for life places a "high value on natural life" and "is applied to natural life"

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75 Joy, op. cit., p. 250.
76 Ibid.
78 Ibid., pp. 331-332. 79 Ibid., p. 13.
80 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 180.
81 Ibid.
for after all, "who among us knows what significance any other kind of
life has in itself, and as a part of the universe?"⁸² As Schweitzer
develops the phrase, "all life is sacred, including that which from the
human point of view seems lower in the scale."⁸³ The tremendous respon-
sibility that comes with the necessity of sacrificing some lives in
order that others may be preserved causes man to think carefully before
he makes such a "terrible" choice.⁸⁴ Reverence for life means that man
must discontinue his caveman attitude toward his environment and that
he "tears no leaf from a tree, plucks no flower, and takes care to
crush no insect"⁸⁵ unless absolutely necessary.

Ontologically, reverence for life is an expression of man's
identification with and reverence for Universal Will or Reality in which
all things are based. Schweitzer believes that it is man's nature to
strive for a unity or at-oneness with the Creative Will. This stems
largely from man's desire for self-transcendence and eventually results
in mystical unity with the omnipresent, all-encompassing "Creative
Force" or "World-Spirit".⁸⁶

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⁸²Ibid.
⁸³Ibid., p. 181.
⁸⁴Ibid.
⁸⁶Schweitzer, Indian Thought and Its Development, pp. 262-264.
Mysticism is the perfected form of world-view. In his world-view man endeavors to arrive at a spiritual relationship to the infinite Being to which he belongs as a part of Nature. He studies the Universe to discover whether he can apprehend and become one with the mysterious will which governs it. Only in spiritual unity with infinite Being can he give meaning to his life and find strength to suffer and to act.

And if in the last resort the aim of a world-view is our spiritual unity with infinite Being, then the perfect world-view is of necessity mysticism. It is in mysticism that man realizes spiritual union with infinite Being.87

Schweitzer suggests that in seeking harmony with the mysterious "Spirit of the Universe,"88 reverence for life enables us to enter the service of that Creative Will from which all life emerges. By serving all life we are in harmony with and live in communion with the Creative Will. In the view of Schweitzer, "all Being is Life, and in loving self-devotion to other life we realize our spiritual union with infinite Being."89 Thus, reverence for life is at once "earthly" and transcendent!

It appears, then, that Schweitzer uses the phrase reverence for life in a much broader sense than many students believe. It seems probable that reverence for life, as Schweitzer uses it, is an analysis of the nature of man as he exists and functions in the world.

The most apparent and frequently discussed meaning of reverence

87 Ibid., pp. 10-11.
88 Joy, op. cit., p. 220.
89 Ibid., p. 227.
for life is its prescriptive dimension. The phrase is an ethic or moral precept which admonishes man to maintain, promote, and enhance life. Unlike many others who have worked in the realm of ethics, Schweitzer uses the single concept of reverence for life not only to describe what man is but also to signify what man ought to be. By working from what he believes man's nature is to what he believes man ought to be, Schweitzer succeeds in finding what he calls, "the fundamental principle of morality." The ethic of reverence for life: (a) is not dependent on a theory of the universe, (b) does not deny the value of the present world, (c) is natural to man and will lead to perfection through natural development, (d) is not dependent on reincarnation or a life in the hereafter, and (e) will give meaning and purpose to life.

Schweitzer's ethic of reverence for life is unlimited, comprehensive, and universal in that it is a moral imperative that broadly includes all forms of life. Since there is no variation in the basic will-to-live, reverence for all life is obligatory. It will not permit us to stop with ourselves; we are burdened with an awesome responsibility toward all that lives. The will-to-live must live itself out and strives for the highest excellence. If it is to succeed in its thrust

90 Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 79.
91 Joy, op. cit., p. 274.
for completeness, it demands cooperation of a far-reaching sort. Reverence for life is boundless because it extends beyond communities, societies, and cultures.

Reverence for life is also an absolute ethic. It emerges out of the total fact of the will, and accordingly possesses within itself no possibility of being restricted in application to some area less than all will-to-live. Schweitzer sees the absolute ethic as one which creates perfection in this world; the fact that such a tall order cannot be altogether achieved does not really matter. Reverence for life is absolute in the sense that it asks and commands us to give all that is within our power to other forms of the will-to-live. It informs us that we are to serve all life, try to understand it, cooperate with it, and enhance it. The ethic of reverence for life does not prescribe rules for each situation nor does it set minimum or maximum limits on what we must do. Nevertheless, it tells us unequivocally that what we do to preserve life, to encourage life, and to bring life capable of development to its highest level does in fact, constitute the highest good. To act on behalf of all life in affirmative and constructive ways is our duty; we cannot and must not do less, since this is the 'absolute, fundamental principle of the moral, and it is a necessity of thought.' Conversely, it is bad to destroy life, to damage life, to

93 Ibid., pp. 307-311.
hamper and restrain life capable of development. Schweitzer's principle of reverence for life sets before us a general and absolute, but not unapproachable ideal. While it goes beyond what we can always accomplish, it carries with it the hope that we can act to maintain, promote, and enrich all life which comes within our own individual circle of life space.

Reverence for life as an ethical ideal is cosmic. It does not limit itself to the sphere of human life and relationships. It makes no distinction between higher and lower, superior or inferior, or valuable and less valuable. After all, "Who among us knows what significance any other kind of life has itself, and as a part of the universe?" Schweitzer's own remarks on this matter are both unqualified and illuminating:

Ordinary ethics seeks to find limits within the sphere of human life and relationships. But the absolute ethics of the will-to-live must reverence every form of life seeking so far as possible to refrain from destroying any life, regardless of its particular type. It says of no instance of life, "This has no value." It cannot make any such exceptions, for it is built upon reverence for life as such. It knows that the mystery of life is always too profound for us, and that its value is beyond our capacity to estimate. We happen to believe that man's life is more important than any other form of which we know. But we cannot prove any such comparison of value from what we know of the world's development.

95 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 180.

96 Joy, op. cit., p. 271.
By these remarks, Schweitzer intimates that the autonomous self is no longer the center of creation, but merely a part of the world. As such, it is not able to prevail in its own right but is a part of nature which is not fundamentally different—except for conscious and cognitive capacities—from the beings of plant or animal. The ethic consists in the compulsion to pay the same respect to all forms of the life will as to one's own. If we would be true to the commands of reverence for life, we must actively work toward maintaining and furthering the life in animals, flowers, insects, and all living things. Furthermore, we must actively refrain from thoughtlessly and/or ruthlessly destroying any form of living matter whatever its hierarchy according to the current standards set by society. When it comes to our attitude toward all that lives, nothing is relative—either we possess this reverence for life in its entirety, or we do not. There are no adjustments . . . all life is valuable, and we must value, cherish, expand, and extend it. It should be added that because of the inherent value of life— as Schweitzer sees it—the battle we launch in behalf of life is only ethical if done because of the value of life, rather than from a sense of utility. So both the motive and the consequences of our action toward other wills-to-live are vital in determining right action.

The ethic of reverence for life, as Schweitzer develops it, is also practical. The attitude of reverence is available to all men because every person possesses the ability to engage in the elemental
thinking which will lead "a man directly and almost irresistibly to Reverence for Life." For Schweitzer, elemental thinking is natural to all men. As Schweitzer presents the precept, it is simple, definite, and direct so that anyone can learn it. It is also practicable because it is timeless and can function in any culture.

Schweitzer does not put forth reverence for life as absolute dogma. He recognizes the law of necessity which means we must sometimes save one living being by sacrificing another. The pressure of necessity compels us to kill and maim both with and without our knowledge.

In practice we are forced to choose. At times we have to decide arbitrarily which forms of life, and even which particular individuals, we shall save, and which we shall destroy.

The first rule for decision-making where sacrifice of life is concerned, is that life should only be destroyed when it is absolutely essential for the preservation of other life. Which specific life should be sacrificed and which permitted to live Schweitzer does not tell us, though in general practice it is human life that is preserved rather than animal, because the former is more highly developed. Furthermore, when we must take life we are obligated to sacrifice as little as possible. The minimum here is once again determined by each

97 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 179.
98 Schweitzer, Indian Thought and Its Development, p. 83.
individual with the awareness of the awesome responsibility of the decision.

Schweitzer offers further help in arriving at viable and valuable decisions concerning which life must be taken and which must be allowed to live by calling for the development and maintenance of highly sensitive conscience. The attitude of reverence for life should increase the number of possibilities in which an individual will find it not necessary to destroy life. True reverence for life should keep one's conscience sensitive enough so as to prevent him from engaging in thoughtless killing.

In spite of these measures, life must still be destroyed. Since life can exist only at the expense of other life, man must steer a middle course between the affirmation and the rejection of life. Obedient to the ethic of reverence for life, we must constantly come to terms with the ethic of self-denial. Thus, reverence for life has a tyrannical character, and places a human being in a permanent condition of guilt from which there is no escape and for which there is no absolution. The independent moral self-responsibility with which the ethic saddles the individual far exceeds anything with which Protestantism has burdened the Christian by insisting on his personal responsibility. Unconditional freedom represents a tremendous burden. As a possessor of the will-to-live, man from his very birth appears as an enemy of the will-to-live outside of himself. This hostility is guilt, even when it is unavoidable.
It is the task of ethics to bring this guilt to man's consciousness, and in this way to persuade him, as will-to-live drawn into the self-alienation of life, to set up a standard of peace in the midst of the all-embracing battlefield of creation. Reverence for life makes some atonement possible for the overwhelming guilt that man carries with him by compelling him toward creative service for other life.

Reverence for life portends power and promise for the individual personality because of its likeness to the ethic of Jesus: to lose one's life in others is to find it. Schweitzer believes that "he that loses his life shall find it,"100 will experience a deep enrichment and genuine happiness. Self-negation in a spirit of sacrifice for others is still a form of life-affirmation in the larger sense. In reverence for life human personality becomes an end in itself, not a means for support of the society or state. Individual men owe their allegiance not to society, but to their ethical consciousness when it is deeply committed to reverence for life. It is in the perfecting of the ethics of reverence for life that man finds his true meaning; his true substance and his reason for existence. It is from this source that man learns to live meaningfully in a world where knowledge can supply him with no meaning.

While Schweitzer's faith is in the individual and the work for others that he can do within his life space, he believes that a new public opinion will be created privately and unobtrusively through the practice of reverence for life. Inasmuch as "of all the forces that mould reality, morality is the first and foremost," Schweitzer recommends thinking and practicing the ethics of reverence for life starting with the individual and moving to social institutions and civilization itself.

For Schweitzer, reverence for life—will-to-live brought to consciousness, humanized, and perfected—possesses all that is needed for a philosophy of life. How he comes to this conclusion may best be seen by quoting his own words at length:

The one possible way of giving meaning to his existence is that of raising his natural relation to the world to a spiritual one. As a being in a passive relation to the world he comes into a spiritual relation to it by resignation. True resignation consists in this: that man, feeling his subordination to the course of world happenings, wins his way to inward freedom from the fortunes which shape the outside of his existence. Inward freedom means that he finds strength to deal with everything that is hard in his lot, in such a way that it all helps to make him a deeper and more inward person, to purify him, and to keep him calm and peaceful. Resignation, therefore, is the spiritual and ethical affirmation of one's own existence. Only he who has gone through the stage of resignation is capable of accepting the world.

As a being in an active relation to the world he comes into a spiritual relation with it by not living for himself alone, but feeling himself one with all life that comes within his reach... Let a man once begin to think about the mystery of his life and the links which connect him with the life that fills the world, and he cannot but bring to bear upon his own life and all other

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101Joy, op. cit., p. 278.
life that comes within his reach the principle of Reverence for Life, and manifest this principle by ethical affirmation of life. 102

SOME IMPLICATIONS OF SCHWEITZER’S GENERAL PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE FOR EDUCATION

Philosophers who have considered problems of education have often been accused of not being clear and concise about how their educational proposals are to be derived from their philosophy. 103 This is not the case with Albert Schweitzer when he speaks to the larger issues in education. It is the purpose of this section to consider some of the implications—implicit as well as explicit—of Schweitzer's general philosophy of life for education under the following topics: (a) the meaning of education, (b) the importance of education, (c) the right kind of education, and (d) the educational process.

The Meaning of Education

Schweitzer defines education as a process leading to an integrated outlook on life and the world which can give men and mankind meaning, purpose, and significance. 104 Education consists in absorbing and utilizing underlying principles of "the entire domain of human

102 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, pp. 178-179.
104 Joy, op. cit., p. 305.
knowledge" to understand our environment, other persons, and ourselves. To understand life, ourselves, and others in a life-affirming way that motivates us to serviceable activity in behalf of individual men and the community of mankind, as well as the realm of animal and plant life, is both the beginning and the end of education.

Such a definition suggests that education consists of not only intellectual growth but also emotional maturity, ethical awareness, and serviceable action. Thus, education demands the formation of such essential habits as an honest search for truth, rational thinking, self-discipline, sense of duty, diligence, "thoroughness, humility, patience, gratitude, forgiveness, and respect for life." Furthermore, any complete education must stress the importance of vocational training as "intellectual learning should in every . . . school be accompanied by the acquisition of every kind of manual skill."

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105 Ibid.
106 Ibid., p. 150.
107 Ibid.
108 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, pp. 69-80.
109 Ibid., p. 173.
110 Ibid., p. 172.
111 Ibid., p. 8.
112 Ibid.
113 Ibid., p. 54.
114 Schweitzer, Memoirs of Childhood and Youth, pp. 52-104.
115 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 150.
Schweitzer sees education for human progress as dependent upon the development of an awareness both that "knowledge is power" and of "the necessity of practical work". Schweitzer himself stands as an extraordinary example of one who was able to combine the scholarly with the practical, and he stresses that the material as well as the spiritual side of man must be developed.¹¹⁶

To restrict education to book knowledge is altogether too narrow, for education often arises in the matrix of practical activity. For Schweitzer, education is more than just the discipline of thinking; it is also creative action toward the betterment of the individual and community.

Schweitzer views education as a process of enlightenment which relies on truth-seeking grounded in "realistic thinking".¹¹⁷ He believes that education should cultivate our rational capacities to seek complete knowledge wherever such thought may lead: "It is with complete confidence that I step forward to press the claims of unprejudiced rational thought."¹¹⁸ True education is both fearless and realistic:

If thought is to set out on its journey unhampered, it must be prepared for anything, even for arrival at intellectual agnosticism . . . Thinking which keeps contact with reality must look up to

¹¹⁷ Joy, op. cit., p. 5.
the heavens, it must look over the earth, and dare to direct its
gaze to the barred windows of a lunatic asylum.119

While Schweitzer states that "dogmatism has taken the place of the
pursuit of truth,"120 his own conception of education is radically
different and calls for a "courageous freedom of investigation."121
According to Schweitzer, any conclusions derived from education must
be tested ruthlessly and should be considered as tentative.122

Schweitzer sees education as performing a twofold function.
It is through education that each individual in society will discover
his own abilities, proclivities, limitations, and reasons for existence. It is also through education that each person will become aware
of what he must do to take his rightful place as a positive contributor
in the development of world civilization.123 Thus, education is both
personal development and a cultural-political undertaking.

The Importance of Education

Schweitzer's belief that education is essential to man is di-
rectly related to his assertion that man needs to know the meaning and
purpose of his life. Since "the thing that we must be preoccupied

119 Joy, op. cit., p. 4.
120 Ibid., p. 318. 121 Ibid., p. 33.
122 Ibid., p. 30.
with is the mystery of our life,"^124 education can help by provoking "elemental thought" about the questions of existence which occur in the mind of every human being.125 It is Schweitzer's contention that "every being who calls himself a man is meant to develop into a real personality within a reflective theory of the universe which he has created for himself."126 Education is a necessity because if it "places its confidence in rational thinking",127 and urges us to collect our thoughts it can "rouse" and help us find meaning and purpose.128 Education, Schweitzer argues, is important because it can give us insight into and personal conviction about the problems of our own lives, as well as those of society.129 According to Schweitzer, without education little else is possible!130

Education, properly considered, concerns itself with "elemental thinking",131 which ultimately brings us to the optimistic conclusion

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125 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 174.
127 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 172.
128 Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 56.
129 Ibid., p. 93.
130 Joy, op. cit., p. 305.
131 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 174.
that we should raise life "to its highest level of value." 132

Thence originates activity directed to the improvement of the living conditions of individuals, of society, of nations, and of humanity, and from it spring the external achievements of civilization, the lordship of spirit over the powers of nature, and the higher social organization. 133

In Schweitzer's eyes, education is essential because it can assist in the development of the concept of reverence for life—responsibility toward all that lives—which underlies all progress and civilization. From Schweitzer's viewpoint, education plays a vital role in the reconstruction of civilization. The aim of education and civilization for Schweitzer are the same; namely, the enhancement of the quality of life by promoting the rational and moral perfection of the individual, as well as that of society. 134

In coming to some decision about the meaning of life and the action necessary for its improvement, education is important only if it is the "right kind". For anyone who carefully reads The Philosophy of Civilization and Schweitzer's essay, "Philosophy and General Education in the Nineteenth Century" 135 it becomes apparent that he is gravely concerned about the direction of Western education. It is also clear that Schweitzer holds that education, philosophy, and religion should

133 Ibid.
134 Ibid., p. 174.
work toward the same ends and furnish man with the same essentials; that is, a unified world- and life-view. As viewed by Schweitzer, none of the three are accomplishing these ends!

As a perennial searcher of truth, Schweitzer is distraught about how education in our time is contributing to its own erosion. For him thought is becoming increasingly fragmented. Many academicians insist that each academic discipline be autonomous and independent of other disciplines.

This is a time that is utterly lacking in philosophic education. The individual disciplines have emancipated themselves: either they feel no need to share in one organic world-view, or else they maintain that they will create for themselves a private philosophy. 'Science is power'—that is the slogan which seems to carry the day. But people forget to add that science is not education. We learn from our century that even while scientific knowledge is advancing, the number of educated persons may diminish.136

Schweitzer is certain that truth is woven from a blending of the best thought in all disciplines,137 and he is especially concerned about the heavy reliance on what he considers to be an incomplete scientism.138

Today thought gets no help from science, and the latter stands facing it independent and unconcerned . . . Our age has discovered how to divorce knowledge from thought, with the result we have, indeed, a science which is free, but hardly any science left which reflects.139

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136 Ibid., p. 15.
137 Ibid., op. cit., p. 3.
138 Ibid., p. 17.
139 Ibid., pp. 17-18.
It is Schweitzer’s position that education is too narrow, too involved with secondary issues, and too preoccupied with sheer fact-gathering. Educators are concentrating on outer knowledge when they should be focusing on inner truth. Schweitzer contends that education is characterized by at least the following shortcomings:

1. The failure to make reason the foundation for its undertakings. 

2. The failure to expose youth to proper ideals.

3. The failure to focus on a central goal which can give it meaningful direction.

4. The failure to provide learners with concepts and knowledge in "ordinary comprehensive-language". Schweitzer believes that educators use technical language excessively and that they mistake pedantry or "obstructive erudition" for wisdom.

5. The failure to expose youth to Nature and to provide abundant opportunities in what has come to be called "outdoor education."

6. The failure to offer learners an opportunity to discover

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140 Ibid.
141 Ibid., p. 15.
142 Ibid., p. 16.
143 Ibid.
144 Schweitzer, Indian Thought and Its Development, p. lx.
146 Ibid., p. 16.
truth on their own. Education tends to be too authoritarian in that it forces ready-made "truth" on its clientele.\textsuperscript{147}

7. The failure to focus on elemental questions which are relevant to living. Education is altogether too answer-centered when it should be concerned with raising and reflecting on the significant questions of meaning and purpose in life.

8. The failure to encourage learners to strive for self-knowledge and self-discipline. Traditional education tends to foster an "outer" or "other" orientation in the area of the developing individual self.\textsuperscript{148}

9. The failure to adequately deal with "the duty of humanity".\textsuperscript{149} Education of the contemporary kind centers on stockpiling shelf-wisdom and vocationalism when it should be giving attention to the subject of "man's humanity to man".

10. The failure to provide an overall environment which aids learners in arriving at some unified view of life and the world.\textsuperscript{150}

Although Schweitzer emerges as an obdurate critic of education, he does not believe that traditional education is without merit. While he does not find or take time to spell out what is right with current

\textsuperscript{147}Ibid., p. 19.
\textsuperscript{148}Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{149}Ibid., p. 15.
\textsuperscript{150}Ibid., p. 20.
educational practices, he repeatedly acknowledges his great debt to formal education.\textsuperscript{151}

The Right Kind of Education

By utilizing Schweitzer's general theory of life and his comments on education in general, it is possible to arrive at what he would call the "right kind of education".\textsuperscript{152}

For Schweitzer, all education must be realistic, and that education which is most realistic takes as its starting point the study of elemental questions.\textsuperscript{153} To answer such questions, education must stress "elemental thinking"\textsuperscript{154} which:

\ldots starts from the fundamental questions about the relations of man to the universe, about the meaning of life, and about the nature of goodness. It stands in the most immediate connection with the thinking which impulse stirs in everyone. It enters into that thinking, widening, and deepening it.\textsuperscript{155}

In order to get at these fundamental questions, the right kind of education must make use of all available knowledge\textsuperscript{156} as a basis from


\textsuperscript{152}Joy, op. cit., p. 305.

\textsuperscript{153}Ibid., p. 4.

\textsuperscript{154}Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 174.

\textsuperscript{155}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{156}Joy, op. cit., p. 305.
which we can intellectually comprehend life and the world. Through the use of reason and reflective thinking, Schweitzer believes that it is possible to arrive at the meaning and purpose in our lives. It follows that education is involved with some fact-finding but places its major emphasis on thinking and reflection. Schweitzer's writings are filled with the importance of reflection, and his solid belief in its power is easily documented:

... the injustice and violence and untruth, which are now bringing so much disaster on the human race would lose their power if only a single real trace of reflection about the meaning of the world and of life should appear among us.

Because Schweitzer is convinced that we need to discover meaning and purpose in our lives and that this can best be achieved by means of reflection, the right kind of education will stress "meditation, quiet, and self-recollection". Speaking about its effects on the young, Schweitzer comments that such an atmosphere promotes solemnity, seriousness, and understanding. This suggests that education should emphasize the non-verbal aspects of teaching and learning as well as the verbal.

The right kind of education must work toward providing an environment for students which will produce human beings who are

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157 Ibid., p. 7.  
158 Ibid., pp. 7-31.  
159 Ibid., p. 31.  
160 Ibid., p. 213.  
161 Ibid., p. 214.
thinkers and who are free.

A man's ability to be a pioneer of progress . . . depends on his being a thinker and on his being free. He must be the former if he is to be capable of comprehending his ideals and putting them into shape. He must be free in order to be in a position to launch his ideals out into the general life.\footnote{162}

Students can best be educated for thinking and freedom by giving them freedom with some guidance if and when it is required. For Schweitzer, thought is cultivated when individuals have a voice in what they are to study and how they are to study it.\footnote{163}

Since Schweitzer believes that understanding and enlightenment are enhanced when we look inward, the right kind of education will help the individual toward self-knowledge from which he can then begin to successfully order his life. Education should teach us that:

The great secret of success is to go through life as a man who never gets used up. That is possible for him who never argues and strives with men and facts, but in all experiences retires upon himself, and looks for the ultimate cause of things in himself.\footnote{164}

Truth is a rallying point for Schweitzer's conception of education, and it is the job of the latter to establish a climate whereby youth can be awakened to the love of truth, not only in and for itself, but also because it can be utilized in our lives. For Schweitzer, truth stands on reason which passes into an ethical mysticism that leads to the conclusions that "all Being is life, and that in loving

\footnote{162}Ibid., p. 5. \footnote{163}Ibid. \footnote{164}Schweitzer, Memoirs of Childhood and Youth, pp. 121-122.
self-devotion to other life we realize our spiritual union with infinite Being.165 Schweitzer's conception of truth appears to be eclectic in that he believes the mind can conceive ideas (Idealism), perceive reality (Realism), and work toward Absolute Truth (Neo-Thomism). In some sense, he measures truth as that which lends itself to the enhancement of life—a loose sort of ethical Pragmatism. Finally, his conception of truth is experimental in that he maintains that each person knows what is true only through his own unique experiences and that it is up to the individual to discover what is true. While it is obvious that education must seek answers, it should not be altogether answer-centered. A major function of education is to expose the young to a variety of learning environments so that they may come to know that there are no easy, preconceived answers. Education is "not a formula for explaining everything"166 and its value lies not so much in solving all problems but in discovering the important ones.167 The right kind of education is that which leaves us with an "enlightened ignorance"168 insofar as it "admits how absolutely mysterious and unfathomable are the world and life,"169 but motivates us to continue in search of a unified view of both which can supply meaning for existence.

165 Schweitzer, Indian Thought and Its Development, p. 263.
166 Joy, op. cit., p. 103.
167 Ibid., p. 79. 168 Ibid., p. 227. 169 Ibid.
Schweitzer asserts that the proper kind of education should promote ideals among the young. It is ideals that furnish us with the faith and conviction by which "all work that is worth anything"\textsuperscript{170} is accomplished. Specifically, education should encourage the young to retain their idealism.

The knowledge of life, therefore, which we grown-ups have to pass on to the younger generation will not be expressed thus: 'Reality will soon give way before your ideals,' but 'Grow into your ideals, so that life can never rob you of them.' If all of us could become what we were at fourteen, what a different place the world would be!\textsuperscript{171}

It is Schweitzer's position that education must aim at making its students:

... simpler, more truthful, purer, more peace loving, meeker, kinder, more sympathetic. That is the only way in which we are to sober down with age. That is the process in which the soft iron of youthful idealism hardens into the steel of a full-grown idealism which can never be lost.\textsuperscript{172}

Broadly speaking, the right kind of education should focus on what Schweitzer refers to as the "ideal of humanity".\textsuperscript{173} By this, he means a concern for others which will not allow us to remain aloof, indifferent, and unsympathetic.\textsuperscript{174} Education should become ethical in both practice and in what it promotes; namely, respect for each person's

\textsuperscript{170} Schweitzer, Memoirs of Childhood and Youth, pp. 121-122.
\textsuperscript{171} Ibid., pp. 122-123. \textsuperscript{172} Ibid., p. 120.
\textsuperscript{173} Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 334.
\textsuperscript{174} Joy, op. cit., p. 135.
inner resources and potential and the values of extending allegiances beyond family, class, country, and humankind to all "lifekind".

Closely related, is Schweitzer's belief that meaningful education will make it possible for developing learners to observe and interact with nature. By being exposed to nature, Schweitzer thinks that students will see that we are united with all life and that all life is valuable. Youth can learn from this kind of knowledge that man can experience his spiritual relationship with the universe. Exposure to nature should also instruct the young that when man violates the natural environment serious consequences ensue.

Finally, the right kind of education should aim at transforming or reconstructing civilization which has as its object the spiritual perfecting of individuals. In order that such a transformation can occur, education must:

175 Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 337.

These educational tasks can be achieved when the central focal point of education becomes "elementary meditation upon what man is in the world, and what he wants to make of his life."\(^{177}\)

The Educational Process

The educational process ordinarily exists when there is interaction—verbal and/or non-verbal—between a student and teacher concerning some kind of knowledge. While it may be argued that such a view is overly simplistic, the fact remains that when teacher, knowledge, and student are present there is a possibility of change of an educational kind.

The implications of Schweitzer's general theory of life suggest that education must emphasize the individual learner as the crucial mediating factor in the triadic relationship. While the teacher and knowledge are important, the student's personal existence is of greater concern. Reverence for the undeveloped and the developing person means that students will not be treated as objects or "things"; that they will not be molded for the needs of technocratic and dehumanized institutions; that they will not be forced to be "successful", "happy", "adjusted", and "accepted" according to the values of the majority; and that they will not be forced to be mere spectators in their lives. Reverence for learners does mean that they will be treated as individual persons with

\(^{177}\) Schweitzer, *The Philosophy of Civilization*, p. 93.
lives of their own about which they should have something to say. The individual person must have the opportunity to make decisions about the kind of education which can give his own particular life meaning, purpose, and direction. Schweitzer's educational thought is prescriptive in that it asks that each individual become completely serious about his life, the meaning of his existence, and how he may elevate his own life and other life.

If the individual learner is to figure out the meaning and purpose of his life with any precision, reverence for truth is a necessity. Reverence for what is true demands that the student have access to knowledge upon which he can reflect. The curriculum to which the learner is to be exposed must necessarily be broad because: (a) truth can not be woven from isolated, compartmentalized boxes of knowledge, and (b) the enrichment of one's life comes from breadth of knowledge drawn from various subject matter areas. In order to gain any unified view of life and the world, education must be poly-disciplined.

More specifically, wisdom which is needed for a view of life is most likely to come from an unbiased study of the world religions, Eastern thought, philosophy, psychology, morphology of civilization, anthropology, ethics, literature, history, and the natural sciences. For understanding, tolerating, appreciation, and cooperation with others, the student should have an opportunity to study foreign languages, communication arts, and human relations. In an attempt to achieve
a measure of completeness, the curriculum should include outdoor and physical education for the development of physical strength and endurance which are necessary for anyone who hopes to contribute service on a sustained basis. Music and art should be a vital part of the curriculum as they foster an aesthetic sensibility and give the student a chance to creatively express what is uniquely his own. Finally, the practical arts would be available to the student so that he can engage in various types of craftsmanship which will "prove the unity of his personality by the union of practical work with intellectual activity."\textsuperscript{178}

Reverence for the developing person will not permit educators the license to force particular subject matter on the learner. Educators should attempt to discover the interests and preferences of the student realizing that it is the student's attitude toward the subject matter which determines what is learned. A valuable part of education is its attempt to interest--but not force--the learner in those areas of knowledge he is not interested in so as to foster breadth and vision.

For Schweitzer, knowledge is a tool for coming to a decision about the meaning and purpose in life. Considered as a tool, knowledge takes on a utilitarian function in a person-centered, life-oriented curriculum. According to Schweitzer, "thought must be active. It must affect something."\textsuperscript{179} Knowledge must be put into action toward

\textsuperscript{178}Joy, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 145.

\textsuperscript{179}Erica Anderson, \textit{The Schweitzer Album}, p. 169.
resolving individual problems and the problems confronting civilization. Because "ideas and knowledge are worthwhile only when they are put into serviceable use," the curriculum assumes a "major-issues-confronting-humankind" dimension. Schweitzer repeatedly writes that knowledge is only valuable insofar as it helps to improve one's own life and the lives of others, and his own life turns out to be the best argument for his case.

The implications of Schweitzer's thought suggest that the role of the teacher is one of assisting the individual to fashion himself. The teacher should be an arranger of environments which will facilitate "elemental thinking" about the fundamental questions of life. Both teacher and learner become co-partners in attempting to "make life more meaningful, to make life moral, to make life rational, to make life consistent." The teacher should emphasize the worth of the individual, stress that each learner is responsible for giving meaning to his own life, and encourage freedom of thought. The classroom climate should be democratic and based on a free-ethical spirit. Schweitzer asserts that, "the most important thing in education is to make young people think for themselves."

A primary task of the teacher is to establish a warm, interpersonal classroom atmosphere in which a sharing of ideas may take place.

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"Reverence for the personality of others", demands not only that the teacher take every action to encourage learners to come forth with their feelings and ideas but also that they should not be constrained to do so. Learning is best facilitated when teachers and students move from the impersonal to the interpersonal. In the words of Schweitzer, "Man belongs to man. Man has claims on man . . . . The law of reserve is condemned to be broken down by the claims of the heart . . . . Our human atmosphere is much colder than it need be."

Schweitzer's view of the nature of man implies that the teacher will arrange classroom environments in which the developing individual can learn about strategies for survival and work individually toward self-perfection. The learner should also have opportunities to relate to and cooperatively work with others so that his social interest can develop. Furthermore, the student should be exposed to nature in order to gain an appreciation of, respect for, and sensitivity toward all that lives.

The teacher, then, is an arranger of environments which will help develop these aspects of man's nature, as well as an active agent in assisting, guiding, and encouraging the learner.

Another important job of the teacher is to draw out and inspire

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184 Ibid., p. 111.
185 Ibid., pp. 110-115.
186 Ibid., pp. 114-115.
the student to do his best. Schweitzer comments that:

As a rule there are in everyone all sorts of good ideas, ready like tinder. But much of this tinder catches fire, or catches it successfully, only when it meets some flame or spark from outside, i.e., from some other person.\footnote{187Ibid., p. 108.}

While the teacher must refrain from indoctrinating learners, he must be committed to encouraging students to apply what is learned, to strive for self-perfection, to help others, and to act in morally responsible ways. Moreover, the teacher should encourage students to integrate the use of head, heart, and hand in their education.

Schweitzer asserts that the most successful teacher is the one who teaches by example. In his belief that the teacher should be a model or exemplar, Schweitzer says, "Example is not the main thing in influencing others. It is the only thing."\footnote{188Erica Anderson, The World of Albert Schweitzer, p. 138.} When the teacher lives in deeds what he speaks in words, such action "accomplishes what no exhortations and no punishments can."\footnote{189Schweitzer, Memoirs of Childhood and Youth, p. 66.}

Finally, Schweitzer views the profession of the teacher as an important and noble one. The teacher is important as he is in a position to assist in the development of the rational and ethical perfection of the individual and of society. The role of the teacher is a noble one because it offers the possibility of combining service in both word and
deed. The world- and life-affirmation and the ethic of reverence for
life which underlie Schweitzer's general philosophy of life "will not
allow the scholar to live only for his learning, even if his learning
makes him very useful." The teacher must be more than an information-
giver. He must strive to be the best possible example of a man who
gives himself, "as man, to the man who needs a fellow-man" and as
one who is good and does good. In the last analysis, the teacher should
strive to be the "Compleat Person"—an example of an integrated, whole
human being—who sets a lofty but realizable example for students.
Schweitzer himself approaches such an example—scholar, critic, artist,
builder, practitioner of ethics, and humanitarian.

In summary, Schweitzer's philosophy of life suggests a great
deal that bears heavily on the theory and practice of education. Much
of Schweitzer's importance to education rests in his belief that the
elemental and foundational must be attended to first, for they stand as
the final arbiters of how one looks at life and hence education. In
spite of the fact that Schweitzer—by both thought and example—is
significant for education, the true Schweitzerian tradition demands that
the educator must go beyond even the teachings of Schweitzer in bringing
about a more effective and more satisfactory theory and practice of
education.

190 Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 323.
191 Ibid.
Chapter 3

EDUCATION AND VALUES

The ethical spirit must be re-awakened today. If we study thoroughly and discuss the ethical and cultural questions of the present day, we shall be contributing toward the strengthening of the spirit of true humanity and of peace in the world.

Start early to instill in your students awareness that they are on this earth to help and serve others, that is as important to pass on to them as knowledge.

The only teacher is the man who thinks ethically and struggles for ethics.

Until I arrive at some ideal which is more meaningful, I have taken as my ultimate value the principle of reverence for life and its teachings.

Albert Schweitzer

Albert Schweitzer believed that both education and civilization must be based on a carefully conceived value system. Unfortunately, attempts to improve both have not been constructed upon a solid foundation of elemental values and as a result, both education and civilization are in a state of decay.¹ For Schweitzer, scholarship and knowledge-gathering are certainly legitimate concerns of education, but they are not enough. It is the valuational concern growing out of one's world- and life-view that gives direction and purpose to education. Schweitzer goes to considerable lengths throughout The Philosophy of Civilization to point out that some thinkers are preoccupied with ontology and some

with epistemology, but all must be concerned with axiology.

Schweitzer contends that education is a deliberate endeavor to provide the developing person with a unified world- and life-view that he would not possess if left completely on his own. The young are exposed to ethical decisions which, by and large, have already been made for them. Moreover, the teacher is inevitably concerned, not only with book knowledge, but with "rights", "goods", preferences, desires, "shoulds" and "oughts" which ultimately reflect the kind of Universe the teacher thinks ought to be. Decisions concerning the purpose of education, the right kind of education, what is to be taught, and how teaching is to occur are, according to Schweitzer, fundamentally value judgments.

While Schweitzer believes that education is an axiological undertaking—embracing not just ethics, but aesthetic, social, and religious values—his primary concern is with the moral dimensions of the individual and society.² For Schweitzer, it is the ethical that counts:

A new renaissance must come, perhaps a greater one than brought us forth from the Middle Ages: the great renaissance in which mankind discovers that ethical action is the supreme truth and the supreme utilitarianism . . . All I desire is to be one who prepares the way for this renaissance.³

In his search for the supreme value from which all others issue, Schweitzer arrives at the ethic of reverence for life. In his own words: "Reverence for life . . . aims to create values, and to realize progress of different kinds which shall serve the material, spiritual, and ethical development of men and mankind."^4

It is the purpose of this chapter to uncover the meaning of Schweitzer's reverence for life as a source of values and to discuss some of its implications for education.

REVERENCE FOR LIFE AS THE COMPLETE AND ULTIMATE VALUE

Reverence for life grows out of Schweitzer's conception of what is true about the nature of man as he exists in the world rather than what is useful to man. Reverence for life finds its justification in the facts of human nature. The primary fact of human nature is the will-to-live which exists in all beings. For Schweitzer, the fundamental fact of our existence and "the most immediate act of man's consciousness is the assertion: I am life which wills to live, in the midst of life which wills to live."^5 This fundamental, direct, and simple truism is the one thing that all men can know:

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^5Ibid., p. 125.
Day by day, hour by hour, I live and move in it. At every moment of reflection it stands fresh before me. There bursts forth from it again and again as from roots that can never dry up, a living world- and life-view which can deal with all the facts of Being. A mysticism of ethical union with Being grows out of it.  

While man cannot explain this primary fact of existence, he identifies with other living beings noting that all will-to-live craves expansion. Through reflective identification and comparison, man's outer or theoretical knowledge of the world passes over into experiential or inner knowledge of the world.

The knowledge which is becoming experience does not allow me to remain in face of the world a man who merely knows, but forces upon me an inward relation to the world and fills me with reverence for the mysterious will-to-live which is in all things . . . From within outwards it puts me in relation to the world by making my will-to-live feel everything around it as also will-to-live.

His belief in the basic truth entailed in the will-to-live leads Schweitzer to declare that:

Ethics consist, therefore, in my experiencing the compulsion to show to all will-to-live the same reverence as I do my own. There we have given us that basic principle of the moral which is a necessity of thought. It is good to maintain and encourage life; it is bad to destroy life or to obstruct it.

In his reliance on what he considers inner truth, Schweitzer

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7 Ibid., p. 308.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., p. 309.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
believes that he arrives at one of the several requirements that he regards as necessary for a viable ethical theory; namely, it must possess a world- and life-view.12

A second requirement for a consummate ethic, according to Schweitzer, is that it must be world- and life-affirming. For Schweitzer, "the aim of ethics is improvement of the conditions of this world."13 This can be done only by an ethical theory which grows out of a positive, constructive frame of reference. More specifically:

Only the kind of ethics that is linked with affirmation of the world can be natural and complete . . . By its very nature, ethics affirms the world. It calls for doing good actively and effectively. Hence we may say that affirmation of the world exerts a favorable influence upon the advancement of ethics, and that ethics has difficulty thriving in a climate of negation of the world. In the first case it can act according to its nature; in the second case it becomes artificial.14

Not only is an ethic of life- and world-affirmation natural to man but it is also in harmony with the Universal Being. Schweitzer writes that:

In my deepened world- and life-affirmation, I manifest reverence for life. With consciousness and with volition I devote myself to Being. I become of service to the ideas which it thinks out in me . . . reverence for life means to be in the grasp of the infinite, inexplicable, forward-urging Will in which all Being is grounded.15

12Ibid.
14Ibid., p. 12.
Schweitzer's third criterion for a complete ethic is that it must be active. A passive ethic limits itself to the perfecting of the individual self while a complete ethic must concern itself with man's relation to man. Nonactivity is ethical to the extent that "in being indifferent to the things of this world, man is free of the egoism that material interests arouse in him"16 and it lends itself to "the idea of nonviolence."17 An enlightened nonactivity is also ethical in that it permits man time for reflection and self-analysis from which his desire for self-perfection can make a beginning toward realization.18 However, "such a concept of ethics is faulty and incomplete,"19 because it allows "man the egoistic attitude of being wholly concerned with his individual salvation."20 Moreover, the principle of nonactivity "calls only for refraining from evil, not acting for good."21

Although Schweitzer believes that the complete ethic must be active, he nevertheless sees the passive role as being essential to the active, serviceable role that true ethics must play if civilization is to advance. For Schweitzer: "Only he who in deepened devotion to his own will-to-live experiences inward freedom from outward occurrences,

17 Ibid.
18 Ibid., p. 13.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
is capable of devoting himself in profound and steady fashion to the life of others."\textsuperscript{22} Thus, reverence for one's own will-to-live widened into reverence for the will-to-live of others enables Schweitzer to write that: "Man belongs to man. Man is entitled to man . . . The ethics of reverence for life requires that all of us somehow and in something shall act as men toward other men."\textsuperscript{23}

The fourth demand which Schweitzer makes for a complete ethic is that it must be universal and not confined only to man's relation to man. Schweitzer is repeatedly and unequivocally clear in his insistence on the matter:

If the domain of ethics is limited to the relations of man to man, then every effort to arrive at a fundamental ethical principle which has an absolutely binding content is hopeless from the beginning . . . If there really is a fundamental principle of ethics, it must somehow refer to the relation of man to life as such in all of its manifestations.\textsuperscript{24}

Because he primarily builds his philosophy of what he thinks is true of the nature of the will-to-live, Schweitzer believes that Western thought should consider accepting:

... the thought that self-devotion must stretch out not simply to mankind but to all creation, and especially to all life in the world within the reach of man. Let it rise to the conception that the relation of man to man is only an expression of the

\textsuperscript{22} Schweitzer, \textit{The Philosophy of Civilization}, p. 314.

\textsuperscript{23} Schweitzer, \textit{The Teaching of Reverence for Life}, p. 39.

relation in which he stands to all being and to all the world in
general. The ethic of self-devotion, having thus become cosmic,
can hope to meet the ethic of self-realization, which is cosmic
by nature, and to unite with it.25

In Schweitzer's view, the ethic of reverence for life is the
only ethic that can meet the challenge of limitless responsibility toward
all kinds of life.26 For Schweitzer, sympathy is only a part of ethics.27
True ethics exist when empathy and sensitivity toward all that lives
is present.28 Schweitzer summarizes the point in the following way:

The definition of ethics as behavior based on the conviction of
reverence for life leaves one, in general, unmoved. But it is the
only complete definition. Sympathy is too narrow a thing to be
ranked as the sum total of the ethical. It denotes, indeed, only
compassion for the suffering will-to-live. Part of ethics is that
we should experience in ourselves all the circumstances and all
the aspirations of all will-to-live, its joy, its longing to live
out its life, as well as its urge to self-realization.29

A fifth requirement which Schweitzer sets up for a finished
ethic is that it must find its origin in the facts of human nature
rather than in social conditioning. The complete ethic is born as
inward necessity of the individual as opposed to outward suggestions
coming from society.30 Schweitzer sees both the individual and civili-
ization in its entirety in a state of decline because of "ethics being

27Ibid. 28Ibid., p. 170.
29Ibid.
left to society”. Schweitzer concludes that an ethics derived solely from society is unsatisfactory because the collective tends to sacrifice the individual to the general welfare and because groupism promotes "as ethics principles of expediency or of the vulgarest opportunism." While Schweitzer sees society as serving ethics by its laws concerning right and wrong, man should not attempt to learn ethical conduct from society. "We always know that society is full of folly and will deceive us ... It is an unreliable horse, and blind into the bargain. Woe to the driver, if he falls asleep!" For Schweitzer, ethical conduct which is the result of social enculturation must forever be incomplete because:

The ethic of ethical personality is personal, incapable of regulation, and absolute; the system established by society for its prosperous existence is suprapersonal, regulated, and relative. Hence the ethical personality cannot surrender to it ... Schweitzer is convinced that reverence for life which is the product of "true knowledge" is the only principle capable of generating the kind of ethics which can oppose society when the latter's

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32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid., p. 327.
36 Ibid., p. 325.
"focus is too short." 37

Finally, a complete ethic must be absolute in the sense that it engenders total and unlimited concern for all that lives. 38 In no way, according to Schweitzer, can a finished ethic be influenced by what is expedient. 39 A major part of the misery besetting the individual and civilization itself can be traced to current ethics which rely on compromises. 40 By attempting to fit ethics into "tabulated rules and regulations", 41 striving to build ethics "on a principle of utility", 42 and relying on an "ethics of materialism", 43 man has produced an ethical relativism which "hangs in the air". 44 Schweitzer adds that current ethics:

... try to dictate how much of my existence and of my happiness I must sacrifice, and how much I may preserve at the cost of the existence and happiness of other lives. With these decisions they produce experimental, relative ethics. They offer as ethical what is in reality not ethical but a mixture of non-ethical necessity and ethics. 45

On the other hand, "the principle of reverence for life rejects relativism." 46 Good is that which maintains, promotes, and enhances

37 Ibid., p. 292.  
38 Ibid., p. 324.  
39 Ibid.  
40 Ibid., p. 317.  
42 Ibid.  
43 Ibid., p. 242.  
44 Ibid.  
life while evil is that which degrades, injures, and destroys life.\textsuperscript{47} The ethics of reverence for life permit no compromises or adjustments as decision-making is the responsibility of each individual. Schweitzer asserts that:

In ethical conflicts man can arrive only at subjective decisions. No one can decide for him at what point, on each occasion, lies the extreme limit of possibility for his persistence in the preservation and furtherance of life. He alone has to judge this issue, by letting himself be guided by a feeling of the highest possible responsibility towards other life.\textsuperscript{48}

From Schweitzer's vantage point, the stringent requirements he designs for a meaningful ethic are found in his ethic of reverence for life. He believes that reverence for life is: (a) "something universally valid,"\textsuperscript{49} (b) "something absolutely elementary and inward,"\textsuperscript{50} (c) is ever-present once an individual experiences it,\textsuperscript{51} (d) is continually challenging man to "try conclusions with reality,"\textsuperscript{52} and (e) is practical because it touches "a man's experience"\textsuperscript{53} and exerts "permanent pressure upon him."\textsuperscript{54} Schweitzer's enthusiasm for reverence for life may be seen in his following remarks:

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{48} Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, pp. 317-318.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., p. 107.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
Sympathy and love and in general every precious enthusiasm are contained within it. With an unresting, vital force, reverence for life works upon the mind it has entered and throws it into the disquietude of a responsibility which never ceases. Reverence for life drives a man on as a churning screw drives a ship through the water.  

THE POWER AND PROMISE OF THE ETHICS OF REVERENCE FOR LIFE

Schweitzer believes that reverence for life is powerful enough to make us new men under old conditions, improve general conditions in the world, and "bring to mankind perpetual peace." Obviously, it promises much to individual men and all of mankind once it is experienced and implemented.

Once the will-to-live becomes reflective in an individual, he cannot help but be sensitive to the value of his own life and all other life in his environment. According to Schweitzer, reverence for life continually compels man to be concerned with whatever is living around him, "and to feel himself responsible for it." Not only should we be concerned with all life and responsibility for it by "maintaining and furthering its existence as such" but we must also strive to elevate it to its "highest value" in all of its dimensions.

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56 Ibid., p. 107.
57 Ibid., p. 330.
58 Ibid., p. 330.
59 Ibid., pp. 330-331.
60 Ibid., p. 331.
61 Ibid.
Schweitzer thinks that because of his capacity for reasoning, reflection, and sensitivity, man can be molded and changed. For Schweitzer, it follows that reverence for life causes us to work toward every "kind of progress of which man and humanity are capable".\textsuperscript{62} Reverence for life unceasingly motivates us to improve the life of the individual person and the lives of humankind in general, "but as ethical men".\textsuperscript{63} It is a person-building and civilization ethic, starting with the former and eventually leading to the latter. Reverence for life acts not only as a catalyst but also as a guide for man to complete and purify "ideals of civilization which with full consciousness of their goal struggle to come to terms with reality."\textsuperscript{64} More specifically, reverence for life cherishes and promotes, "... the ideal of the individual; the ideal of social and political organization; the ideal of spiritual and religious social organization; the ideal of humanity as a whole."\textsuperscript{65}

Since reverence for life unites the will-to-live which is divided in nature, no life should unthinkingly exist at the cost of another. Reverence for life demands total commitment in behalf of life and, therefore, man must become concerned about the world. The right disposition for concern, growth, and change for good is there. No man

\textsuperscript{62}Ibid. \textsuperscript{63}Ibid. \textsuperscript{64}Ibid. \textsuperscript{65}Ibid., p. 332.
who comes under the influence of reverence for life can treat other human beings as things, which Schweitzer believes is so common in contemporary times. On the contrary, reverence causes man to choose opportunities whereby he can give himself as a man to the man who needs human help and understanding. Schweitzer writes:

. . . reverence for life . . . creates a way of thinking in which there is offered to every man in the thoughts of others the human value and human dignity which the circumstances of life would deny him. The struggle has thus lost its extreme bitterness. Man has now to assert himself only against his circumstances, and no longer against his fellowmen as well.

Schweitzer is convinced that his central ethical principle provides an ethical "staying power" unparalleled in the history of ethics. Reverence which stems from the will-to-live that "has become reflective" continually motivates the individual and the masses to find the will to do what ought to be done, even working toward respect for and adherence to societal laws when these are life-affirming. Ethical conduct viewed in light of reverence for life and this only, reduces any discussion over conflicting duties. Due to his interest in and concern for all life, man's interest in and concern for the entire world is continually maintained at maximum strength.

While Schweitzer is often taken to task for what some believe to be an apparent disregard for the material aspects of existence,

66 Ibid., p. 335.  
67 Ibid., pp. 335-336.  
68 Ibid., p. 330.  
69 Ibid.
nothing could be further from the truth. His position is that there should be a more even balance between the material and spiritual elements in civilization than is currently the case. Schweitzer is specific on the matter when he pens:

Though all of us are alike aware that the maintenance of civilization is dependent first and foremost on the gushing forth of the fountains of spiritual life which are in us, we shall nevertheless zealously take in hand our economic and social problems. The highest possible material freedom for the greatest possible number is a requirement of civilization.⁷⁰

For Schweitzer, it is only reverence for life that can create a willingness needed for bringing the material and spiritual into harmony. Schweitzer declares that:

The understanding and confidence which we mutually accord to each other with a view to what is most purposive, and by means of which we obtain the utmost power that is possible over circumstances, can be enjoyed only if everyone can assume in everyone else the reverence for the existence of the other and regard for his material and spiritual welfare as a disposition which influences them to the depths of their being.⁷¹

Reverence for life can also help man restore his natural relationship with nature. Schweitzer believes that man's lust for "power over the forces of nature"⁷² is "bringing with it manifold dangers".⁷³ Caught in a "materialistic state of servitude",⁷⁴ man is defiling his environment, destroying any reasonable ecological balance, becoming

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⁷⁰Ibid., p. 336.
⁷¹Ibid., p. 337.
⁷²Ibid., p. 333.
⁷³Ibid.
⁷⁴Ibid.
dehumanized, and growing "machine-like hearted" toward his fellow man. For the man who is truly ethical—a practitioner of reverence for life—all life is sacred. Rather than doing violence to the natural environment, reverence demands that we conserve and cultivate it.

Schweitzer also asserts that his ethic precipitates a dissatisfaction with the current practices of social institutions and demands a reform which will cause them to become more person-centered and service-oriented. In Schweitzer's judgment, social institutions are robbing man of his "spiritual independence" and molding his thinking for him with the result that mankind is in an "unprecedented condition of material and spiritual penury." Reverence for life offers man a support by which he can become "spiritually independent" and "the means to a firm and valuable self-determination." Schweitzer predi­cate that reverence affords man the following outlook:

It is with a will and a hope which he carries ready shaped within himself that he faces reality. It is to him self-evident that every society that is formed among men must serve towards the maintenance, the advancement, and the higher development of life, and the growth of true spirituality.

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75 Ibid.
76 Ibid.
77 Ibid., p. 339.
78 Ibid., p. 341.
79 Ibid., p. 339.
80 Ibid., p. 340.
81 Ibid.
Lastly, reverence for life is the only possible way in which mankind can be rescued from its present "crises and catastrophes." According to Schweitzer, the modern state ruthlessly exerts its authority over the individual to the point that any effective questioning of public policy by the individual is no longer possible. Depriving a majority of its individuals from "taking up a critical attitude towards it," it forges blindly ahead. Schweitzer sets forth what he believes to be the result as follows:

Collapsing under the weight of debts, torn by economic and political conflicts, stripped of all moral authority, and scarcely able any longer to maintain its authority in practical matters, it has to struggle for its existence in a succession of fresh troubles.

This state of affairs is, of course, worsened by "increasing atomic armaments" and the "glorifiers of war" both of which threaten "unmitigated catastrophe"--the possible annihilation of "lifekind" itself.

Reverence for life is an "ethic of crisis" because it calls for a "radical change of policy" to deal with the continuing crisis.

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82 Ibid., p. 341.  
83 Ibid., p. 341.  
84 Ibid., p. 342.  
85 Schweitzer, The Teaching of Reverence for Life, p. 54.  
86 Ibid., p. 53.  
87 Ibid.  
88 Ibid., p. 63.  
89 Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 337.
facing modern man. Schweitzer's ethic is radical in that it will com­
promise with no alienating force which frustrates, damages, or destroys
life. In short, it requires "an ideology of humanitarianism"90 and a
commitment to "lifeanity" which Schweitzer believes necessary for
"perpetual peace".91

SOME IMPLICATIONS OF SCHWEITZER'S ETHICS
OF REVERENCE FOR LIFE FOR EDUCATION

Schweitzer's ethics of reverence for life holds significance
for education because he is convinced that it is the supreme value and
he has definite ideas about how it should be taught. In a time when
educators are confused about what values are pivotal, uncertain how to
teach values, and groping for ways to give education an increased
valuational dimension, such convictions deserve close attention. The
purpose of this section is to consider some of the implications of
Schweitzer's ethical teachings for education as they relate to ethics
as a proper concern of education and the educational process.

Ethics as a Proper Concern
of Education

While education is attending to the task of helping the indivi­
dual to arrive at a life- and world-view, it must also assist the

91 Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 344.
developing person in arriving at what is ethical. Although Schweitzer is hopeful that ethics will evolve out of one's life- and world-view, he is convinced that education must give special attention to ethics. To Schweitzer's mind, education toward ethics is a must if the individual and civilization are to be what they ought to be.\textsuperscript{92} Anything of permanent worth can be accomplished only if we think ethically.\textsuperscript{93} Even if education and teachers "can do nothing more than bring ethical thinking to the fore, they have nevertheless done something valuable."\textsuperscript{94} Schweitzer suggests the critical necessity and the practicality of education which is concerned with the ethical when he states that, "all those who in any way help forward our thought about ethics are working for the coming of peace and prosperity in the world."\textsuperscript{95}

Traditional education which makes "political and economic questions"\textsuperscript{96} its study and pushes ethics aside\textsuperscript{97} must shoulder much of the blame for man's present moral slump. From Schweitzer's viewpoint, the level of morality is decreasing to the point that in the realm of ethics "we live in a city of ruins."\textsuperscript{98} Schweitzer describes man's declining morality in the following way:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{92}Ibid., p. xiv.
  \item \textsuperscript{93}Ibid., p. 104.
  \item \textsuperscript{94}Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{95}Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{96}Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{97}Ibid., p. 15.
  \item \textsuperscript{98}Ibid., p. 104.
\end{itemize}
We believed once in the victory of truth, but we do not now. We believed in our fellow men; we do not now. We believed in goodness; we do not now. We were zealous for justice; but we are not so now. We trusted in the power of kindness and peaceableness; we do not now.99

The only way out of this nadir of morality is to utilize education in an attempt to "bring more ethics into the world."100 There is no other way because education is the only institution which commands the overall resources to "pass through the whole experience of mankind in its search for the ethical."101 In particular, education can serve ethics by exposing the young to the best ethical principles of the past102 and by giving them opportunities for exchanging ethical ideas.103

The Educational Process

Schweitzer's ethic of reverence for life implies that education must place the individual person at the center of the educational process. Because Schweitzer's ethic is intensely individual, the student himself must decide to what extent he will accept and honor it. To try to force others to accept and practice reverence for life, whether by coercion or direction, undermines the pure spirit and the full potency of the ethic. The important thing is that the student shall not be

100Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 103.
101Ibid., p. 106.
102Ibid., p. 327.
103Ibid., p. 103.
denied the opportunity to investigate the ethics of reverence for life, as well as all other ethical systems. Schweitzer is convinced that it is only through such broad exposure that the developing person can be awakened to the ultimate and limitless personal responsibility which he must assume for his conduct.

According to Schweitzer, the teaching and learning of general ethics—the study of "right human conduct"—must be grounded in reflective thought about the accumulated knowledge of ethics. In his own words, "There is ... no such thing as a scientific system of ethics; there can only be a thinking one." As to what is proper or improper conduct, "no one can speak to his neighbor as an expert." The essential matter is that the student be awakened to the ethical spirit. This can best be accomplished by a sharing of ethical ideas and critical discussion of ethical questions currently presenting themselves to mankind.

The knowledge which Schweitzer believes is most valuable for discovering the right conduct is to be found in the works of the Great

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104 Ibid., p. 104.
107 Ibid.
108 Ibid.
Ethical Teachers: Lao-Tse, Confucius, Buddha, Zarathustra, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Jesus, Paul, Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, Erasmus, Montaigne, Charron, Locke, Shaftesbury, Hume, Spinoza, Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Fouillée, Guyau, Stern, von Hartmann, Bergson, Goethe, and Tolstoy. Schweitzer chooses the knowledge put forth by these thinkers because he holds that: (a) an "ethical kernel of the thoughts of all these men can be collected into an idea of the ethical," and (b) "thinkers like Socrates, Kant, or Fichte had a moralizing influence" from which there flowed "ethical movements" which made future generations more ethically competent.

Schweitzer's preference for the knowledge of ethics propounded by those mentioned above does not preclude what others may have to say about the subject. Because "everything is more or less secondary" to ethics, anyone who thinks "he can contribute something to help forward the ethical self-consciousness of society and of individuals" should be listened to.

All knowledge, regardless of its origin, must be critically examined. To consume the thought of others without testing it

\[\text{110 Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, pp. 103-265.}\]
\[\text{111 Ibid., p. 103.}\]
\[\text{112 Ibid.}\]
\[\text{113 Ibid.}\]
\[\text{114 Ibid.}\]
\[\text{115 Ibid., p. 104.}\]
\[\text{116 Ibid.}\]
thoroughly would constitute irreverence for truth and a betrayal of one's own true being. Schweitzer shows the value he attaches to analysis of thought emanating from others when he writes, "The highest honor one can show to a system of thought is to test it ruthlessly with a view of discovering how much truth it contains, just as steel is assayed to try its strength." Because of professional training and experience in truth-seeking, it is here that the teacher can be of real assistance to the learner. The teacher can be of further aid to the student in finding out what is true in a system of thought by helping to translate "technical expressions" which impede understanding into "ordinary comprehensible language." Also, the teacher can help the student to get at the truth by placing information in the proper context so that knowledge takes on its true meaning. Finally, the teacher can help the student discover truth by demonstrating the importance of integrating the knowledge of the various subject-matter disciplines. For Schweitzer, it is absolutely essential that ethical scholarship lower the barrier "between philosophical ethics and religious ethics" because "both

119 Ibid., p. ix.
120 Ibid.
121 Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 106.
It is obvious that Schweitzer views the helping relationship as the major role of the teacher. It is also apparent that he would have both learner and teacher increasingly moving toward a certain reverence for truth about the ethical.

Since Schweitzer affirms that the individual must engage in ethical reflection about ethical knowledge largely on his own, solitary effort should be given increased attention in schools. He believes that it is largely through soul-searching in private quietism that one can arrive at the truly ethical. This suggests that there will be more time for individual reflection and ethical decision-making on the part of the student than is generally allowed. With the help of conscientious teachers and the privacy to reflect about available knowledge concerning ethics, right conduct "comes to clearness within ourselves."

While Schweitzer is more concerned with breadth and depth in education than with a particular method, he nevertheless sanctions several methodological approaches which may lead to "the recognition of what is moral."

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122Ibid.


125Ibid., p. 107.

126Ibid.
The primary method for discovering what is ethical, according to Schweitzer, is reflective dialogue with the self. He is aware that such a method of thinking does not just happen—it must be awakened and developed in the young by ethical provocation. Such a way of thinking is best aroused and heightened by allowing time for individual private reflection and through a neo-Socratic method of instruction. In this way, Schweitzer hopes that the young will not only learn to reflect on the ethical questions asked them by their teachers but that they also will eventually learn to ask questions of ethical significance on their own. For Schweitzer, many of these questions are highly individualistic and can only be answered through inner dialogue with the self. He states that, "Personal reflection about final and elemental things is the one and only reliable way of measuring values." 127

Specifically, the student can learn reflective dialogue with himself through the following steps:

1. The teacher asks the learner ethical questions which appear to be common to all individuals. The difficulty of questions and the way in which they are stated are adjusted to the experiences and "readiness" of the developing person.

2. The teacher arranges a quiet environment and permits the learner to retire into privacy to do some soul-searching in an effort

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to find appropriate answers to "his" questions.

3. The teacher and student engage in a dialogue about the student's answers with the teacher taking the role of a friendly questioner. The learner should be encouraged to also raise questions. Once the learner is stirred, once he is awakened, he begins to reflect, probe, and question on his own. He is motivated by curiosity about moral questions and finds pleasure in private ethical inquiry.

Because they lend themselves to individual inquiry, independent study "programs" growing out of common ethical questions would be approved by Schweitzer. Such a program would not be designed by the teacher alone. In all of his attempts to serve others, Schweitzer's actions are based on the unique needs of those who are to be helped. Likewise, nothing can be taught without taking the individual's needs and interests into full account. Independent study should help build the independence of spirit which Schweitzer feels is necessary in arriving at ethical truths.

Schweitzer also favors small discussion groups which treat the ethical by way of the dialogical method. For maximum learning to occur, the size of such groups should be small enough for all members to participate but large enough to insure as many representational

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128 Based on personal interview with Erica Anderson, for many years a personal friend of and confidante to Schweitzer, at Great Barrington, Massachusetts, on May 4, 1972.
viewpoints as possible. Particular care should be taken to include those who are, in reality, so frequently omitted—the poor, the minorities, and the helpless. The atmosphere in which the group functions is of critical importance. The learning "climate" must be such that it fosters concern, care, and a helping attitude on the part of each member for all other participants. For the dialogical method to be effective, it must address itself to ethical problems, democratic relationships, and creative thinking. Structured along these lines, Schweitzer believes that warm, probing dialogical inquiry can contribute to ethical progress.

As far as Schweitzer is concerned, lectures given by those who really have important information to share is certainly an acceptable practice in instruction. For the lecture method to be an aid to learning, the lecturer must be well organized and be able to speak without the benefit of notes. He must speak as "a man to his fellow man" and present his remarks in simple language so that all may comprehend. Information to be imparted should be related to daily living as much as possible and the presentation should be short. The lecture should be followed by a brief period of silence for individual reflection. Finally, learners should be encouraged but not forced to ask questions.

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Finally, a desirable but often overlooked instructional method which Schweitzer recommends is—for lack of a better term—the student tutorial system. Because of their youthful idealism, their natural willingness to help others, and their almost exclusive argot, Schweitzer believes that developing persons are equipped to teach each other in ways that the more developed person is not. Such a method also utilizes talent which is frequently ignored and creates a spirit of cooperation in working toward the ethical. This does not mean that the teacher will be inactive; to the contrary, he should encourage "helping students" to refrain from violating individualistic thought and reflection among fellow-learners.

Passing to the content of instruction, Schweitzer believes that the learner should study the ethics of reverence for life. He has considerable to say on the matter of how the young can learn about his ethics.

Schweitzer claims that ethical conduct grows out of an interest in and a valuable conception of life. Life is the ultimate value and all others possess standing as they further it. For Schweitzer, it is obvious that the young must learn reverence for life. That is, they must come to realize—through private reflection as much as possible—


133 Ibid., p. 271.
that right conduct consists in maintaining and cherishing life. Schweitzer is confident that once the young person begins to reflect about the important matters of existence, he will settle on reverence for life. This suggests that the school and teacher arrange an environment which: (a) encourages learners "to collect their thoughts," (b) prompts students to "become more inward," and (c) awakens the young to a "sense of responsibility." If these results are to be attained, then the teacher must frequently provide what Schweitzer calls the "solemn hour for the soul." This is a time for free meditation upon the perplexing questions of youth, as well as life. Time should be allowed for individual reflections to be shared with others if the possessor so desires.

Assistance from the teacher is needed to completely awaken the child to the value of life and as suggested earlier, Schweitzer favors an intimate sort of Socratic method for the task. Schweitzer's method of asking questions is somewhat different from the traditional Socratic method in that he prefers opening any dialogical exchange with an act of kindness. His method of questioning also differs because the teacher

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134 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 179.
135 Ibid., p. 174.
136 Ibid.
137 Ibid.
139 Hagedorn, Prophet in the Wilderness, p. 61.
should refrain from Socratic irony as the latter is dishonesty which the learner can sense. Finally, his method of questioning differs insofar as the teacher should not only point out what the student does not know but also should stress what the learner does know. By this approach, it is possible to establish a trusting, non-threatening exchange of ideas which builds confidence and assurance. \(^{140}\) Because the learner is rewarded by both the interpersonal relationship and the "spiritual"\(^{141}\) joy of learning, he is motivated to discover more about the "life good to live."

By individual reflection and discussion with the teacher about the questions of existence in general and the will-to-live in particular, the student should ultimately conclude that by nature man values his own life—he ought to value it more; man craves self-perfection—he ought to perfect himself to the highest degree possible; man possesses a social interest in others—he ought to heighten this interest in others; man is related to natural life—he ought to have more respect for it; and man is related to Infinite Being—he ought to strive to become more related and "at-one" with it. The process is completed when the learner personifies it.

Another major way in which reverence for life can be taught

\(^{140}\) Ibid.

\(^{141}\) Phillips, Safari of Discovery: The Universe of Albert Schweitzer, p. 188.
successfully is through example. Schweitzer is repeatedly on record as saying that teaching by example is the best way to teach others. If, as one student of Schweitzer suggests, the phrase reverence for life is more widely known "than Plato's 'form of the Good,' than Kant's 'law of thought,' or Hegel's 'unity of self with not-self,'" then Schweitzer's life constitutes living proof that teaching by example is more effective than teaching by words.

Schweitzerian pedagogy demands that the teacher not only talk about the value of life but that he also practice reverence for life both within and beyond the school. However, teaching by example must be pure and genuine. Schweitzer cautions those who would teach through example by stating that they:

... should not think, 'Behold, I am giving an example'—that spoils it. Anyone who thinks of the example he will give to others is occupied with things he ought not be doing. He has lost his simplicity. Only as man has simplicity can his example influence others. 143

Teaching by living example can be reinforced by exposing learners to the lives and works of the outstanding practitioners of reverence for life. Through the study of "significant models," the learner is brought into the realm of a "paradigmatic self." Such life-affirming


personalities as Confucius, Lao-Tse, Chaung-Tse, Zarathustra, Jesus, Geothe, Tagore, and Ramakrishna are worthy examples for the young to imitate if they so choose. Buddha and Gandhi also qualify because they refrain from taking life and in spite of their life- and world-negating philosophy, they find themselves engaging in acts which are altogether life-affirming. For the sake of contemporaneity, we could add the name of the late Martin Luther King, Jr. to the list.

These men are also important to study because their work and thought are timeless and universal. They discover the great questions with which all men must grapple regardless of cultural or racial background. The spirit of these life-affirming personalities can influence the young favorably because they challenge and help bring forth the good that is natural to man.

Schweitzer admonishes both teacher and learner against idolizing significant models because such blind devotion negates any meaningful insight. Also, the persons portraying the lives and thoughts of important prototypes must present their subjects in a simple, straightforward way so that all learners may comprehend.

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144 See Schweitzer, Indian Thought and Its Development.
145 Ibid., pp. 92 and 230.
146 Joy, Albert Schweitzer: An Anthology, p. 79.
147 Ibid., p. 88.
148 Ibid., p. 78.
149 Ibid., p. 79.
The young can also be exposed to the value of life and right conduct by going to Nature itself. By observing Nature at work—especially the natural tendency of most creatures to aid one another—the young become aware that there is something good about Nature giving birth to life and supporting its growth. The blind power and brute savagery of Nature should also awaken the young to the realization that there is something evil about stamping out life and retarding its growth. Schweitzer believes that there is a natural inclination in the young person to sense that all living things wish to exist and advance. Through a process of identification and comparison with other life and by empathically putting himself into the place of creature companions, the developing person gains an experiential awareness that all life possesses unique value. Given opportunities to help fellow creatures and fellow classmates to expand their lives, the student experiences spiritual reward. Such reinforcement heightens the learner's natural tendency to affirm life and transforms the experiential awareness of the sanctity of life into experiential meaning when other life is helped. Thus, the developing person—and in later years the more developed person—finds meaning in the ethics of reverence for life and is lead to increased reverence.

Teaching reverence for life through the "use of Nature" implies

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that the role of the teacher is largely an arranger of field trips to Nature, a "naturalizer" of the classroom, a provider of environmental learning materials, and a "life" resource person. Throughout the entire process of sensitizing the child to the proper treatment of life, the teacher must exercise a reverence for the student's life by refraining from conditioning or "shaping" because "man is never to be sacrificed for an end." This is not easy since the choice of one environment in preference to another lends itself to direction. The ethical teacher possesses increased guilt with each choice made and must realize the tremendous responsibility under which he labors. Such guilt and enormous responsibility, however, are positive in the sense that they should give the teacher cause to pause and think carefully before any decisions concerning learners are made.

As the maturing person's rational powers of comprehension increase over the years, the conception that life is to be prized and brought to its highest development is given a more firm foundation in rational thought.

That all ethics must be the product of rational thought is for Schweitzer, a necessity. In a comment about the value of reason, Schweitzer says that, "Reason ... is given us that we may bring

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everything within the range of its action." In a statement which speaks to reason and the ethical, he writes that, "Whatever is reasonable is good . . . To be truly rational is to become ethical." He is convinced that reverence for life is the "necessity of thought" and that it is "rationalism, thought to a conclusion."

To give sum and substance to any acceptance of reverence for life, the young person must be able to justify and supplement his natural and subjective love of life with reason. This calls for the necessity of sharpening the reasoning powers of the underdeveloped person. Schweitzer does not have much to say as to just how this is to be done, but his own life-style as a student who earned doctorates in philosophy, theology, music, and medicine may offer some clues.

Schweitzer's own approach to developing his powers of reason suggest that the mind or intellect can be honed by continual and strenuous intellectual "workouts." For Schweitzer, this is accomplished most effectively by working for an in-depth, in-breadth immersion in both formal and not so formal academic disciplines. By constant exercise of the intellect and by stoking the mind with time-tested knowledge, students will come to see that knowledge and truth are interconnected. Consequently, the understanding of reverence for life can be based on

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154Ibid., p. 237.  
155Ibid., p. 263.
rational grounds.

In this case, the teacher becomes an arranger of activities that will develop the mind (reason, memory, and will), a tough-minded questioner, a selector of materials, and a discoverer of methods which will exercise the mental powers of the young.

Certainly, the young can learn of reverence for life by living it in the classroom. In a sense, this is a case of the learning commencing "where the use of language ceases."\(^\text{156}\) Living or practicing reverence can be accomplished by the teacher and pupils arranging concrete situations in which the learner can contribute to life. Such situations can range from promoting the life of flora and fauna brought into the classroom to contributing to self-perfection and the perfection of other selves already in the classroom. By practicing reverence for life on the spot, the learner sees the immediate consequences of his actions. Through private reflection, discussion with classmates, and dialogue with the teacher, the learner can evaluate his conduct. In this way, the school is assisting in the development of moral selves and education itself is becoming a reverential institution.

A radically different approach of learner-evaluation would emerge from living and practicing Schweitzer's ethics in the classroom. The sole criterion for the evaluation of others becomes what the student

\(^{156}\) Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 315.
contributes and what he does to further life—his own and that of others with whom he interacts. According to Schweitzer, "Spiritual happiness is sufficient unto itself." Evaluation based on such an intrinsic reward goes beyond current attempts to measure persons by pencil and paper techniques. Contemporary "testomania" centering in attempts to quantify human lives must give way to more reverential judgment.

In summation, Schweitzer sees the ultimate question of life centering in ethical conduct. The fate of civilization itself rests on discovering that which is truly ethical. Since all mankind must deal with the question of right human conduct, every child has the right to be assisted in arriving at what he believes to be appropriate conduct. A study of ethics in general and of the ethics of reverence for life can, according to Schweitzer, become the most practical endeavor in which education can engage.

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157 Phillips, Safari of Discovery: The Universe of Albert Schweitzer, p. 188.
Chapter 4

EDUCATION AND SOME FIELDS OF KNOWLEDGE

With its depreciation of thinking our generation has lost its feeling for sincerity and with it that for truth as well. It can therefore be helped only by its being brought once more onto the road of thinking.

We must all venture once more to become thinkers.

Education must concern itself with finding that knowledge by which man can discover the path that leads from darkness to light.

We must educate for truth. There is no other way!

Albert Schweitzer

Albert Schweitzer was thoroughly convinced that it is only through an education which yields true knowledge that man can "become capable of answering current questions" about his existence, the world, and his relation to it. For Schweitzer, truth based on valid knowledge is man's chief weapon in the struggle to discover a purposeful and meaningful existence. Much of his life was spent in pursuit of the kinds of knowledge that would equip him for continual truth-seeking. Schweitzer was certain that "truth is under all circumstances more valuable than non-truth." With an education which "gets at" the proper kinds of knowledge, man can shape a meaningful existence for himself and also contribute to the development of others' existences--


2 Ibid., pp. 16-17.

3 Ibid., p. 33.
even to the whole of mankind itself. Schweitzer's optimism regarding the importance and power of truth is clearly revealed when he states:

One belief of my childhood I have preserved with the certainty that I can never lose it: belief in truth. I am confident that the spirit generated by truth is stronger than the force of circumstances. In my view no other destiny awaits mankind than that which, through its mental and spiritual disposition, it prepared for itself. Therefore I do not believe that it will have to tread the road to ruin right to the end.\(^4\)

It is Schweitzer's view that intelligence and the desire to know distinguish man from other forms of animals. The capacity for reason, imagination, memory, and conscious willing are unique to man and enable him to be a civilization builder.\(^5\) A major consequence of this human intellectual activity is the collection and storage of knowledge. For Schweitzer, to know is to be truly human; knowledge is necessary for man to achieve "humanhood." He writes:

> In every stage of life, right up to the level of man, terrible ignorance lies over all creatures . . . The world given over to ignorance and egotism is like a valley shrouded in darkness. Only upon the peaks is there light. All must live in darkness. Only one creature can escape and catch a glimpse of the light: the highest creature, man.\(^6\)

Consequently, a major objective of education must be the attainment of knowledge.\(^7\)

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6. Ibid.
Since Schweitzer thinks knowledge is fundamental in human development and believes that knowledge must be passed along to the young, it is important to uncover what he thinks knowledge is. The methods and content of instruction which Schweitzer suggests depend heavily on what he perceives knowledge to be. Not only does Schweitzer have considerable to say about epistemology but he also discusses several fields of study which bear upon the teaching-learning process.

It is the aim of this chapter to lay bare Schweitzer's ideas concerning knowledge and some of his comments about various fields of study as these relate to education. Though some of this information borders on repetition of material in preceding chapters, a more thorough discussion is necessary.

SCHWEITZER'S VIEWS ON THE NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge, to the famous Alsatian, was both substantive and functional. Schweitzer's desire for knowledge centered in his need to: (a) discover the meaning and purpose of life and (b) find the underlying principle of morality. For Schweitzer, knowledge is utilitarian in that it should perform the service of enlightening man as to the meaning of his existence and to the proper behavior in which he is to engage. Nevertheless, he maintained that all knowledge, no matter how diverse or

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orientated, is worthwhile. He was positive that the possibility of knowing is enhanced when man can summon a large store of accumulated experience. His concentrated academic studies and lifelong "passion for reading" suggest that Schweitzer believed that accumulated experience is—at least to some extent—available in books and institutions of learning. His lifelong interest in the natural sciences and orientation to historical science convinced him that it is especially important to gather systematic and unbiased knowledge. His continual accumulation of knowledge and the serviceable use to which he put it indicate that he believed both the substantive and process concepts of knowledge are important. Schweitzer's own description of his decision to become a medical doctor makes this very point.

I wanted to be a doctor that I might be able to work without having to talk. For years I had been giving myself out in words . . . Medical knowledge made it possible for me to carry out my intention in the best and most complete way, wherever the path of service might lead me.  

Schweitzer asserts that knowledge should be both experiential and descriptive. For example, knowledge "about" existential questions which one experiences is direct and immediate. Since we cannot directly experience all that we must experience in order to wrestle with the mind-boggling questions of existence, it is necessary to "go outside of

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10 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 77.
ourselves" so to speak. According to Schweitzer, complete knowledge and full intellectual development are not possible without a knowledge about thought from the past.\(^\text{11}\) As Schweitzer puts it, "When one reads a good book on a serious subject, he is no longer a creature but moves toward becoming a man."\(^\text{12}\)

In his perennial search for answers to the endless and profound questions of life, Schweitzer stresses the importance of both the subjective and objective dimensions of knowledge.\(^\text{13}\)

Schweitzer's reverence for truth and adherence to objective thinking\(^\text{14}\) is evidenced frequently in his autobiographical books and in the way he approaches such figures as Jesus Christ, the Apostle Paul, and the musician Johann Sebastian Bach. Objective facts, insofar as they may be discovered and grasped, are the necessary presuppositions of understanding for Schweitzer. He writes that as a young teenager he possessed an intense desire for objective discussion.\(^\text{15}\)

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\(^{11}\)Note: A large part of *The Philosophy of Civilization* is devoted to surveying and reporting the history of ethical thought.


\(^{13}\)Ibid.


\(^{15}\)Schweitzer, *Memoirs of Childhood and Youth*, p. 88.
On everyone who met me in the street I wanted to inflict thorough-going and closely reasoned considerations on all questions that were then being generally discussed, in order to expose the errors of the conventional views and get the correct view recognized and appreciated. The joy of seeking for what was true and serviceable had come upon me like a kind of intoxication, and every conversation in which I took part had to go back to fundamentals... The conviction that human progress is possible only if reasoned thought replaces mere opinion and absence of thought had seized hold of me.  

Although Schweitzer eventually concluded that objective facts can deliver only partial answers to the challenging questions of human existence, he never relinquished his love for discussion based on objective information.

If I meet people to whom it is possible to open oneself out as a man who thinks, I feel a passionate enjoyment in their society as if I were as young as ever, and if I stumble on a young man who is ready for serious discussion, I give myself up to a joyous exchange of cut and thrust which makes the difference between our ages, whether for good or ill, a thing of no account.

Schweitzer's uncompromising tenacity for discovering truth based on objective knowledge is apparent in the cold comfort he experienced while publishing his unorthodox conclusions concerning the life of Jesus. He states that:

The satisfaction which I could not help feeling at having solved so many historical riddles about the existence of Jesus, was accompanied by the painful consciousness that this new knowledge in the realm of history would mean unrest and difficulty for Christian piety. I comforted myself, however, with words of St. Paul's which had been familiar to me from childhood: "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth."  

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16 Ibid., pp. 88-89.  
17 Ibid., p. 91.  
18 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 45.
But in spite of all his faith in and insistence on objective knowledge, Schweitzer concludes that it is always incomplete. On the significant question of life in the world, objective knowledge can do little more than provide increasingly complex explanations "which only make the mysterious more mysterious than ever." Schweitzer describes what objective information can do for man:

Explore everything around you, penetrate to the furthest limits of human knowledge, and always you will come up against something inexplicable in the end. It is called life . . . All knowledge is, in the final analysis, the knowledge of life.

Objective knowledge enables man to gain knowledge "about" life, but it is subjective thought which can give man knowledge "of" life. With the knowledge that life is mystery as a point of departure, Schweitzer believes that it is no longer objective "reason that devotes itself to thought, but our whole being, that unity of emotion and reflection that constitutes the individual."

Schweitzer is certain that it is possible to find meaning and purpose in life if a unity of the objective and subjective components of knowledge can be secured. For Schweitzer, true and productive "thinking is harmony within us."

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19 Schweitzer, Memoirs of Childhood and Youth, pp. 85-86.
20 Schweitzer, Reverence for Life, p. 114.
22 Joy, Albert Schweitzer: An Anthology, p. 3.
Since his "particular preoccupation was with problems of morality," he found that he was forced to go beyond objective knowledge. In his theology and philosophy, Schweitzer relied heavily on the objective and rational; in ethics he found answers in what most thinkers would term the subjective and non-rational. Yet, Schweitzer was convinced that the highest rationality comes when man takes his reality from the depths of his very being. He affirms that: "Every human being who has the courage to allow his mind to probe deeply into the nature of truth will discover in himself the idea . . . that will illumine his path through life."

It is obvious that for Schweitzer knowledge from within carries individual human significance which objective knowledge does not. In the final analysis, it appears that Schweitzer chooses subjective knowledge based on objective facts as decisive in seeking answers to existential questions. He confirms as much when he writes about his medical studies:

Through my study of chemistry, physics, zoology, botany, and physiology I became more than ever conscious to what an extent truth in thought is justified and necessary, side by side with the truth which is merely established by facts. No doubt something subjective clings to the knowledge which results from a creative act of the mind. But at the same time such knowledge is on a higher plane than the knowledge based only on facts.

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24 Ibid.
25 Ibid., p. 154.
26 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 85.
As stressed in Chapters Two and Three, when Schweitzer plumbs the depths of his own being he discovers the idea of reverence for life which illumines his path and gives him the strength needed to fashion an extraordinary existence. To Schweitzer, if others truly confront thought and push far enough they too will come to the realization that, "Wherever you see life--that is yourself." When man realizes that he must try to make some kind of meaningful sense out of the great mystery of life, Schweitzer maintains that the mentally healthy person begins to take a positive interest in life. Life and what it may mean becomes attractive to him and turn him toward life, so to speak. Man begins to revere life intellectually, spiritually, and materially. To the Socratic dictum, "The unexamined life is not worth living," Schweitzer might add that the unlived life is not worth examining.

In addition, Schweitzer believes that once men begin to investigate life carefully they will realize that:

Life means strength, will, arising from the abyss, dissolving into the abyss again. Life is feeling, experience, suffering... its profundity will seize you suddenly with dizziness. In everything you recognize yourself. The tiny beetle that lies dead in your path--it was a living creature, struggling for its existence like yourself, rejoicing in the sun like you, knowing fear and pain like you. And now it is no more than decaying matter--which is what you will be sooner or later, too.  

27 Schweitzer, Reverence for Life, p. 115.

28 Ibid.
This insightful recognition is, Schweitzer thinks, reverence for life. It is reverence for the fathomless mystery man encounters in the universe, "an existence different in its outward appearance and yet inwardly of the same character as our own, terribly similar, awesomely related." Accordingly, "The strangeness between us and other creatures is here removed." Indifference to, separation from, and coolness toward all life is replaced by empathy, relatedness, concern, and sympathy.

As specified in Chapter Two, Schweitzer believes that reverence for life stems from a deepened will-to-live which has its roots in the nature of man. Thus, when an individual experiences it, he possesses that which may be called "inalienable knowledge." That is to say, the individual possesses knowledge which comes from within rather than from without. This is a kind of truth-finding rather than truth-taking. To Schweitzer, the former "brings with it a development in the direction

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29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
32 Note: While the researcher can find no mention of it by other scholars of Schweitzer, it is apparent that Schweitzer was enormously influenced by William Stern's Critical Personalism. Certainly, one who is less influenced by such Pantheistic Personalism would be unlikely to come to the same conclusion reached by Stern and Schweitzer; namely, that there is a definite solidarity among all living things. (See Philosophy of Civilization, pp. 259-260).
33 Schweitzer, Reverence for Life, p. 119.
of truthfulness;" the latter "means the death of that virtue." Once a man experiences and begins to practice reverence for life, he is living in harmony with the fundamental fact of human existence—the will to live; moreover, he is engaging in the kind of conduct which makes him less "brutal, ignorant, and heartless." "Being true to thine own self" and engaging in conduct which upgrades all life is, for Schweitzer, rational and objective.

Schweitzer justifies his position of trying to make the objective-subjective components of knowledge relational but yet, at the same

35 Ibid.
37 Note: One gets the distinct impression that Schweitzer is actually bending thought on the one hand and expanding it on the other so that it will agree with what he himself needs for a meaningful life. He may be aware of this but he writes as if he is convinced that his position is absolutely necessary. A case in point appears on page eighty of The Philosophy of Civilization: "If rational thought thinks itself out to a conclusion, it arrives at something non-rational which, nevertheless, is a necessity of thought. This is the paradox which dominates our spiritual life. If we try to get on without this non-rational element, there result views of the world and of life which have neither vitality nor value."

To the question of why many other keen thinkers have not and/or do not champion reverence for life as a necessity, Schweitzer answers that those who develop ethics are fearful of true thought. He also claims that other great thinkers have acknowledged reverence for life but referred to it as love or non-violence. While reverence goes beyond what is commonly understood as love and non-violence, there is a certain arrogance in Schweitzer's belief that he is confronting true thought while others are not.
time ultimately relinquishing the objective by saying that meaning can "come only as a result of inexorably truth-loving and recklessly courageous thought." 38

Sources of Knowledge

It is obvious that Schweitzer is convinced that sources of knowledge are to be found in the objective-subjective, rational-non-rational, and cognitive-affective aspects of man's intellectual undertakings. Although he was very much against the labeling process, it is safe to say that Schweitzer was at once an eclectic and an intellectual anarchist regarding the problem of sources of knowledge. In his assault on eliminating ignorance and his efforts at discovering truth, Schweitzer accepts all sources of knowledge that stand on the side of truth. 39 He must be regarded as an intellectual anarchist in that he goes beyond the current acceptable canons required for reaching truth. 40

Since the sources of knowledge which an educator chooses will suggest varying kinds of instructional activities, it is necessary to spell out Schweitzer's beliefs about where one gains knowledge.

39 Ibid., p. 55.
40 Note: Although Schweitzer was convinced that science and the scientific method are absolutely essential to progress, he was gravely concerned about the Western world's near mania for measuring and quantifying questions which he believed transcend mere scientific procedures.
Schweitzer thinks that man can gain knowledge through his senses. Through sight, sound, taste, smell, and touch man acquires an image of the environment around him. Much of Schweitzer's own knowledge during his formative years was due to his penchant for observing and immersing himself in all that surrounded him. This was especially true concerning his "childish piety," "feeling for music," "love of Nature," and "feeling for animal life." As a medical doctor who published research pertaining to tropical medicine and as a systematic observer of the nature of life, Schweitzer was convinced that empirical knowledge is valuable.

Although Schweitzer has respect for that knowledge which comes from the senses, he thinks that it is just one source of knowledge and that it can be deceptive. Because the senses owe their existence to human physiology, Schweitzer asserts that true knowledge can be adulterated by one's prejudices, emotional health, and self-interests. He emphasizes as much when he speaks of reasons underlying the decay of civilization:

41 Note: See Schweitzer, Memoirs of Childhood and Youth, pp. 12-123.
42 Ibid., p. 10.
43 Ibid., p. 28.
44 Ibid., p. 38.
45 Ibid., p. 46.
46 Note: Some of Schweitzer's observations relating to nature of life in the jungle appear in On the Edge of the Primeval Forest. Other notes which he kept at his hospital concerning the nature of life were destroyed over the years by the jungle climate of Africa.
Instead of discussing together the essential elements, such as population, State, Church, society, progress, which decide the character of our social development and that of mankind generally, we contented ourselves with starting from what is given by experience . . . We refused to believe that any ideas could be applicable to reality except those derived from experience . . . How we glorified our practical common-sense . . . we were behaving, really, like boys who give themselves up exultingly to the forces of nature and whizz down a hill on their toboggan without asking themselves whether they will be able to steer their vehicle successfully when they come to the next bend or the next unexpected obstacle.  

In summary, sense experience "does not make the man of today a cool observer and calculator such as he supposes himself to be."  

According to Schweitzer, another rich source of knowledge is tradition. He maintains that by critically examining the thought of great thinkers of all ages man can accumulate important knowledge. Again, much of Schweitzer's own knowledge was the result of his studies in history and biography. For Schweitzer, authoritative knowledge is valuable to the extent that it is verifiable and can be enlarged. In his Civilization and Ethics, Schweitzer asks the question, "Is there . . . any sense in ploughing for the thousand and second time a field which has already been ploughed a thousand and one times?" His answer is an unqualified yes. He then undertakes to survey and analyze the history of ethical thought—both that of the East and the West—and enlarges it by describing his "New Way" in ethics.

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49 Ibid., p. 103.
If traditional knowledge is to be meaningful, it must be researched from all possible viewpoints, and primary source materials should be used when possible. As Schweitzer sees it, much of the knowledge which comes from tradition is spurious because it lacks critical objectivity.  

A very important source of knowledge for Schweitzer may be referred to as existential. By this, Schweitzer means knowledge which emanates from individual reflection about one's own existence in the world. Schweitzer contends that, "A fundamental impulse to reflect about the universe stirs in us during those years in which we begin to think independently." From the "impulse to reflect," argues Schweitzer, dissatisfaction arises as the individual discovers that he has "appeared" within a world which is meaningless. Once "thought awakes," the question as to what meaning man will give to his life within the riddles of the universe raises itself. The answer to this question must come from within the individual himself. If man does not make use of his "own individual thinking," he remains a "stunted being" without meaning and purpose. Without private reflection about how to give

50 Ibid., p. 27.  
51 Ibid., p. 56.  
52 Ibid., p. 278.  
53 Ibid., p. 279.  
54 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 173.  
55 Ibid., p. 172.
meaning to his life, man is condemned to a creature-like existence which is characterized by "unrest, disappointment, and pain." He remains an undeveloped self and as such, is alienated, separated, and insignificant. For Schweitzer, all of this can be surmounted or at least subdued by reverence for life and attaining harmony with infinite Being or infinite Will. With the reflective, inward knowledge that he is life among other lives struggling to maintain himself, man must ask the question of why he desires to maintain himself. The answer is, for Schweitzer, that man desires to be in harmony with "the infinite, inexplicable, forward-urging Will in which all Being is grounded." Schweitzer believes that this harmony can be realized by reverencing other manifestations of Being. As Schweitzer views it, man can authenticate and elevate his existence in the world by being true to the will-to-live--his own, that of others, and infinite Will. This reflective kind of knowledge that comes from within is, to Schweitzer, knowledge derived from man's nature (the will-to-live) which is direct and immediate. Furthermore, he declares:

It is this knowledge that hands me the compass for the voyage in the night without the aid of a chart. To live out one's life in the direction of its course, to raise it to higher power, and to ennoble it, is natural. Every depreciation of the will-to-live is an act of insincerity towards myself, or a symptom of unhealthiness.

57 Ibid., p. 283.
58 Ibid., p. 282.
59 Ibid., p. 282.
Schweitzer asserts that, "The beginning of all wisdom is to be filled with the mystery of existence and of life." But if man turns inward, pondering and meditating about his existence, truth can be found. Man must "go deep into" himself to discover that "something in us that illumines our own vision." When knowledge comes from existence, it is individualistic and subjective; others cannot tell us what is true.

Because truth is elusive, it demands unity of thought and because life is varied, it needs re-affirmation; therefore, existential knowledge must be verifiable and buttressed by reason. Reason is held in high esteem by Schweitzer on several accounts. One of the

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60 Anderson, The Schweitzer Album, p. 171.
61 Ibid., p. 65.
62 Ibid.
63 Ibid., p. 162.
64 Note: Schweitzer faced several dilemmas in working out his thought. In this case, Schweitzer is certain that upon reflection the individual will settle upon reverence for life as "the light within" which can give him meaning. Yet, he claims that no one else can prescribe to another the truth that is necessary for meaning. On page sixty-five of Erica Anderson's, The Schweitzer Album, Schweitzer states that there is no one, single truth for everyone where truth and meaning are concerned. Schweitzer recognized this problem and apparently decided that he could have it both ways or at least live with the paradox. In an article entitled "The Ethics of Reverence for Life," Christendom, Winter, 1936, pp. 230-231, Schweitzer writes of reverence for life: "Whether such-and-such a man arrives at this principle, I may not know. But I know that it is given inherently in the will-to-live."
65 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 45.
most important of these is the fact that contemporary man has abandoned reason on which the fate of civilization depends, and this factor, he thinks, is contributing to the decay of civilization.\(^6^7\) As Schweitzer sees it, "All real progress in the world is in the last analysis produced by rationalism."\(^6^8\)

While Schweitzer is definitely in favor of "fact-discovering" reason, he stretches it into what he calls a "new rationalism."\(^6^9\) He is less than clear about what he means by the term but describes it thisly:

> It is no dry intellectualism which would suppress all the manifold movements of our inner life, but the totality of all the functions of our spirit in their living action and interaction. In it our intellect and our will hold that mysterious intercourse which determines the character of our spiritual being.\(^7^0\)

This "new rationalism, deeper and more efficient than the old,"\(^7^1\) is characterized by, "Leaving itself freely open to the whole influence of the world of fact."\(^7^2\) And, "it must explore every path offered by reflection and knowledge in its effort to reach the ultimate meaning of being and life!"\(^7^3\) Reason, for Schweitzer, obviously involves our whole

\(^6^7\) Schweitzer, *The Philosophy of Civilization*, p. 53.


\(^7^0\) Schweitzer, *The Philosophy of Civilization*, p. 54.

\(^7^1\) Schweitzer, *Out of My Life and Thought*, p. 172.


\(^7^3\) *Ibid.*
Since Schweitzer is deeply concerned about meaning and purpose in a world he considered to be without either, he uses reason to:
(a) lay a foundation for new insights, and (b) verify inward, intuitive knowledge originating from one's own concrete existence. He is confident that truth can supply man with meaning, but it "must in the end be capable of being grasped as something that stands to reason."  

Schweitzer contends that reason leads to the truest source of all knowledge—"mysticism of reality." While this may be characterized as "grasping" or "realizing" truth, it is unrelated to visions, trances, and ecstasies. It is not esoteric, gnostic, cabalistic, or even abstract. Schweitzer's mysticism strives for an "at-oneness" relationship with infinite Being but by moving toward life rather than away from it. There is nothing abstract about man giving himself to other beings. The mysticism which Schweitzer speaks of is based on "a living relationship to living life." He states that, "The hitherto accepted mysticism is abstract" as it is constructed on imagination, "fantastic systems of 'metaphysics'," and "peculiar psychic experiences."  

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74 Joy, Albert Schweitzer: An Anthology, p. 31.
76 Ibid., p. 304.
77 Ibid.
78 Ibid.
79 Ibid.
80 Ibid., p. 72.
81 Ibid., p. 73.
According to Schweitzer, "We must therefore abandon abstract mysticism, and turn to the mysticism which is alive."\textsuperscript{82}

Schweitzer is able to talk about a concrete, realistic, and alive mysticism because he believes that reality consists in "the Being which manifests itself in phenomena."\textsuperscript{83} He elaborates by commenting that:

\ldots reality knows nothing about the individual being able to enter into connection with the totality of Being. As it knows of no Being except that which manifests itself in the existence of individual beings so also it knows of no relations except those of one individual being to another. If mysticism, then, intends to be honest, there is nothing for it to do but to cast from it the usual abstractions, and to admit that it can do nothing rational with this imaginary essence of Being \ldots. It must in all seriousness go through the process of conversion to the mysticism of reality. Abandoning all stage decorations and declamation, let it try to get its experience in living nature.\textsuperscript{84}

Schweitzer then turns to what he believes is the true, living mysticism of reality by explaining that:

There is no Essence of Being, but only infinite Being in infinite manifestations. It is only through the manifestations of Being, and only through those with which I enter into relations, that my being has any intercourse with infinite Being. The devotion of my being to infinite Being means devotion of my being to all the manifestations of Being which need my devotion, and to which I am able to devote myself.

Only an infinitely small part of infinite Being comes within my range. The rest of it passes me by, like distant ships to which I make signals they do not understand. But by devoting myself to that which comes within my sphere of influence and needs me, I make spiritual, inward devotion to infinite Being a reality and thereby give my own poor existence meaning and richness. The river has found the sea.\textsuperscript{85}

\textsuperscript{82}Ibid., p. 304. \quad \textsuperscript{83}Ibid. \quad \textsuperscript{84}Ibid., p. 305. \quad \textsuperscript{85}Ibid.
Although Schweitzer's mysticism of reality consists of reverence for life which permits "union with the Infinite to be realized by ethical action," he concludes that everyone has his own mysticism of reality. The important thing is that each person must "dig into depth" and find that reality which can furnish meaning in his life.

The Validation of Knowledge

The validity of knowledge, for Schweitzer, is determined by its value to the individual in his quest for meaning and purpose in life. Schweitzer holds that all sources of knowledge are of potential value to existential decision-making. But in the last analysis, it is the individual who is responsible for the "sorting-out-process" which is necessary for obtaining that knowledge which he needs for a meaningful existence. However, any "existential conclusions" must be the result of methods of inquiry which are free of bias and dogma.

In Schweitzer's own case, the ways he gained knowledge (the sources mentioned above) were also the means by which he validated it. In particular, he seems to have utilized three criteria for testing knowledge: (a) does it square with what self-reflection reveals about human nature, (b) does it hold significance for constructing a

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86 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 182.
88 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 177.
meaningful life, and (c) is it the result of the most dogma-free methods possible?

SOME COMMENTS ON VARIOUS FIELDS OF KNOWLEDGE

Having considered Schweitzer's views on the nature of knowledge, it is the aim of this section of the chapter to consider some of his ideas concerning major areas of study.

Philosophy

The field of philosophy will be considered first because Schweitzer believes it plays a paramount role in the thinking of individuals and the masses whether they know it or not. He believes that philosophers such as "Kant and Hegel have commanded millions who have never read a line of their writings, and who did not even know that they were obeying their orders."\(^89\) Also, the type of philosophy which Schweitzer envisions is characterized by a breadth and depth of concern not found in any other field of knowledge.

Schweitzer considers the function of philosophy to be the unification of knowledge from the several separate fields of study into a meaningful whole. The teacher of philosophy must be acquainted with all of the prominent fields of knowledge and then strive to relate them to one another in a logical way. He must be a generalist in the truest

\(^{89}\) Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 50.
sense of the term rather than a narrow specialist in one discipline. A major mission of philosophy is to traverse the lines and lower the walls which have been instituted among the various fields of study.  

Schweitzer maintains that philosophy should aid the individual and the collective in coming to an adequate world- and life-view. It should "influence the general thought" and be available for all of the people rather than the pedantic few. Schweitzer states in quite comprehensible language what he expects of philosophy:

... to deal with the elemental, inward questions about which individuals and the crowd are thinking, or ought to be thinking, to apply to them more comprehensive and more thorough methods of thought, and then restore them to general currency; and, finally, that the value of any philosophy is in the last resort to be measured by its capacity, or incapacity, to transform itself into a living philosophy of the people.

Moreover, philosophy ought to be "an active worker producing universal convictions about civilization." According to Schweitzer, Nineteenth and Twentieth Century philosophy have to be held responsible for contributing to the decline of civilization.

Our philosophizing did nothing more than produce again and again unstable fragments of the serviceable outlook on life which hovered before its mind's eye. Consequently our civilization also has remained fragmentary and insecure ... Our philosophizing

90 Ibid., p. 106.  
91 Ibid., p. 6.  
92 Ibid.  
93 Ibid., p. 6.  
94 Ibid., p. 6.  
95 Note: It should be stressed that Schweitzer's view of civilization is first and foremost ethical.
became less and less elemental, losing all connection with the elementary questions which man must ask of life and of the world. More and more it found satisfaction in the handling of philosophic questions that were merely academic, and in expert mastery of philosophical technique... Through this philosophy which did nothing but philosophize instead of struggling for a world-view founded on thought and serviceable for life, we came to be without any world-view at all, and therefore lacking in civilization.96

Finally, Schweitzer conceives "the ultimate vocation of philosophy to be the guide and guardian of general reason"97 toward a life- and world-view which can provide the serviceable, ethical ideals necessary to sustain a progressive civilization.98

Religion

As far as Schweitzer is concerned, religion is similar to philosophy insofar as it is concerned with organizing knowledge of various fields of study into a coherent whole. In both philosophy and religion, the chief goal is understanding; but religion should also provide inspiration, hope, and an impulse towards humanitarianism.99

Schweitzer is clear about what he envisions the task of religion to be: "Religion has not only to explain the world. It has also to respond to the need I feel of giving my life a purpose."100 Like

96 Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 72.
97 Ibid., p. 8. 98 Ibid.
99 Schweitzer, Reverence for Life, p. 53.
100 Joy, Albert Schweitzer: An Anthology, p. 69.
philosophy, religion must somehow offer the individual and the collective a satisfactory world- and life-view. 101

Schweitzer stresses the point that religion as it now exists is radically different from what it ought to be. As he views it, religion has been dogmatic and authoritarian robbing man of his spiritual independence. 102 Schweitzer asks and answers, "Is religion a force in the spiritual life of our age? I answer in your name and mine, 'No!'" 103 He believes that the "trend of the times and the movement of contemporary thought have" 104 overpowered religion and are derailing it from the course it once pursued. 105 Schweitzer contends that religion has succumbed to politics, 106 denominationalism, 107 and the "dogmas of nationalism and pragmatism." 108

Also, religion "is powerless in our time" 109 because it is

102 Ibid., p. 339.
104 Schweitzer, Reverence for Life, p. 60.
105 Ibid.
106 Ibid.
107 Ibid.
109 Schweitzer, Reverence for Life, p. 46.
"preachy," ritualistic, moralistic, \textsuperscript{110} and hypocritical. Schweitzer avows that Western religion is particularly ineffective because it does not deliver what it promises.

It speaks so piously of human dignity and human rights and then disregards this dignity and these rights of countless millions and treads them underfoot, only because they live overseas or because their skins are of different color or because they cannot help themselves. \textsuperscript{111}

Schweitzer views religion in a life-centered and anthropocentric context rather than in a heaven-centered and theocentric perspective. According to Schweitzer, "The first command the Lord gave upon earth can be condensed to only one word: man. He does not speak of religion, of faith, of the soul, or of anything else on earth; he speaks only of man." \textsuperscript{112} Religion should focus on man as he exists in the world at the present, trying to teach him to be more elemental, thoughtful, and ethically active. \textsuperscript{113} It should teach man how to live life now rather than how to prepare for life in the hereafter. For Schweitzer, "clinging in fear and terror to the hope of eternal life is not" \textsuperscript{114} what true

\textsuperscript{110} Note: Schweitzer gained a reputation of moralizing through his work in ethics. The fact is, he was not given to lecturing others on morality. See Reverence for Life, a collection of some of his sermons.

\textsuperscript{111} Schweitzer, Reverence for Life, p. 53.

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., p. 54.

\textsuperscript{113} Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 340.

\textsuperscript{114} Schweitzer, Reverence for Life, p. 69.
religion is about. What he thinks religion is about is teaching man to love life and to live it more successfully through serviceable action toward others right here on earth. Schweitzer underscores that such an approach to life is ethical and carries its own reward in itself rather than having its roots in the traditional hope of an eternal reward.

Schweitzer often remarked that he wished that he could have found the time to complete his thought about religion, philosophy, ethics, civilization, music, organ-construction, missionary work, tropical medicine, nuclear testing, and world peace. Because of his several scholarly undertakings, his half-century of varied endeavors at Lambaréné, and constant interruptions of all sorts, Schweitzer claimed that, "Some of my thoughts I had to carry for years in my head before I found the time to put them on paper." Nevertheless, he was able to develop his religious thought enough so that it is clear what he expects of religion where man is concerned. As knowledge which is a force in man's life, religion ought to teach man hope. Schweitzer sees hope as power and strength. He comments: "The energy in the world is equal to the hope in it. And even if only a few people share such hopes, a power is created which nothing can hold down—it inevitably

115 Ibid.
116 Ibid., p. 75.
118 Schweitzer, Reverence for Life, p. 46.
150

spreads to others.\textsuperscript{119} Secondly, religion ought to teach man silence.\textsuperscript{120} Empty talk accomplishes little or nothing. Schweitzer declares that religion should inform us that, "We must learn that all of our talking and planning is powerless. Modest, quiet work...is the order of the day."\textsuperscript{121}

Thirdly, religion must stress the importance of solitary work.\textsuperscript{122} It is through our own individual efforts that real and fruitful work is achieved. Schweitzer affirms that, "We expect all kinds of salvation from meetings, congresses, and organized cooperation."\textsuperscript{123} Yet the most productive labor is done by one's self, and "that is just what we must learn--to work independently."\textsuperscript{124}

In the fourth place, Schweitzer contends that religion ought to teach man to give service, especially to those who are less privileged.\textsuperscript{125} For Schweitzer, service to those who need it and desire it "is not primarily a religious matter. Far from it. It is first and foremost a duty of humanity never realized or acted upon by our states and nations."\textsuperscript{126} Religion ought to inspire man as man to give himself to other men--"true religion is also true humanitarianism."\textsuperscript{127}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{119}\textsuperscript{Ibid.}
\item \textsuperscript{120}\textsuperscript{Ibid., p. 47.}
\item \textsuperscript{121}\textsuperscript{Ibid.}
\item \textsuperscript{122}\textsuperscript{Ibid.}
\item \textsuperscript{123}\textsuperscript{Ibid.}
\item \textsuperscript{124}\textsuperscript{Ibid.}
\item \textsuperscript{125}\textsuperscript{Ibid., p. 52.}
\item \textsuperscript{126}\textsuperscript{Ibid.}
\item \textsuperscript{127}\textsuperscript{Ibid., p. 53.}
\end{itemize}
Next, religion ought to impress upon man the importance of atonement. For Schweitzer, atonement was particularized to expiating for the crimes committed by whites against blacks. More specifically, man should atone because of the "terrible crimes of violence done" to African natives under the guise of religious nations. From Schweitzer's point of view:

People robbed native inhabitants of their land, made slaves of them, let loose the scum of mankind upon them. Think of the atrocities that were perpetrated upon people subserviated to us, how systematically we have ruined them with our alcoholic "gifts" and everything else we have done... We decimate them, and then by the stroke of a pen, we take their land so they have nothing left at all.

Atonement through service is the only possible way of trying to square the great injustice done by whites to blacks. Schweitzer believes that religion has a special obligation in this area. 

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128 Ibid., p. 55.

129 Note: Surprisingly enough, recent years have seen some blacks demand and some whites come forth with sundry reparations of atonement for earlier Caucasian crimes against blacks. The forms that atonement assumes are subtle and not easily discerned. Also, just how lasting such atonement will be in this particular area of human relations remains a moot question. In this, as in so many matters, Schweitzer was truly prophetic.

130 Schweitzer, Reverence for Life, p. 55.

131 Ibid.

132 Ibid., pp. 55-56.

133 Ibid., p. 57.
Sixthly, religion ought to teach man the need for spiritual progress. For Schweitzer, the spiritual has been sacrificed to the material with the result being a decline in civilization. While both the material and spiritual elements are important in the development of civilization, Schweitzer maintains that the spiritual is the more important. He believes that there is one thing we can be certain of—"the purpose of all events is spiritual." If the spiritual component of civilization can be restored, "some progress must come." Religion should teach man that "a race of men must arise to form nations united by spiritual goals, attempting the highest that can be achieved on earth."

In terms of what religion ought to teach man, Schweitzer also hopes that it will make him aware of the need for feeling and showing compassion and gratitude. Schweitzer is convinced that man can find meaning in the "ethics of compassion" and acts of gratitude because he is taking positive action that brings men closer together. He is taking action that unites rather than separates. By an act of compassion and gratitude, "a human being is eternally joined to you by

134 Ibid., p. 98.  
135 Ibid.  
136 Ibid.  
137 Ibid.  
138 Ibid.  
139 Ibid., p. 121.  
140 Ibid., pp. 128-136.  
141 Ibid., p. 118.
mysterious bonds created through a deed done.″  

Lastly, Schweitzer briefly mentions that religion should awaken man to the importance of reflecting seriously about life, retaining high ideals, helping one's self, and having the courage to make one's way in all things without "formulas and doctrines."  

Art  

From early childhood until near the end, art and aesthetic experience played an important part in the life of Schweitzer. His detailed book on Bach, his own career as a musician, and his work in organ-construction indicate that he considered art essential to the development of the whole person. Schweitzer views art as recreational in that it can be enjoyable and restful at the end of a busy day. At Lambarene, he consistently found time to play a zinc-lined pedal piano given to him by the Paris Bach Society. He writes:  

How I enjoyed being able to practice at leisure and in quiet, without any slavery to time through being due to play at concerts, even though occasionally I could not find more than a bare half-hour in the day for the purpose.″  

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142 Ibid., p. 137.  
143 Ibid., p. 85.  
144 Ibid., p. 81.  
145 Ibid., p. 62.  
146 Ibid., p. 65.  
147 Schweitzer, Memoirs of Childhood and Youth, p. 28.  
148 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 115.
As Schweitzer interprets it, art is not only recreational for the performer but also for the one who responds to the aesthetic object. Schweitzer makes this point in discussing the music of Bach, when he remarks that:

What is greatest in this art...is the spirit that breathes out from it. A soul which out of the world's unrest longs for peace and has itself already tasted peace, allows in this music others to share its own experience.149

Through artistic expression—especially "painting, poetry, and music"150 one is able to give expression to feelings which he would be powerless to objectify in other ways, thus discharging tension, reducing hostility, and subduing frustration. "In every true artistic perception, there come into action all these feelings and ideas of which a man is capable,"151 thereby causing therapeutic benefits.

Perhaps more importantly, Schweitzer believes that art yields experience which is contemplative. That is, an object of beauty "demands of us men and women that we attain a composure and an inwardness that will enable us to rouse to life something of the deep spirit which lies hidden within it."152 In a large part, Schweitzer sees great art as

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149 Ibid., p. 56.
152 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 57.
functional in the sense that it can place man in a reflective mood about
the "fundamental mystery of things." In describing the merits of
Bach's Well-Tempered Clavichord, Schweitzer notes that:

What so fascinates us in the work is not the form or the build
of the piece, but the world-view that is mirrored in it. It is
not so much that we enjoy the Well-Tempered Clavichord as that we
are edified by it. Joy, sorrow, tears, lamentations, laughter--
to all these it gives voice, but in such a way that we are trans­
ported from the world of unrest to a world of peace, and see
reality in a new way...

Art, according to Schweitzer, is capable of giving man insight
and completeness of vision that other areas of knowledge cannot.
Because man reacts to artistic expression with all his "feelings and
ideas" of which he is capable, art is capable of forcing him to
combine intelligence and emotion. Schweitzer is convinced that learn­
ing, insight, and vision occur best when man's total being is involved.
Form conveys "suggestive symbols" which in "an unspoken but vital
way," provoke active thought and provide "the most potent means of
conjuring up the faculty of complete vision."

Schweitzer believes that in everyone there is a hidden "artist"

154 Ibid., p. 338.
156 Ibid., p. 16. 157 Ibid.
158 Ibid.
struggling to free himself. He elaborates by saying that only some individuals have the ability to actively create, while others can only react to creativity. It is not so much that the former "are more fundamentally artists than the others, but only that they can speak and the others are dumb." 159 It is in the inexplicable scheme of things that some should be able to express works of art and others enhance this creativity by reacting. As Schweitzer explains it:

When we see the passionate effect made by art on men who are only "receptive," and how much their mute imagination can add to the works of others, it no longer seems a paradox that it is only by accident that some of the great ones have received the gift of speech. 160

Consequently, all persons should have the opportunity to react to and create works of art. Viewed in this way, the object of aesthetic experience is both individual or particular and social or general.

Schweitzer looks upon art as being both subjective and objective. 161 Subjective art has its source in the individual personality and it is "almost independent of the epoch in which" 162 it exists. It is a law unto itself, is opposed to the spirit of the times, and creates new forms for the expression of its ideas. 163

Objective art is defined by Schweitzer as art which arises from,

159 Ibid., p. 15.  
160 Ibid.  
162 Ibid.  
163 Ibid.
or strives to reproduce forms, colors, and characteristics of the objective world. He adds that it is entirely of its time and works exclusively with "the forms and the ideas" that are currently prevalent. It applies little or "no criticism upon the media of artistic expression" which it encounters, and is under no obligation "to open out new paths." And finally, "the artistic personality exists independently of the human, the latter remaining in the background as if it were something almost accidental."

Schweitzer concludes that both objective and subjective art are essential, which is in keeping with his view that all things should be balanced and harmonious. Objective art, he says, is "super-personal." It seeks to express the is but does so "definitively, in unique perfection." It is here that Schweitzer sees art as having the function of supporting the ought. For all of his respect for the greatness of Bach, he observes that:

There is no stronger testimony to the greatness of Bach than the fact that in an epoch of error, and sharing its errors, he nevertheless wrote imperishable works. We have finally, however, the sad consciousness that he was only great enough to save himself, but not his epoch as well—that he did not hurl himself

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164 Ibid.
165 Ibid.
166 Ibid.
167 Ibid.
168 Ibid.
169 Ibid.
170 Ibid.
against it and strive to lead it back from this stilted poetry and the empty forms of Italian recitative and the da capo aria.

Although Schweitzer never finds the time and strength to delineate the particulars, it is apparent that art, too, has a role to play in the spiritual perfection of the individual and civilization. Based on what was mentioned above concerning Bach's shortcoming, it appears that Schweitzer views the role of the artist as that of rejecting the world as it is. Considering Schweitzer's belief in life- and world-affirmation, the artist who is ethical must not escape from the world in complete abstraction. Because of the power of art to rouse man, the artist becomes a key person in changing the current conformity-ridden world.

Apparently, the ethical man is a creative man of action. Schweitzer's call for a radical change of policy in thinking and action is, it seems, a challenge to create and transform a civilization which he characterizes as barbaric in its inhumanity into one which is committed to humanitarianism.

Schweitzer possesses a high regard for subjective art as he believes that:

171Ibid., p. 95.
Neither in painting, nor in music, nor in poetry is there such a thing as an absolute art that can be regarded as the norm, enabling us to brand all others as false, for in every artist there dwells another who wishes to have his own say in the matter.\textsuperscript{173} Schweitzer finds subjective art to be desirable because it comes from within, is original, and revolts against the spirit of the times. Schweitzer asserts that ideas are stronger than circumstances.\textsuperscript{174} He contends that objective art panders to the circumstances while subjective art battles them.\textsuperscript{175} All progress is based on that action which stems from the individual who looks inward, dares to be different, and is in disagreement with existing circumstances. To Schweitzer, the artist must dare to be independent of the time and circumstances in which he finds himself.\textsuperscript{176} In brief, the artist must be subjective in that he positions himself in opposition to the current times and creates new forms of expression.\textsuperscript{177} While Schweitzer favors "each artist doing his own thing," he cannot help but encourage the artist to do his part in creating a different kind of world.\textsuperscript{178}

Schweitzer was a man who constantly strove to combine the "fine" arts with the "useful" or practical arts. He viewed medicine as one.

\textsuperscript{174} Ibid., Vol. I, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{175} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{176} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{177} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{178} Ibid., p. 95.
of the most practical of all arts and became "a surgeon in order to
serve,"\textsuperscript{179} to do, and be useful in a concrete way. It is only by
blending the "fine" with the "useful" that one develops completeness
and wholeness.

Schweitzer believes that practical work is essential to pre­serving and promoting life going as far as to say that "usefullness is
everything."\textsuperscript{180} To Schweitzer, the practical builders are the sum and
substance of society. By the use of one's back in productive labor, he
becomes the backbone of civilization.

Finally, Schweitzer believes that all human activity possesses
an artistic dimension, that the ethical life itself is a work of art.

History

History was a continuing interest of Schweitzer's starting as
early as his ninth year\textsuperscript{181} and lasting until his death in 1965.
Schweitzer views history as a parent discipline which promises much
valid knowledge for man. However, history as it is now "done" and
taught is of little value. In recalling his love for both history and
science, he remarks, "... I gradually recognized that the historical
process too is full of riddles, and that we must abondon forever the

\textsuperscript{179}Joy, \textit{Albert Schweitzer: An Anthology}, p. 146.

\textsuperscript{180}Anderson, \textit{The Schweitzer Album}, p. 78.

\textsuperscript{181}Schweitzer, \textit{Memoirs of Childhood and Youth}, p. 59.
hope of really understanding the past."\textsuperscript{182} This is not because it is altogether impossible to understand the past but because there is a flagrant lack of critical objectivity among the majority of common people, professional historians, and teachers of history.\textsuperscript{183} Schweitzer amplifies by saying that:

\begin{quote}
Historical sense, in the full meaning of the term, implies a critical objectivity in the face of far-off and recent events alike. To keep this faculty free from the bias of opinions and interests when we are estimating facts is a power which even our historians do not possess . . . It is significant that while during the last few decades the learning of our historians has, no doubt, increased, their critical objectivity has not.\textsuperscript{184}
\end{quote}

He goes on to say that the history of the day is shot through with prejudices springing from growing nationalism and thoughtless creed. Schweitzer is of the mind that, "It is quite common nowadays to see the greatest learning bound up with the strongest bias."\textsuperscript{185}

From his own standpoint as a biographer and historian, Schweitzer scathingly denounces historians. They "are occupied by works written with propagandist aims;"\textsuperscript{186} they disseminate "as passionately as anyone the opinions of their own people instead of calling the latter to a thoughtful estimate of the facts;"\textsuperscript{187} they process history for popular

\begin{footnotes}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{182}Ibid., p. 86.
\item \textsuperscript{183}Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 27.
\item \textsuperscript{184}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{185}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{186}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{187}Ibid.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotes}
consumption and use; they produce history books for the young which are "culture beds of lies." Schweitzer's interpretation of history is primarily ethical and he holds that our current lack of a historical sense of reality is contributing to the decay of civilization. If we are to make history rather than suffer it, the field of history must provide: (a) "an elevated practical conception of events," (b) a less mechanical registering of spiritual achievements, and (c) a genuine historical sense of reality." This can be accomplished by assuming a critical outlook based on objectivity and the meticulous research of primary source materials.

Science

Science was very much a part of Schweitzer's entire life. He was involved with science as a medical student, physician, and researcher in tropical medicine. His interest in the general field of science continued in various ways and according to one student, he was very

\[188\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 28.} \quad 189\text{Ibid.} \quad 190\text{Ibid.} \]
\[191\text{Ibid.} \quad 192\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 29.} \quad 193\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 27.} \]
\[194\text{Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, pp. 20-58.} \]
\[195\text{Note: Schweitzer was in touch with foundation researchers in science and he corresponded regularly with such friends as Albert Einstein, Jean Rostand, and Linus Pauling. He was continually observing the nature of all life for the possibility of concrete evidence concerning the mysterious will-to-live. Schweitzer was also actively looking for ways to humanize science. Finally, his interest became even more fervid when he began to speak out against nuclear testing and atomic war.} \]
well informed on the latest scientific progress right up to his ninetieth year.\textsuperscript{196}

Schweitzer writes that as a medical student the study of the natural sciences brought him more knowledge than he had expected.\textsuperscript{197} He was impressed with the "truth which affirms itself as self-evident"\textsuperscript{198} and arguments in which facts "obtain a definite victory."\textsuperscript{199} The demand to support every statement made with facts appealed to Schweitzer and he left his medical studies convinced that without exposure to the sciences, intellectual maturity is impossible.\textsuperscript{200}

His concern for answers to cosmic questions, however, could not be satisfied by science. He writes in \textit{Memoirs} that:

The science teaching had something peculiarly stimulating for me. I could not get rid of the feeling that it was never made clear to us how little we really understand of the processes of Nature. For the scientific schoolbooks I felt a positive hatred. Their confident explanations—carefully shaped and trimmed with a view to being learnt by heart, and, as I soon observed, already somewhat out of date—satisfied me in no respect.\textsuperscript{201}

According to Schweitzer, science "has given us immense benefits;
it also has put us into great danger."²⁰² Like philosophy, religion, and history, science has also contributed to the decadence of civilization. As Schweitzer perceives it, the natural sciences are undermining the few existing ethical ideals that were carried over from the Eighteenth Century. He believes that man has thoughtlessly relinquished reflective thinking and replaced it with almost complete confidence in science and its "plebeian enthusiasm" for facts.²⁰³ He goes so far as to say that nothing is now recognized as valid except a science which describes reality.²⁰⁴ The result is thoughtlessness about any progressive civilization, which in Schweitzer's judgment, rests on ethical ideals and action.

In summary, Schweitzer is committed to the position that the world cannot get along without the scientific method and scientific knowledge. The study of science:

... means for everyone who produces intellectually, enlightenment and enormous gain, if he who has hitherto created facts now has to face facts, which are something, not because one has imagined them, but because they exist. Every kind of thinking is helped, if at any particular moment it can no longer occupy itself with what is imagined, but has to find its way through reality.²⁰⁵

²⁰³Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 4.
²⁰⁴Ibid.
Schweitzer's love for the study of man and his relationship to society goes back to his early childhood of which he says:

I had indeed as early as my ninth year begun to follow the events of the day with keen interest, and to live through them in thought... what especially interested me was the politics... I threw myself on the newspapers.  

Later as a student at the University of Berlin, Schweitzer attended lectures given by Georg Simmel. Unquestionably, the latter had a solid influence on Schweitzer and at least two Schweitzerian scholars claim that Simmel's affirmation "Become what you are" held substantial significance for the Goll Scholarship student. Also, as a student in Paris, Schweitzer was very much interested in the social theory of Charles Fourier.

In The Philosophy of Civilization, Schweitzer reveals that he was more than familiar with the works of Jeremy Bentham, Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, Auguste Comte, Henri de Saint-Simon, P. J. Proudhon, Robert Owen, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and Herbert Spencer.

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206 Schweitzer, Memoirs of Childhood and Youth, pp. 59-60.
207 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 22.
209 Schweitzer, On the Edge of the Primeval Forest, p. 64.
210 Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, pp. 221-234.
While he did not think that the social sciences should restrict themselves to only a few areas of studies, Schweitzer was convinced that they should give increased attention to three major problems: (a) race relations, (b) economic problems, and (c) the proper use of political, social, and nuclear power.

Schweitzer sees the basic problem in race relations as the exploitation of blacks by whites. The social sciences must somehow help reverse existing racial prejudices, denial of rights, and colonialism. Basically, Schweitzer thinks this can be done when social scientists themselves develop an acute ethical conscientiousness which they all-too-often lack. More specifically, he states that it is the job of social scientists to:

... re-establish human rights which cannot be infringed, human rights which guarantee to each person the greatest possible freedom for his personality within the entity of his own nation, human rights which protect his existence for his human dignity against any foreign violence to which he may be subjected.  

Schweitzer enumerates what he considers to be indestructible human rights as follows:

1. The right to habitation. "Man has the right to live where his life has been developed, and not to be displaced."  

211 Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 82.  
2. The right to circulate freely . . . "the right of emigration and immigration." 213

3. The right to land and soil . . . "to the natural riches of the soil and subsoil; and to dispose of it as one will." 214

4. The right to free work. "No right is more fundamental or more essential than that of the free disposal by man of his labor." 215

5. The right to justice. 216

6. The right to social organization without colonial interference. 217

7. The right to education. 218

8. The right to self-determination. 219

Social scientists must inform and somehow convince the populace that a colonization by exploitation is incompatible with true civilization and that man can engage in racial discrimination only at his own peril. 220

Schweitzer asserts that economic developments of the technological-scientific civilization of the West are inimical to man's spiritual
well-being. It has provided him with an abundance of material goods but has done violence to his spirit. According to Schweitzer, "The capacity of the modern man for progress in civilization is diminished because the circumstances in which he finds himself placed injure him psychically and stunt his personality." Man is being dehumanized at an alarmingly accelerated pace. The "factory system" alienates people "from the soil which feeds them, from their own homes, and from nature." Overstrain and the continual struggle for an insatiable existence of comfort have reduced man's freedom and his capacity for thought. Specialization curbs creativity and breadth of outlook. Mass production and its conditions render human relations mechanical, impersonal, and even cold. Persons are frequently treated as means rather than ends and are subordinated to institutions which rob them of any real sense of individuality. The current craze for organization has led to an over-organization that is hindering true civilization. Contemporary man has become lost in the mass as well as unthinking. Technologization has usurped one of the inalienable rights of individuals, the right to think as a free personality.

222 Ibid., p. 10.
223 Ibid.
224 Ibid., p. 11.
225 Ibid., p. 12.
226 Ibid., p. 16.
227 Ibid., p. 19.
Social scientists must endeavor to apprise people of the importance of an improved balance between the material and spiritual development of the individual and society.

Schweitzer is decidedly concerned about our ability to engage in nuclear armaments capable of bringing mankind to an end and our inability or unwillingness to engage in peace building. Our thirst for ever increasing power over the forces of nature threaten possible extinction unless man learns to live with his fellow man. Schweitzer summarizes the situation by declaring:

Let us dare to see things as they are. It has developed that man has become a superman. His superhumanity arises from the fact that through his acquisition of knowledge and power he ... can employ, by contrivances invented for the purpose, the energy released by the explosion of a certain mixture of chemicals. This permits him to make use of a much more powerful missile and to project it for much longer distances.

The superman suffers, however, from a fatal spiritual imperfection. He does not possess the superhuman reason which should accompany his superhuman might. He needs this reason if he is to make use of the power he has achieved for good and meaningful purposes rather than for dealing out death and destruction.228

Both world wars and the crisis in Southeast Asia are living proof to Schweitzer that "in becoming supermen we have become monsters."229 With increased destructive power which modern science has placed in our hands and the present mental disposition of modern man, "We are at the beginning of the end of the human race."230 We are clearly at a crisis

229Ibid.
230Ibid., p. 314.
and as Schweitzer views it, the scientists and social scientists must speak out against the misuse of this terrible power.

**Literature, Language, and Mathematics**

Schweitzer considered literature to be an important area of study because it focuses on many problems common to all men. In particular, much of its concern deals with the classic theme of man's attempt to give meaning and purpose to his life. The lessons to be learned about life from such literary giants as Tagore, Tolstoi, and Goethe are both profound and necessary.\(^{231}\)

Schweitzer spoke and wrote both French and German, having a preference for his mother tongue German.\(^{232}\) His interest in different languages was strong, and he found languages important because he was cosmopolitan in terms of his thinking, traveled to several different countries, and worked toward a third world based on man's need for his fellow man. Nevertheless, Schweitzer hints that one should learn to speak his mother tongue with facility before turning to other languages.\(^{233}\)

In the larger context, it is only through language that reverence for what is true in the past can be preserved and that which is to be in the future can be constructed.

\(^{231}\)Ibid., p. 146.

\(^{232}\)Schweitzer, *Out of My Life and Thought*, p. 52.

\(^{233}\)Ibid.
Mathematics did not play a great part in Schweitzer's life, except in his study of the natural sciences as a medical student. This field of study is important because it is precise, "mind-stretching," and useful. It is also important because it is the language of science.\textsuperscript{234}

\section*{THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS}

Albert Schweitzer's concern for meaning in life and his views on epistemology suggest that the learner goes to school for one indispensable reason: to methodically, efficiently, and purposefully acquire the kinds of knowledge which can help him create a meaningful existence. He also goes to school to become a "knowing" person which, for Schweitzer, he must become if he is to escape the gross ignorance which envelops other creatures. Contrary to traditional education, Schweitzerian pedagogy would have the learner go to school primarily to procure the kind of knowledge that will help him discover meaning for his own life, rather than being stocked with knowledge that deliberately inducts him into a predetermined, specific way of life. The important matter for Schweitzer is that the undeveloped person be awakened to the importance of knowledge as a tool for living.\textsuperscript{235} It is in the school,

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
  \item \textsuperscript{234} Schweitzer, \textit{Memoirs of Childhood and Youth}, p. 84.
  \item \textsuperscript{235} Schweitzer, \textit{Out of My Life and Thought}, p. 177.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
like no other place, that the developing person can obtain assistance in securing the accumulated experience of mankind.

The process and substantive concepts of knowledge held by Schweitzer imply that the school should emphasize "learning by doing" but not at the cost of abandoning the accumulated and recorded intellectual riches of mankind. Schweitzer asserts that education should foster an attitude of reverence for valid knowledge of the past but more importantly, it ought to sensitize the person to the importance of applying knowledge.

Schweitzer's belief that knowledge is experiential means that the school, to be an effective institution of learning, should provide the student with firsthand experiences in the form of field trips, experiments, projects, role-playing, "gaming," and other involvement exercises. Since Schweitzer thinks knowledge is also descriptive, immediate experiences will have to be supplemented by secondhand reports which are likely to be book-oriented and reading-centered. The academic dimensions of Schweitzer's own life intimate that books will be an important center for considerable educational activity. Nevertheless, he spent the greater part of his life personally testing what he discovered in books. The fact that Schweitzer was not an armchair philosopher and that he had little patience with those who are

\[236\] Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 28.
"nothing more than writers and members of academies" signify that pedantry has no place in his conception of education. Finally, Schweitzer is convinced that neither firsthand nor secondhand knowledge should be thoughtlessly consumed. One of the advantages of school, as he envisions it, is the possibility for the learner to engage in rational discussions with other students and teachers about the knowledge to which he is exposed. Schweitzer's insistence that truth has its roots in objective knowledge and his own work in the sciences suggest that the learner must be exposed to ways of: (a) discovering well-grounded information, (b) making meticulous observations, and (c) accurately checking facts. Much classroom time will be spent in student-teacher demonstrations, working with physical objects, and engaging in "discovery learning" based on the scientific methods. Unlike many educators, Schweitzer is definitely against drill and rote memorization. He speaks to the former when he says, "In all spheres of life, anything repeated over and over again loses its effect." Apparently, his own school experiences left him with an unsavory taste for the latter:

Homer left me cold. We were driven to a feeling of positive disgust for him by being expected to know the names of the parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins of all the heroes, gods,

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237 Ibid., p. 47.
238 Schweitzer, Reverence for Life, p. 70.
and goddesses who appear in the poems. And genealogies and relationships were never my strong point.

This is not to say that the student is free to ignore facts. If he is to find meaning and purpose in the "real" world, he must grasp substantial amounts of solid subject matter which involve both knowledge of the past and present. Obviously, the student can make progress toward gaining knowledge about his existence only if he is proficient in basic communication skills—reading, speaking, and writing. Further, the student must learn to analyze all knowledge he encounters through the use of reason and intelligence. This involves both the cognitive and affective domains of thinking or as Schweitzer puts it, one's whole being. Finally, the learner must apply the knowledge toward discovering more about himself and his relationship to the world. In a sense, the developing person is beginning his own lifelong "project" of attempting to gain knowledge that will bring meaning and purpose to his life. The project is relevant, ongoing, and of enormous significance; and as such, it possesses its own motivation for continual knowledge-seeking. If Schweitzer is correct in thinking that quite early in one's life there is a basic desire to reflect about existence, then the learner approaches knowledge with an attitude that it will help him to know more.

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239 Schweitzer, Memoirs of Childhood and Youth, pp. 87-88.
240 Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 56.
about life. He is searching for, learning, and utilizing content not because of some invented necessity but because it is relevant to the fundamental questions of being.

Because Schweitzer is convinced that truth consists of subjective as well as objective knowledge, the learner must have time of his own to meditate and reflect. The student must have an opportunity to individually and quietly consider the "hard" data he has been exposed to. Established facts must be checked with and against the state of one's being. This aspect of the student's learning is individual, self-oriented, and nonmanipulative. According to Schweitzer, truth and meaning are possible only when it is "created privately and unobtrusively." He is unequivocal about the necessity of private reflection as witnessed by his statement that developing persons, "... need times in which to concentrate, when they can search their inmost selves. It is tragic that most men have not achieved this feeling of self-awareness." In order that contemplation may be facilitated, the physical setting and architecture of the school building should be such that the individual is able to look "out over trees, roofs, clouds,

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241 Note: Interestingly enough, one of the current indictments brought against education by students from kindergarten through graduate school is that it divorces itself from life.


243 Schweitzer, Reverence for Life, p. 80.
and blue sky . . . into an infinity of distance."

The classroom should be structured so that one's thoughts and vision can ramble "from the finite to the infinite" and the self can be "wrapped in peace and quiet."

When attempting to attain inner knowledge, the school "is much more than a building in which one listens to" others. In Schweitzer's judgment, educators simply must start taking more account of the physical climate of the school. All sources of knowledge—the senses, reason, existence, new rationalism, and mysticism of reality—are better broached when the base of operation provides distance and a background set in Nature "so that the outward gaze can change to the inner one."

What inner, subjective knowledge one "comes up with" must be checked and refined by the new rationalism which leaves itself open to whatever facts it discovers. In turn, Schweitzer is of the mind that this will lead the learner to a truth which he refers to as the mysticism of reality. While Schweitzer particularizes this to reverence for life, each person must discover his own mysticism of reality.

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244 Schweitzer, *Memoirs of Childhood and Youth*, p. 78.
245 Ibid.
246 Ibid.
247 Ibid.
248 Ibid.
250 Schweitzer, *Out of My Life and Thought*, p. 175.
Certainly, Schweitzer's confidence in the reality of reverence for life means that the student should be exposed to this point of view. Yet, Schweitzer repeatedly makes it clear that there are other possible viewpoints and that it would be unethical not to expose the learner to these.

Schweitzer deals with the troublesome question of whether knowledge is subjective or objective by making them relational. He believes that when it comes to the subjective-objective components of knowledge, truth is the result of a "both-and" rather than an "either-or" proposition. Basically, it is the responsibility of the learner to sort out and use that knowledge which holds significance for fashioning a meaningful existence. The school exists primarily for the purpose of assisting in the process.

Due to the fact that the questions of meaning and purpose are common to all men, education must find curriculums and contents that are relevant and useful to all—the disadvantaged, powerless, and dispossessed as well as the more fortunate. Since the learner is dealing with significant questions in life and the meaning of life itself, Schweitzer maintains that the curriculum must be as broad as possible. Furthermore, the student should know that he is surveying "the entire domain of human knowledge" for a purpose; namely, to secure the kind

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251 Joy, Albert Schweitzer: An Anthology, p. 305.
of knowledge needed for living.\textsuperscript{252} It follows that the curriculum must be learner-centered, life-oriented, and change-conscious.

More specifically, Schweitzer places a heavy emphasis on the study of philosophy, religion, and art. Philosophy should be taught with the purpose of enabling the learner to emerge with a comprehensive outlook, a "theory of the universe,"\textsuperscript{253} and some sort of vision about life. It should awaken the student to the importance of dealing with elemental, inward questions of being and becoming. Philosophy should also provide the learner with knowledge and technique for arriving at some convictions about civilization. Certainly, the developing person should learn the importance of philosophizing and actively engage in the process both within and beyond the classroom. The learner should have an opportunity for non-pedantic study of axiology, cosmology, philosophical anthropology, and social philosophy. To Schweitzer, ethics should be of primary importance because of its focus on proper conduct. Also, philosophy and philosophers of the East should not be overlooked.

The student should be exposed to a dogma-free study of religion. Like philosophy, religion is wholistic in that it unifies various fields of study into a coherent configuration which can supply one with a broad frame of reference. The study of religion should center around what the

\textsuperscript{252}Schweitzer, \textit{Out of My Life and Thought}, p. 177.

\textsuperscript{253}Schweitzer, \textit{The Philosophy of Civilization}, p. 52.
world religions and the great religious thinkers—Buddha, Zarathustra, Christ, Paul, and Luther—have to offer the young person. The study of religion should focus on man as he presently functions on earth, suggesting the importance of being more service-minded and ethically conscious. It should teach the possibility that life can acquire increased meaning by living it now rather than preparing to live it at another time in an altogether uncertain hereafter. The student should grasp that true religion can be a positive force in life, offering alternative views of life and focusing on the proper conduct of man. Becoming more specific, Schweitzer believes that the study of religion should expose the young to virtues of silence, solitary work, service to others, justice, compassion, gratitude, taking life seriously, and spiritual awareness. Most of all, students should learn from their religious studies that man must become humanitarian in outlook and action.

Where both religion and philosophy are concerned, Schweitzer is committed to the idea that all schools should have philosophical and religious libraries. In a letter of thanks to a publisher-friend for having established a philosophical library, Schweitzer affirms that, "Today's generation"\textsuperscript{254} must become familiar with "books of worth"\textsuperscript{255} so they can "partake of the cultural and spiritual values books transmit."\textsuperscript{256}

\textsuperscript{254}Anderson, \textit{The Schweitzer Album}, p. 138.  
\textsuperscript{255}\textit{Ibid.}.  
\textsuperscript{256}\textit{Ibid.}. 
Schweitzer sees the humanities when defined as art, history, and literature, as forming a major part of the curriculum. The study of art gives the student an opportunity to create what he sees in life and what he feels about it. Art also offers the student a chance to view works of life which are uncensored, portraying all aspects of life—joy, misery, agony, happiness, dread, struggle, victory, loss, and so on indefinitely. It is through art—both in creating and reacting—that one can find solutions to the questions of meaning and purpose in life.

History offers the learner unique possibilities of coming into contact with the lives of great men and seeing how they handled the enormous questions of existence. It also should give the student some solid reasons for knowing how he got to be where he is. The learner should see the importance of objectivity in approaching history but should strive to relate and identify personally with historical events and personalities. Of particular importance, is the necessity of seeing history without being blinded by its penchant for nationalism and propaganda. Finally, the student should have a chance to "do" history on his own in that he can discover historical truths by investigating on his own. This implies that the student become familiar with methods of historical research.

The chief value of literature lies in its broad themes pertaining to life and its portrayal of the individual struggling for survival, meaning, purpose, and victory. Through identification, the student can
become immersed and involved in the life and death struggles of others. As Schweitzer sees it, literature should be taught along lines which deal with various motifs in life rather than by the traditional fact-centered, content-oriented approach.

Schweitzer definitely sees science as an essential part of the curriculum. The fact that life and its value—from the single cell organism to man—underlie Schweitzer's entire philosophy suggests that students must have the chance to study the life sciences. Through the analysis of living things, study of organisms, observation of Nature, and knowledge of evolution, the young can better form an intelligent and realistic view of life and the world around them. It is important, Schweitzer argues, that science in the narrow sense be broadened into reflective science.\(^\text{257}\) That is, science which is primarily limited to technical matters and "cold facts" must become science which is concerned with fundamental questions.\(^\text{258}\) Not only should science itself concentrate more on profound questions but also it should indicate to the student that while we know a great deal "about" cosmic questions, we have relatively little understanding of them. Hopefully, the study of science would raise as many questions about the nature of truth, about life and mind, and about what is real as it would answer. A proper study of

\[^{257}\text{Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 257.}\]

\[^{258}\text{Ibid.}\]
science should leave the learner realizing that if he is to find answers concerning meaning in life, he will have to supplement scientific knowledge with that gained from philosophy, religion, art, history, and literature.

The study of science should enable the learner to see the importance of objectivity without worshiping it. An invaluable outcome of the study of science should be the awareness of and proficient use of the scientific method. This is important because it can assist the student to uncover truth in all areas of knowledge, especially history.259

Finally, exposure to science should impress upon the learner that science must maintain ethical neutrality where truth is concerned; that is, it must describe what is. On the other hand, science must show the developing person—by both word and example—that it definitely supports civilization by proclaiming that its knowledge be used for peaceful purposes and civilization building.

Schweitzer suggests that the social sciences occupy an important place in any curriculum.260 The problems of man as he relates to society are growing in number and intensity almost daily. It is the special province of the social sciences to help call attention to and

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259 Ibid., p. 27.
260 Ibid., p. 25.
resolve problems relating to race relations, dehumanization, alienation, identity, anomie, narrow specialization, over-organization, conformity, propaganda, distribution of economic wealth, lack of freedom, distribution of power, overpopulation, and war.

Along with philosophy, the study of social science should inform the student that civilization is in a serious state of decay, that this decay is caused by the lack of an ethical foundation, that the restoration of civilization is possible, and that such restoration is possible only if we can bring the material and spiritual facets of civilization into harmony.

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262 Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 17.

263 Ibid.

264 Ibid.

265 Ibid., p. 19.


267 Ibid., p. 16.

268 Ibid., p. 17.

269 Ibid., p. 45.

270 Ibid., p. 333.

271 Ibid., p. 10.

272 Ibid., p. 337.


275 Developed in The Philosophy of Civilization.
Finally, the young should learn from social science that if the individual person and civilization are going to survive in any manner, then:

People must be taught to honor the ideal of humanitarianism. That above all is essential. That is spiritual politics, which must be pursued side by side with all political planning and acting... A spirit of true humanitarianism must arise to counter the spirit of inhumanity, which today is the ruling force in the world and which threatens to destroy us.\textsuperscript{276}

Schweitzer believes that this is not the thought and talk of an idealist but of a practical realist. Because "the achievements of science and technology\textsuperscript{277} have brought mankind to the brink of extinction by nuclear holocaust, "War has become something out of the question."\textsuperscript{278}

As Schweitzer sizes up the situation:

Before this era, when weapons still had limited effects, it was possible to ridicule pacifism as utopianism. But in the present age of weapons that can annihilate millions of people in a single assault, and simultaneously poison the atmosphere with radiation, peace has become an urgent necessity.\textsuperscript{279}

The student must somehow learn "that there is no practical problem\textsuperscript{280} prevailing between men and nations at any level which is worth the price of atomic war.\textsuperscript{281} Hopefully, the learner will come to abhor "the inhumanity of using atomic weapons."\textsuperscript{282}

\textsuperscript{276} Schweitzer, The Teaching of Reverence for Life, p. 54.
\textsuperscript{277} Ibid., p. 59.
\textsuperscript{278} Ibid., p. 53.
\textsuperscript{279} Ibid., pp. 53-54.
\textsuperscript{280} Ibid., p. 61.
\textsuperscript{281} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{282} Ibid., p. 62.
Finally, Schweitzer is convinced that social science must produce, "A new kind of patriotism."\textsuperscript{283} The new brand of patriotism which Schweitzer envisions is one in which "the new patriot is able to feel more humanly and see farther than patriots of the past."\textsuperscript{284}

Schweitzer views languages, mathematics, physical education, and practical arts as an integral part of the curriculum not only because they are useful but also because they are necessary to the development of the whole person. The study of languages is needed because we are moving toward a shrinking world in which communication with several nationalities will be the order of the day; mathematics because it is the language of science and it is necessary for figuring and calculating daily problems; physical education because rigorous exercise produces strength and dissipates tension; and the practical arts because they enable man to create and build objects which serve more down-to-earth immediate needs.\textsuperscript{285}

Schweitzer's conception of a curriculum finds its roots in his dictum "First think, then do."\textsuperscript{286} He definitely believes that the factor which determines what is to be taught is whether or not it relates to the knowledge that is needed for living.\textsuperscript{287} Furthermore, 

\textsuperscript{283}Ibid., p. 53. \textsuperscript{284}Ibid. 
\textsuperscript{286}Anderson, \textit{The Schweitzer Album}, p. 78. 
\textsuperscript{287}Schweitzer, \textit{Out of My Life and Thought}, p. 77.
he is convinced that what is studied should produce a man for all seasons, the whole person or universal man. Finally, Schweitzer maintains that educators and learners alike should not stress the technological at the expense of the aesthetic, moral, and humanistic.

Schweitzer is of the persuasion that the primary task of the teacher is to awaken the young to become serious about the meaning of their lives and to alert them to the fact that knowledge can contribute significantly to this endeavor. Schweitzer's belief that each person's life is uniquely his own and that the question of its meaning can ultimately be answered only by the individual suggests that the learner himself is largely responsible for acquiring the knowledge he needs to create a meaningful life. However, it is obvious that the young person is not competent enough to acquire knowledge completely on his own.

From all of this, it follows that the role of the teacher is not that of a director but one of a provocateur, a catalyst, and a helper. In the language of Schweitzer, the teacher is "a candle for others."289

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288 Note: Again Schweitzer faces a dilemma. He is firmly convinced that a meaningful life is the result of the individual devoting himself to other life or as Jesus puts it, "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it." If the individual adheres to this higher life-affirmation, obviously his life is not his own in any usual sense. When Schweitzer is pushed on this point, he repeatedly says that his philosophy is his conclusion which he needs for his life and that each individual must decide for himself what his particular life needs for meaning and purpose.

Schweitzer's conception of education squares with the etymological meaning of the word; namely, that education means "drawing out." He writes, "To unbind what is bound, to bring the underground waters to the surface: Mankind is waiting and longing for such as can do that."^{290}

As a "stage manager," the teacher must somehow arouse or draw out that fundamental impulse to reflect on the meaning of existence which Schweitzer believes to be inherent in all persons.^{291} The teacher should also help the student to see that it is through knowledge that one can gain insight concerning existence. It is vital that the student be awakened to the realization that knowledge is or at least can be relevant to his life and the making of it. Once this is understood, the learner's relationship to the subject matter studied becomes primary rather than secondary. He sees the material to be studied in terms of his own self rather than something imposed by others and unrelated to self.

The first method is the neo-Socratic model described in Chapter Two. The teacher can awaken the developing person intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually by asking him such questions as: Who am I? What is my purpose in life? What is my ultimate destiny?^{292} These and

^{290}Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 77.
^{291}Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 56.
similar questions, if asked frequently, should sensitize the learner to problems of existence. Likewise, such questions—Where can I find answers to the questions pertaining to life? What knowledge will help in my quest for meaning and purpose? Where do I look for meaningful knowledge concerning life and the universe—should prompt the learner to look for knowledge that will be meaningful and personally useful to him. As a raiser of questions, the teacher is instigating student concern toward "taking life seriously" and achieving knowledge which may hold significance for existence.

Not altogether unrelated to the Socratic method is the teacher as exemplar or a paradigmatic model. The two are related to the extent that both champion teachers who are: (a) genuinely interested in the meaning and purpose of life, and (b) enthusiastically and actively seeking truth.

From Schweitzer's vantage point, the teacher should make his own life his argument. He should be sincerely and deeply interested in the fathomless questions of life and regard it as a privilege to interact with students concerning such questions. The teacher should be a free thinker who is always searching for that knowledge which can shed light on his existence. He is a question-centered person who prompts the young to ask their own questions and will gladly give of his own

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Schweitzer, Reverence for Life, p. 48.
knowledge if asked to do so. Under no circumstances should a teacher perpetuate dogma nor should he impose his views on students. Anything to be taught along information-giving lines, should be determined by what is needed by the student and by what the situation demands. While students should be challenged, the true teacher must use terminology and concepts which are comprehensible to all—the underprivileged, the mistreated, and the miserable.

This is not to suggest the teacher should not use other methodological approaches when learners desire them or it is mutually agreed that there is a need to do so to enhance the growth of the student. It is more than likely that there will be times when it is necessary for teacher and learner to become co-partners in mental gymnastics in order that reasoning powers can be sharpened. It is also likely that problem solving will be an instructional method when the problem originates with the learner and is relevant to his life. Lectures, demonstrations, field trips, dialogues, independent study, and student tutoring are acceptable methods if they contribute to what the student needs for learning more about existence. Schweitzer would definitely oppose much of the "gadgetry and gimmickry" that many educators are currently consuming from profit-seeking business firms. If education is anything for Schweitzer, it is an intensely human concern!

Regardless of the method to be used, Schweitzer believes that learning can take place only when there is a warm, personal climate.
It is primarily up to the teacher to initiate a relationship in which the learner is free to come to his own conclusions regarding meaning and purpose in life. Such a relationship can take root when the teacher is genuine, accepts the learner, and shows empathy and concern for the student as a person. According to Schweitzer, the teacher should regard every student as a friend and show this friendship to the student as soon as he can. The teacher should act "natural and direct" so as to put the student at ease and foster trust. To Schweitzer's way of thinking, "Something has to happen in someone's heart" before much can happen in the classroom. He believes that this is most likely to occur when interaction is characterized by an intimate style of give and take. Schweitzer believes that the interpersonal relationship is absolutely essential in teaching. A student, friend, and co-worker of Schweitzer writes that, "... the reason he became a minister instead of striving for a professional career was simply to have more personal and daily contact with people than the academic life would permit."

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295 Ibid., p. 18.


Schweitzer's educational thought is unusually individualistic in its outlook. Education should be directed to and for the individual. Knowledge exists for man, not vice-versa. Knowledge and education may change but man is always man. It is the individual's mental disposition that must be changed if real progress is to be made at any level. According to Schweitzer, the renewal of civilization itself is dependent almost exclusively on the individual. If education is successful in getting the student to take his life seriously, he will eventually realize that both man and civilization lack the proper ethical basis. Schweitzer omits the details, but this "new tone of mind" among individuals will then make it possible to create "a new public opinion privately and unobtrusively."

299 Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 44.
300 Ibid., p. 45.
301 Ibid.
Chapter 5

EDUCATION AND SELF-PERFECTION

There has been created a social mentality which discourages perfection in individuals.

It is the duty of individuals to rise to a higher conception of their capabilities and undertake again the function which only the individual can perform, that of producing new spiritual-ethical ideas.

Education is that activity directed at bringing about the inner perfection of the individual personality.

The aim of education is the inner perfection of the individual and at the same time the direction of his activity so as to take effect on other men and on the objective world.

Albert Schweitzer

Any discussion of the educational significance of Albert Schweitzer would be incomplete without discussing his ideas regarding self-perfection. Schweitzer's own quest for self-perfection and his unique conception of what perfecting the self entails is highly relevant to current educational theory and practice. As we move into the 1970's, there is considerable educational activity centering on the development of the individual at all levels. Individually-centered education is receiving increased attention on all levels by educators, learners themselves, interested persons within the community, and the national government itself. It is the purpose of this chapter to expose Schweitzer's views concerning the matter of self-perfection and to suggest what these imply for education. Many of these views have been touched upon in earlier chapters; but in order to understand Schweitzer's
concept of self-perfection, it is necessary that these be discussed in detail.

SCHWEITZER'S CONCEPTION OF SELF-PERFECTION

Schweitzer's view of self-perfection is largely ethical in nature. He blames the present decaying condition of both the individual and civilization on the lack of ethical worthiness of individuals who have permitted their freedom to be usurped by external circumstances. According to Schweitzer, progress of any sort is possible only, "if individuals seek to assert themselves in society as ethical personalities."²

The Source of Self-Perfection

As was underscored in Chapter Two, Schweitzer is convinced that the most immediate fact of consciousness is, "I will to live."³ At its most primitive level, this is seen as the urge to self-preservation and is characteristic of all organisms. In Schweitzer's words, "all life tries to live itself out."⁴ In human beings, there is not only a

² Ibid.
⁴ Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 300.
tendency to stay alive but also the distinct proclivity for perfection. This "impulse to perfection"\(^5\) is instinctive in other creatures from the single-celled organism up to and including *homo sapiens*. In man, however, this "urge to self-perfecting"\(^6\) becomes less instinctive and more conscious. Schweitzer explains in voluntaristic terms:

> In my will-to-live the universal will-to-live experiences itself otherwise than in its other manifestations. In them it shows itself in a process of individualizing which, so far as I can see from the outside, is bent merely on living itself out to the full, and in no way in union with any other will-to-live. The world is a ghastly drama of will-to-live divided against itself. One existence makes its way at the cost of another; one destroys the other. One will-to-live merely exerts its will against the other, and has no knowledge of it. But in me the will-to-live has come to know about other wills-to-live. There is in it a yearning to arrive at unity with itself, to become universal.\(^7\)

This is possible because man is essentially a conscious, cognitive, and reflective being.\(^8\) In answer to the question of why the urge for self-preservation in man is followed by the desire for self-perfection, Schweitzer replies, "I have acquired the capacity of reflecting."\(^9\)

For Schweitzer, the source of self-perfection comes from the fundamental fact that all living beings are will-to-live. It comes from within and its recognition expands with thought.\(^10\) He summarizes

\(^5\)Joy, Albert Schweitzer: An Anthology, p. 250.  
\(^6\)Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 311.  
\(^7\)Ibid., p. 312.  
\(^8\)Ibid.  
\(^9\)Ibid.  
\(^10\)Ibid., p. 291.
his own remarks on self-perfection by saying:

We do not know how this aspiration came to be in use and how it has developed itself in us. It is an intrinsic part of our being. We must follow it if we will not be untrue to the secret will-to-live which is rooted in us.11

Schweitzer's Particular Type
or Form of Self-Perfection

It was also pointed out in Chapter Two that while the individual wills to live, he also exists among other life which wills to live.12 This obviously presents man with a dilemma: Must he work toward his own individual self-affirmation or the self-perfection of other life? However, Schweitzer believes that because man is a thinking being he recognizes the solidarity among all living things. With the realization that all life is one, man begins to affirm and perfect not only his own life but the lives of others.13 Schweitzer's own explanation is worth quoting:

The will-to-live which animates natural forces and living beings is concerned to work itself out unhindered. But in man this natural effort is in a state of tension with a mysterious effort of a different kind. Life-affirmation exerts itself to take up life-negation into itself in order to serve other living beings by self-devotion, and to protect them, even, it may be, by self-sacrifice, from injury or destruction . . . That which is


active elsewhere only as a sporadic instinct, or as an instinct in incomplete individualities and that, too, always within special relations of solidarity with others, becomes now, in man, a steady, voluntary, unlimited form of action, a result of thought, in which individuals endeavor to realize the higher life-affirmation.  

This comes about because of man's powers of cognition. Man's ability to think "seizes on something of which a preliminary form is seen in an instinct, in order to extend it and bring it to perfection." The precise role of thought in the matter is not clearly spelled out by Schweitzer, but it is critical. He clarifies to this extent:

In some way or other the role of thought lies in the fulfillment of life-affirmation. It rouses the will-to-live, in analogy with the life-affirmation which shows itself in the manifold life which is everywhere around it, and to join in its experiences. On the foundation of this world-affirmation, life-negation takes its place as a means of helping forward this affirmation of other life than its own. It is not life-denial in itself that is ethical, but only such as stands in the service of world-affirmation and becomes purposive within it.

Therefore, the correct perfecting of the self is considered by Schweitzer to be a blending of the affirmation of one's own self-interest and the devotion of one's self to other lives. Schweitzer's own life as an example of such balance is worthy of at least cursory comment here.

The widely accepted image of Schweitzer as an aging, kindly, white-haired father figure running around in a pith helmet giving his

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15 Ibid., p. 291.  
16 Ibid.
complete life in service to the natives of French Equatorial Africa is only part of the picture. Schweitzer did not regard his decision to go to Africa in order to render independent, direct service as a life of withdrawal, denial, or asceticism.\footnote{17}{Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 76.} Although he did originally think that he would have to renounce his musical activity, academic career, literary work, and financial independence, such was not to be the case.\footnote{18}{C. T. Campion (trans.), On the Edge of the Primeval Forest by Albert Schweitzer (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1952), p. 1.} Throughout the years, Schweitzer was able to engage in musical activity at Lambarene and gave many organ concerts while visiting in Europe, and made recordings of his organ music in 1936, 1952, and 1953.\footnote{19}{Erica Anderson, The World of Albert Schweitzer (New York: Harper & Brothers Publisher, 1955), p. 119.} After going to Africa, his scholarly works were prolific. He produced The Philosophy of Civilization, On the Edge of the Primeval Forest, Memoirs of Childhood and Youth, Out of My Life and Thought, Indian Thought and Its Development, and six other books; published over forty articles; and delivered the Dale, Hibbert, and Gifford Lectures, as well as lectures on Goethe. Schweitzer's income from organ concerts, organ recordings, book royalties, and loyal friends was sufficient to provide him with financial security. In fact, when a publisher friend lost money on one of Schweitzer's books, he even offered to repay the loss, saying that
he possessed more money than necessary. While he was hardly a man who lived for pleasure alone, it should be remembered that Schweitzer certainly pursued self-interests insofar as he lived for science and art until he was thirty-eight years old; he married and was the father of one daughter; he enjoyed good companionship and had European food shipped to Africa; and he stressed the importance of individual happiness in several of his many books.

It should be pointed out that his astonishing capacity for work enabled Schweitzer to accomplish everything he did without interfering with his devotion to others. It was his concern for and work on behalf of all life which came into his reach that set him so much apart from other men.

Schweitzer's devotion to other life may be seen in his daily practice of treating every animal, every plant, and every person with meticulous concern. Throughout his life, Schweitzer attempted to help all life which needed assistance and went to great lengths to refrain from injuring anything that lived. He took care not to walk on grass if there were paths or sidewalks; he helped worms and insects to places of safety; no meat was butchered at the Schweitzer hospital; monkeys near the hospital could not be killed; painted signs warning of chickens

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21 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 70.
and ducks at Lambarene admonished drivers of vehicles to reduce their speed; and only under necessity was any living thing killed. While he was building his hospital at Lambarene, Schweitzer relates:

But while I am setting the piles I am allowed to discover that sympathy for lower creatures can be aroused in even the most savage of natives. Before the pile is lowered into the pit I look whether any ants, or toads, or other creatures have fallen into it, and if so, I take them out with my hands so that they may not be maimed by the pile, or crushed to death later by the earth and stones, and I explain why I am doing this to those who are standing by.22

Schweitzer's concern for life at the human level is just as conspicuous. His efforts to relieve pain, suffering, and death as a medical doctor for over fifty years among the natives of Lambarene testify to his concern for man. With some financial assistance from friends, he used his own earnings to build a hospital from a single chickenhouse to fifty-five buildings so that medical facilities would be increased and serve to alleviate the suffering among the natives and white inhabitants of Lambarene. His acts of kindness toward other persons wherever he went are legendary. These range from carrying suitcases for women to donating over 10,000 marks which he had won for efforts in promoting world peace to German refugees and destitute writers.23


The Content of Self-Perfection

While the particular traits or characteristics which Schweitzer sees as essential to self-perfection are similar and not easily separable, he does see them as being separate but essential to the development of the whole person.

The starting point of self-perfection is to "take life seriously." To discover what his existence means is an obligation that man owes to himself. Concern for the meaning of existence entails reflecting about the universe, man, and infinite Being. Such reflection, Schweitzer contends, helps move man toward ethical behavior; indeed, "any impulse to action" toward progress is dependent upon serious contemplation of one's "own being." According to Schweitzer, "mere reflection about the meaning of life has already value in itself." Even if thought about existence results in miserable disillusionment or an imperfect conception of the universe, it "is better for it than persistent refusal to think out its position at all." At least, man has used his capacity for meditation, and he should have a better idea as to what he is doing and why.

24 Schweitzer, Reverence for Life, p. 47.
25 Ibid., p. 48.
27 Ibid., p. 60.
28 Ibid., p. 62.
29 Ibid., p. 63.
30 Ibid.
It is at this point that another element of self-perfection enters the picture; namely, resignation. Schweitzer believes that, "it may be that we shall be obliged to resign ourselves to abandon the problem of the interpretation of the universe." However, Schweitzer's conception of resignation is not pessimistic, defeating, or even one of revolt. To Schweitzer, "True resignation is not a becoming weary of the world, but the quiet triumph which the will-to-live celebrates at the hour of its greatest need over the circumstances of life." Resignation at this level represents an inner freedom from the outward circumstances of the world which tend to lead man here, there, and everywhere. This inner freedom means that a man:

... finds strength to deal with everything that is hard in his lot, in such a way that it all helps to make him a deeper and more inward person, to purify him, and to keep him calm and peaceful.

Accordingly, resignation is "the spiritual and ethical affirmation of one's own existence," and only the person who possesses it "is capable of accepting the world" and affirming it.

Even so, Schweitzer does not view resignation as withdrawal or a quiescent retirement into one's own selfhood, nor does he see it as a belief of "an acceptance of what is." It is, however, a point of

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31 Ibid., p. 64.  
32 Ibid., p. 284.  
33 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 178.  
34 Ibid., pp. 178-179.  
35 Ibid., p. 179.
departure or an essential step which must be taken if one is to devote
himself unswervingly to others. Schweitzer comments that through
resignation:

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\ldots \text{I begin to learn the secret of spiritual self-realization. I win an unsuspected freedom from the various destinies of life. At moments when I had expected to find myself shattered, I find myself exalted in an inexpressible and surprising happiness of freedom from the world, and I experience therein a clarification of my life-view. Resignation is the vestibule through which we enter ethics. Only he who in deepened devotion to his own will-to-live experiences inward freedom from outward occurrences, is capable of devoting himself in profound and steady fashion to the life of others.}
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To stretch the wording and thinking of Schweitzer, resignation enables one to see that to reverence or love one's own self is to reverence or
love others. In his own words, "the ethics of sincerity towards one-
self passes imperceptibly into that of devotion to others."

Schweitzer believes that resignation is essential for raising man above what the world thinks is possible and impossible. Furthermore, resignation can help the individual to persist in life- and world-
affirmation regardless of what appears to be pointless misery and suffering in the world. Schweitzer speaks to this point when he writes:

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\text{Only at quite rare moments have I felt really glad to be alive. I could not but feel with a sympathy full of regret all the pain that I saw around me, not only that of men but that of the whole creation. From this community of suffering I have never tried to withdraw myself. It seemed to me a matter of course that we should}
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\[36\text{Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 314.}\]
\[37\text{Ibid., pp. 313-314.}\]
\[38\text{Ibid., p. 314.}\]
all take our share of the burden of pain which lies upon the world . . . I always held firmly to the thought that each one of us can do a little to bring some portion of it to an end.  

Closely related to taking life seriously and resignation is an important part of self-perfection which Schweitzer calls peacefulness. Schweitzer uses the term in a holophrastic sense in that it represents solitude, quietness, solemnity, tranquility, serenity on the one hand, enthusiasm, energy, and power on the other. A "Peacefulness which passes all understanding" is not only a means toward "getting hold of one's self" and gaining inward knowledge; it is also an end in itself insofar as it brings one to a state of composure which "alone is the source of happiness." Schweitzer is especially concerned about how the current industrial society with its emphasis on materialism and concern for producing "organization man" is robbing the individual of his peacefulness. The continual barrage of propaganda, constant noise pollution, and continuing megalopolitan growth make it doubly difficult to gain peace and quiet necessary for looking inward. Before an individual can take any action concerning his own life and/or the lives of others, he must attain a calmness or peacefulness which can give him a

39 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 186.
40 Schweitzer, Reverence for Life, pp. 88-100.
41 Ibid., p. 97.  42 Ibid., p. 91.
thoughtful, deliberate outlook. It is in this vein of thought that Schweitzer muses, "Oh solitude of the primeval forest, how can I ever thank you for what you have been to me."44

Schweitzer emphasizes that the peacefulness he speaks of is a "pulsating power, not quietude."45 It helps man "to get beyond the trivialities of daily life"46 and to overcome the "superficial and profane."47 Given enough solitude and quiet, man can gain a peacefulness which is akin to spiritual power. When such peacefulness is experienced, there is a resultant power that enables man to better solve his problems and overcome troubles.48

Schweitzer is committed to the belief that self-perfection involves attuning oneself to Nature. It is through immediate contact with Nature that one becomes aware that her power, beauty, and mystery transcends any description or surface explanation which science can offer. As Schweitzer sees it, the beauty and power of Nature is such that man must derive strength from it.49 Schweitzer's view of Nature seems to be a kind of pantheism which calls for a closeness of man to Nature. Man's life is inextricably bound to all life and violation of

45 Schweitzer, Reverence for Life, p. 98.
46 Ibid., p. 90.
48 Ibid.
49 Ibid., p. 115.
any life is also a violation of one’s own. Much of Schweitzer’s thought on this matter is at best oblique; however, hints of his concern for the importance of ecological balance may be documented repeatedly.50 While in Africa, Schweitzer wrote that:

... all of us here live under the influence of the daily repeated experience that nature is everything and man is nothing. This brings into our general view of life—and this even in case of the less educated—something which makes us conscious of the feverishness and vanity of the life of Europe; it seems almost something abnormal that over a portion of the earth’s surface nature should be nothing and man everything.51

On occasion, Schweitzer simultaneously pokes fun at and chastises modern man for having unquestioning confidence in his power over the forces of nature.

Because he has power over the forces of nature, man built machines which took work away from man ... In some cities now air raid practices are held, with sirens shrieking and all lights out. People shove something over their heads which makes them look like beasts, and rush into cellars, while flying through the air appears the superman, possessing endless power for destruction.52

According to Schweitzer, the proper perfecting of self requires doing useful work. "Work is necessary to the preservation of life


52Ibid., p. 194.
itself." It is also "satisfying and fulfilling." Schweitzer believes that it is through practical work that one can contribute materially to life. Manual labor or practical work is also necessary to give a unity to one's development. Schweitzer once told a young student of philosophy who had come to Lambarene to ask him questions, "If you choose philosophy for your road, you will find it a stony one. You have to have a strong back." Schweitzer then suggested that the young man help break stones for the foundation of a building, which he did. Later, he and Schweitzer talked about philosophy. Schweitzer's views on the value of work are clearly seen in what he said in one of his lectures on Goethe.

I came on the real Goethe when it struck me in connection with his activities that he could not think of any intellectual employment without practical work side by side with it, and that the two were not held together by their character and object being similar, but were quite distinct and only united through his personality. It gripped me deeply that for this giant among the intellectuals there was no work which he held to be beneath his dignity, no practical employment of which he ever said that others on account of their natural gifts and of their profession could do it better than he, and that he was always ready to prove the unity of his personality by the union of practical work with intellectual activity.

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54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
Responsibility, too, is necessary to self-perfection. This aspect of self-perfection grows directly out of Schweitzer's definition of ethics which, "consist in responsibility towards all that lives—responsibility which has become so wide as to be limitless." Man has a responsibility to find ways in which he can help others and then take concrete action to do so. According to Schweitzer, "in some way or other and in something or other we should all live as men for men." Man is obligated to find ways in which he can give "a little time or friendliness, a little sympathy, or sociability, or labor" to his fellow man. While Schweitzer sees this as duty, he also believes that it is rewarding and fulfilling.

Responsibility is a great thing. To shoulder responsibility, not to shirk it. Politically, economically, in so many respects, people in our time don't seem to face their duties. If we learned early in life not to avoid responsibility the world would look brighter.

Not so far removed from both work and responsibility is Schweitzer's belief that action is essential to self-perfection. Although he is committed to the idea that contemplation is essential to

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58 Schweitzer, Indian Thought and Its Development, p. 262.
60 Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 322.
61 Ibid.
62 Anderson, The Schweitzer Album, p. 79.
full self-realization, Schweitzer does not recommend it completely. It must be supplemented with what he refers to as "the higher realization" which comes through action. In speaking primarily to young people, Schweitzer says that they should "persevere in action." Action is important "for the inner life." Schweitzer amplifies:

The interior joy we feel when we have done a good deed, when we feel we have been needed somewhere and have lent a helping hand, is the nourishment the soul requires. Without those times when man feels himself to be part of the spiritual world by his actions, his soul decays. So many drift into the misery of indifference because they did not start out with the vital power that comes from helping others. Don't forget this. Start right now, keep your eyes open, become active...

As Schweitzer interprets it, action is activity of all kinds toward doing life-affirming deeds. "In such action lies wisdom and confidence. A man who does not act gets no further than the maxim: Life means conflict and tribulation." The importance that Schweitzer attaches to being active may be seen when he discusses the inactivity of Schopenhauer.

You have heard of the philosopher Schopenhauer, who in his writings elevated to a supreme wisdom his belief that life is only suffering, conflict, and misery. I can never read a page of his without asking myself what would have become of this man if-- instead of being able to withdraw in splendid isolation from any

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63 Schweitzer, Reverence for Life, p. 25.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid., p. 81.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid., p. 25.
profession—he had been obliged to become a schoolteacher in a small Alpine village where he would have been faced with the task of converting neglected children into useful citizens. He would never have written his famous books. People would never lionize him or press laurel wreaths upon his silver locks. But Schopenhauer’s brilliance made him only a wise man. The simple and ignorant men of Galilee whom Jesus had sent out to work possessed a wisdom higher than his.\(^9\)

Schweitzer maintains that \textit{integrity} is an essential part of perfecting the self. This virtue includes the "will to sincerity"\(^70\) and confidence in the power of truth to overcome the "skepticism and spiritual bankruptcy"\(^71\) which currently reign supreme.\(^72\) In matters of scholarship, Schweitzer believes in complete and unyielding integrity. He contends that:

Those who tried to bring Jesus to life at the call of love found it a cruel task to be honest. The critical study of the life of Jesus has been for theology a school of honesty. The world had never seen before, and will never see again, a struggle for truth so full of pain and renunciation as that of which the lives of Jesus of the last hundred years contain the cryptic record.\(^73\)

As a student at the University of Strasbourgh, one of the appealing aspects of German research to Schweitzer was its sincerity to follow truth wherever it led.


\(^{70}\)Schweitzer, \textit{Out of My Life and Thought}, p. 173.

\(^{71}\)\textit{Ibid.}, p. 172.

\(^{72}\)\textit{Ibid.}, p. 172.

\(^{73}\)\textit{Ibid.}.
It is impossible to overestimate the value of what German research upon the life of Jesus has accomplished. It is a uniquely great expression of sincerity, one of the most significant events in the whole mental and spiritual life of humanity.\(^7^4\)

Schweitzer knows that absolute integrity in daily activities is difficult. Yet, he believes there are ways—if one is willing to look for them—in which one can maintain integrity in face of what appears to be an impossible situation. He, himself, encountered such a situation in attempting to become a doctor at the mission station at Lambarene which was under the direction of the Paris Missionary Society. The committee heading the Society seriously questioned Schweitzer's unorthodox religious views and wished him to answer questions "with an unqualified"\(^7^5\) yes or no before the entire committee. He states:

\[\dots \text{I declined to appear before the assembled committee and let them put theological questions to me. On the other hand, I offered to make a personal visit to each member of it, so that conversation with me might enable them to judge clearly whether my acceptance really meant such terrible danger to the souls of the Negroes and to the society's reputation. My proposal was accepted} \ldots \text{their fears were dispelled, and these visits actually brought me into quite cordial relations with a number of the committee members.}\(^7^6\)

In certain cases, it appears that Schweitzer would sanction some kinds of deceit. While he does not justify artifice in his writings, he himself was guilty of some duplicity. Examples include his sewing

\(^{7^4}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. } 34.\)

\(^{7^5}\text{Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. } 93.\)

\(^{7^6}\text{Ibid.}\)
money into his clothing while being transported from Africa to Europe as a prisoner during World War I so that it would not be taken by guards;⁷⁷ "masking" by feigning interest in the inane conversation engaged in by others;⁷⁸ and confiscating a generator for his hospital which was brought to facilitate dental work by a visiting dentist.⁷⁹

Self-discipline is central to Schweitzer's concept of self-perfection. Schweitzer pays tribute to an aunt and uncle with whom he lived while attending the Gymnasium at Mühlhausen for teaching him the importance of discipline.⁸⁰ He also stresses his indebtedness to one of his former teachers at Mühlhausen for teaching him self-discipline. The example set by this "form-master"⁸¹ moved Schweitzer to write, "Experience of this self-disciplined activity had a distinct effect upon me. I should have been ashamed to incur his displeasure, and he became my model."⁸² That Schweitzer believed in self-discipline is shown by his own practice of it. He relinquished playing competitive games because of his temper and his desire to win at almost any cost;⁸³

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⁷⁷Ibid.
⁷⁹Statement by Dr. H. M. Phillips in personal interview, September 13, 1971, at Chicago, Illinois.
⁸⁰Schweitzer, Memoirs of Childhood and Youth, p. 55.
⁸¹Ibid., p. 64.
⁸²Ibid., p. 65.
⁸³Ibid., p. 40.
he quit smoking when he was twenty-four years old because he thought the habit was beginning to rule him; he took stimulants such as coffee and tea only when he needed "to burn both ends of the candle" in order to produce scholarly works; and while he was a medical student from 1906 to 1913, he was teaching at the University of Strasbourg, preaching almost every Sunday, commuting frequently to Paris to give organ concerts, writing The Art of Organ Building and Organ Playing in Germany and France (1906), working on The Quest of the Historical Jesus (1910), producing Paul and His Interpreters (1912), and finished The Psychiatric Study of Jesus in 1913. The self-discipline required during these "years of continuous struggle with fatigue" borders on the unattainable. Schweitzer drove himself to work entire nights, night after night, by drinking strong, black coffee and soaking his bare feet in ice water.

Schweitzer asserts that perseverance is basic to perfecting one's self. One must learn to persevere in the face of all kinds of

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84 Ibid.
85 Based on a statement made by Erica Anderson in conversation with the researcher at Great Barrington, Massachusetts, on May 4, 1972.
87 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 80.
88 Based on a statement made by Erica Anderson in conversation with the researcher at Great Barrington, Massachusetts, on May 4, 1972.
difficulties; moreover, one must also learn to persist in conquering
daily, routine tasks so that tedious details become pleasurable and
self-satisfying. Schweitzer's autobiographical works are replete with
examples of his own perseverance in the face of troublesome situations.
He speaks of this in a general way when he writes:

In my own life anxiety, trouble, and sorrow have been allotted
to me at times in such abundant measure that had my nerves not
been so strong, I must have broken down under the weight. Heavy
is the burden of fatigue and responsibility which has lain upon
me without a break for years. I have not much of my life for
myself, not even the hours I should like to devote to my wife
and child. \(^99\)

Yet, he perseveres with "an energy which exerts itself with calmness
and deliberation."\(^9^0\) In conversation with friends, Schweitzer once said:

You know what I would really like to do if I had time?
Just once or twice, to get up without feeling tired and to go
to bed without knowing how many things are still left undone.
What a luxury that would be! \(^9^1\)

He went on to say that because he was basically a lazy person and was
extremely weary from years of labor in the tropics, he had to work and
persevere doubly hard. \(^9^2\)

Schweitzer's ability to persist in the most meaningless tasks

\(^8^9\)Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 187.
\(^9^0\)Ibid.
\(^9^1\)Ibid.
\(^9^2\)Erica Anderson, Albert Schweitzer's Gift of Friendship, (New
is also revealed in his autobiographical writings. In preparation for his first trip to Africa, he notes:

I had to make out from catalogues lists of things to be ordered, go shopping for days on end, stand about in the shops and seek out what I wanted, check accounts and delivery notes, fill packing cases, prepare accurate lists for the custom-house examinations, and occupy myself with other, similar jobs. What an amount of time and trouble it cost me to get together the instruments, the drugs, the bandages, and all the other articles needed for the equipment of a hospital, to say nothing of all the work we did together in preparation for housekeeping in the primeval forest! At first I felt occupation with such things to be something of a burden. Gradually, however, I came to the conclusion that even the practical struggles with material affairs is worthy of being carried on in a spirit of self-devotion. Today I have advanced so far that the neat setting out of a list of things to be ordered gives me artistic satisfaction.

The fact that red tape minutia reduced his time for intellectual work bothered Schweitzer to no end. Yet, he persevered in spite of large amounts of paperwork saying that:

I comforted myself with Goethe, who, as we know, with mighty plans of intellectual activity in his head, would sit studying accounts and trying to set in order the finances of a small principality, examining plans so that streets and bridges should be constructed in the most practical way, and exerting himself year in, year out, to get disused mines at work again. And so this union of homely employment with intellectual activity comforted me concerning my own existence.

Schweitzer believes that gratitude is indispensable to self-perfection. Schweitzer defines gratitude as thankfulness, both felt and shown, for kindness toward us from others. Schweitzer elaborates:

93 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 91.
95 Schweitzer, Reverence for Life, p. 129.
Consider the essential meaning of gratitude: a human being is eternally joined to you by mysterious bonds created through a deed done. He has a claim on you, a claim not based on general laws which he expects but one given by you recognized and acknowledged by yourself. You must undertake to give him whatever this claim demands, wherever and whenever you can. Never regard the person to whom you owe a debt of gratitude as just any man. He is someone special, someone you regard as sacred.  

According to Schweitzer, gratitude focuses man's attention on the good in the world, and it encourages him to do good. An act of goodness or kindness calls forth another act of goodness or kindness, but because man is thoughtless, forgetful, and lazy he does not show gratitude. Schweitzer clarifies by saying that:

Sadly we contemplate the graves of teachers who worked so hard to educate us or of others who helped us along in selfless ways. They passed on without our having shown them what they mean to us. We could not show it because we could not evaluate it, and we could not evaluate it because we never gave it a minute's thought. 

Failure to feel and show gratitude makes the world a much colder place than it needs to be. It is through gratitude that the coldness among men can be reduced. 

Schweitzer maintains that forgiveness is also essential to self-perfection. Because everyone is in need of forgiveness each individual must be able to forgive. Schweitzer underscores the reciprocal character of forgiveness when he points out that:

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96Ibid., p. 137.  
97Ibid., pp. 134-136.  
98Ibid., p. 131.  
99Ibid., p. 134.  
100Ibid., p. 141.
I must practise unlimited forgiveness because, if I did not, I should be wanting in sincerity to myself, for it would be acting as if I myself were not guilty in the same way as the other has been guilty towards me. Because my life is so liberally spotted with falsehood, I must forgive falsehood which has been practised upon me; because I myself have been in so many cases wanting in love, and guilty of hatred, slander, deceit, or arrogance, I must pardon any want of love, and all hatred, slander, deceit, or arrogance which have been directed against myself. I must forgive quietly and unostentatiously; in fact I do not really pardon at all, for I do not let things develop to any such act of judgment. 101

According to Schweitzer, the appropriate perfecting of one's self also involves humility. Humility enables one to retain a perspective concerning his importance and militates against arrogance. This is especially true for those who are privileged to devote themselves to others.

Those who are so favored as to be able to embark on a course of free personal activity must accept this good fortune in a spirit of humility. They must often think of those who, though willing and capable, were never in a position to do the same. And as a rule they must temper their own strong determination with humility. They are almost always destined to have to seek and wait till they find a road open for the activity they long for. Happy are those to whom the years of work are allotted in richer measure than those of seeking and waiting! Happy are those who in the end are able to give themselves really and completely! 102

As Schweitzer sees it, humility also capacitates one to be receptive to other viewpoints which may possess merit. This prevents one from trying to accomplish the impossible and from becoming enraged

102 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 75-76.
at opposition.\textsuperscript{103}

Schweitzer's belief in the importance of humility is obvious from his own display of it. It was out of humility that Schweitzer staunchly opposed the idea of a film of his life; indeed, he is on record as having said, "I would rather burn in hell than have a film made of my life."\textsuperscript{104} When he did finally consent to a documentary film of his life, it was out of kindness to the film maker.\textsuperscript{105} For many years, Schweitzer was also unwilling to give consent for his name to be used to establish Chairs and Distinguished Professorships at universities because he did not feel worthy of such honor.\textsuperscript{106} Likewise, he was unwilling for some time to speak out on nuclear testing because he did not feel qualified and thought that as a non-scientist his statement would be easily discredited.\textsuperscript{107}

Compassion is a vital part of self-perfection because it guarantees that one's will-to-live shall not function blindly only for itself but for other life as well.\textsuperscript{108} Man's capacity for empathy enables him to

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{103} Ibid., p. 76.
\item \textsuperscript{104} Anderson, Albert Schweitzer's Gift of Friendship, p. 5.
\item \textsuperscript{105} Ibid., p. 45.
\item \textsuperscript{107} Norman Cousins, Dr. Schweitzer of Lambarene (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1960), pp. 167-168.
\item \textsuperscript{108} Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 299.
\end{itemize}
experience other life as he would his own. Schweitzer declares that:

Anyone who experiences the woes of this world within his heart can never again feel the surface happiness that human nature desires. When hours of contentment and joy come, the compassionate man cannot give himself unreservedly to them, for he can never forget the suffering he has experienced with others. What he has seen stays with him. The anguished faces of the poor return; the cries of the sick echo in his mind; he remembers the man whose hard lot he once read about—and darkness shuts out the light of his joy. 109

Schweitzer is convinced that through sharing experience with others and helping them in their distress, one can give his life meaning . . . "to lend a helping hand is an absolute inward necessity." 110 Compassion, then, becomes a healing agent which strives to end conflict, pain, and suffering.

In Chapter Four, it was stressed that Schweitzer values the development of man's intellectual, aesthetic, and spiritual capacities. Perhaps it should be re-emphasized that man's inner development should focus sharply on all available knowledge as it concerns the meaning of human existence. Schweitzer would see self-perfection involving the development of a whole person—a thinking, feeling, and reverent human being.

Finally, Schweitzer believes that individuality in thought, morality, and action is indispensable to perfection of the self. By individualism, Schweitzer does not mean the rugged or "ragged"

110 Ibid.
individualism characterized by Social Darwinism. On the contrary, Schweitzer prefers an enlightened individuality which realizes that there can be no individuality for anyone if the individual lives only for himself. This is exemplified in Schweitzer's view concerning the possession of personal property. The duty to pursue one's own self-interests means that the individual may own property. Yet, devotion to others suggests that he will regard relatively little as solely his own. As Schweitzer describes it:

In the question of possessions . . . wealth acquired or inherited should be placed at the service of the community, not through any measures taken by society, but through the absolutely free decision of the individual . . . The one thing that matters is that each shall value what he possesses as means to action. Whether this is accomplished by his keeping and increasing his wealth, or by surrender of it, matters little. Wealth must reach the community in the most varied ways, if it is to be of the greatest benefit to all.\textsuperscript{111}

From devotion to others, it is man's duty to share with others any privilege which he possesses. Exactly to what degree he shares is left to the individual.

Schweitzer is greatly concerned about the waning individualism of contemporary man. He writes:

From childhood up the man of today has his mind so full of the thought of discipline that he loses the sense of his own individuality and can only see himself as thinking in the spirit of some group or other of his fellows . . . Today it is the rule—and no one questions it—always to take into account the views which

\textsuperscript{111} Schweitzer, \textit{The Philosophy of Civilization}, p. 320.
prevail in organized society . . . . The modern man is lost in the mass in a way which is without precedent in history, and this is perhaps the most characteristic trait in him.\textsuperscript{112}

Schweitzer believes that because modern man has put individual freedom of thought out of the question, mankind is entering a period of thoughtlessness in which neither the individual nor the collective can progress toward perfection.\textsuperscript{113}

Likewise, "With the surrender of his own personal opinion the modern man surrenders also his personal moral judgment."\textsuperscript{114} According to Schweitzer, the morally bankrupt individual sanctions actions of the community which tend to be based on expediency rather than standards of morality.\textsuperscript{115} Consequently, the individual, " . . . is thus made capable of excusing everything that is meaningless, cruel, unjust, or bad in the behavior of his nation."\textsuperscript{116}

Schweitzer concludes that with the individual divested of his "freedom, mental collectedness, and all-round development,"\textsuperscript{117} perfection of both the individual and civilization is next to impossible.

The extent to which Schweitzer prizes individuality clearly exhibits itself in his own life style. In his search to find an activity in which he could render service, he writes:

\textldots what I wanted was an absolutely personal and independent activity. Although I was resolved to put my services at the disposal of some organization, if it should be really necessary, I nevertheless never gave up the hope of finding a sphere of activity to

\textsuperscript{112}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 17.  
\textsuperscript{113}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{114}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 19.  
\textsuperscript{115}\textit{Ibid.}  
\textsuperscript{116}\textit{Ibid.}  
\textsuperscript{117}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 20.
which I could devote myself as an individual and as wholly free.\textsuperscript{118}

Upon deciding to go to Africa to render "direct human service,"\textsuperscript{119} Schweitzer made the decision completely on his own and was reproached by family and close friends for such an "individualistic" decision.\textsuperscript{120} "As a man of individual action,"\textsuperscript{121} Schweitzer's own decision prevailed despite his "many verbal duels"\textsuperscript{122} with those who attempted "to dig their fists" into his heart.\textsuperscript{123}

Likewise, his friends and relatives cautioned him about working sixteen to eighteen hour days for so many years. As far as Schweitzer was concerned, this was an individual matter and in answer to a friend who told him he could not burn the candle at both ends, Schweitzer replied, "Oh yes you can if the candle is long enough."\textsuperscript{124}

Finally Schweitzer's individuality is revealed by the way in which he operated his jungle hospital. He refused to modernize his hospital according to Western medical standards despite a barrage of criticism during the last 1950's and early 1960's. Schweitzer designed and directed the hospital at Lambarene on the basis of his understanding of the needs of those who were to use the hospital's facilities. Bertrand Russell appears to have understood Schweitzer's position as well as anyone when he wrote:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{118} Schweitzer, \textit{Out of My Life and Thought}, p. 72.
\item \textsuperscript{119} Ibid., p. 73.
\item \textsuperscript{120} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{121} Ibid., p. 74.
\item \textsuperscript{122} Ibid., p. 73.
\item \textsuperscript{123} Ibid., p. 74.
\item \textsuperscript{124} Ibid., p. 192.
\end{itemize}
It is not a very great discovery that Dr. Schweitzer's single-handed effort to help people blighted by disease may be superseded by modern medical facilities. It is obvious, however, that technical progress always carries with it the price of impersonal machinery, which is devoid of the humanity that a dedicated individual provides through his own action and example.\textsuperscript{125}

Schweitzer's own decision not to modernize his hospital was based on his belief that technology tends to have a depersonalizing effect and that "machinery was difficult to maintain in the steamy jungle."\textsuperscript{126}

In summation, Schweitzer's conception of self-perfection is conspicuously ethical. It stems from the ethic of reverence for life which has its roots in the will-to-live. Schweitzer comments:

The idea of self-perfecting through self-devotion, which we experience as the mysterious element within us, is after all a natural manifestation of the will-to-live. The ego which has reached the farthest height of willing and representing enlarges itself by over-lapping other human existences. Self-devotion is, therefore, not a surrender of the self, but a manifestation of its expansion. The man who analyses himself more deeply learns by experience that the highest life-affirmation comes about, not by the natural will-to-live simply rising into will-to-power, but by its "expanding."\textsuperscript{127}

THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

Albert Schweitzer believed in the ethical perfecting of the individual self, and he believed that education had an obligation to


\textsuperscript{126} Anderson, \textit{The Schweitzer Album}, p. 78.

\textsuperscript{127} Schweitzer, \textit{The Philosophy of Civilization}, p. 255.
aid in the development of self-perfection. For Schweitzer, existence takes on meaning when the individual begins to affirm his own life and the lives of others. As a result, self-perfection involves harmony between pursuing one's own self-interests and devoting one's self to the lives of others. Education becomes a vehicle for helping the learner to arrive at those specific qualities which blend together to effectuate self-perfection.

Education which aids individual self-perfection goes beyond much that is traditional in pedagogy. Schweitzer's preference for individualism suggests an education which is individually-centered. Education which seeks to bring about Schweitzer's concept of self-perfection will place heavy emphasis on the development of the individual's potential. It will also stress the importance of the learner taking a keen interest in the meaning and purpose of his own life as well as being responsible for much of his own learning. Finally, it will encourage the developing person to become other-centered but not other-directed.

While Schweitzer believes in the individual arriving at his own decisions regarding the perfection of self, he also thinks that education should expose the learner to some definite characteristics of self-perfection. The fact that he offers his own concept of self-perfection and suggests ways of teaching it does not mean that he would sanction

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128 Ibid., p. 15.
indoctrination. On the contrary, he is on record as opposing that his thoughts be stressed over and above the thought of other worthy scholars by institutions of learning.\(^{129}\) Schweitzer is unequivocal on this point, "I do not think it is fair . . . to ask other ethical scholars to live in the shadow of my ethical contributions."\(^{130}\)

The starting point for the learner in assuming responsible self-perfection is to become interested in his life and its meaning. As Schweitzer sees it, this involves awakening and heightening the innate disposition to reflect about the meaning of his life which Schweitzer believes exists with all individuals.\(^ {131}\) Once this fundamental impulse is elicited and aroused, Schweitzer is certain that the developing student will become serious about his life and the meaning of existence.

The learner should also come to realize that he will have to resign himself to the likelihood of remaining in the dark concerning complete understanding of world happenings. He should not see this as defeat but as a point of departure for gaining true understanding of his own self. Resigning one's self to the impossibility of understanding the universe and the disastrous events of the world brings freedom from the world and increasingly frees one to concern himself with his own

\(^{129}\) Phillips, Safari of Discovery: The Universe of Albert Schweitzer, p. 177.

\(^{130}\) Ibid.

\(^{131}\) Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 56.
existence.

The student should learn that insight into one's own self and his relation to others is enhanced through peace and quiet. In Schweitzer's terms a person's soul can make itself better known to himself if it is not "being drowned out by the hustle and bustle of everyday life."132 This is especially important as we appear to be moving into future conditions which will militate against time for privacy and quiet needed to achieve peacefulness. As pointed out in Chapter Four, the architectural structure of the school should be designed to facilitate quiet and peace.

Schweitzer believes that one avenue for gaining quiet and peacefulness is to retire to Nature. To contemplate one's being in the presence of Nature gives one an insight into existence that is difficult to find elsewhere.133 Contact with nature should also impress the student with the beauty of Nature, with the overall solidarity among living beings, and with the importance of cultivating rather than violating Nature. This implies that the physical location of the school should be in Nature or near Nature.

The young person should have an opportunity to learn the value of practical work and responsibility. The value of practical work and

132 Schweitzer, Reverence for Life, p. 81.

133 Schweitzer, On the Edge of the Primeval Forest, p. 125.
responsibility can be facilitated by the way in which the school is organized. In the spirit of Lambarene, the school should be organized around the concept of man's need for his fellow man. Each student should do some manual labor in the classroom and around the school building itself. Since Schweitzer believes that any organization should really be a fellowship which is free—as nearly as possible—of institutional aid and direction, each student should be expected to contribute in some way which will help sustain and improve a largely self-reliant and self-determining school.\textsuperscript{134}

The developing person should also see that action is necessary to give life some meaning. This suggests that the student will have ample opportunity to do rather than just contemplate and talk about what he has studied. Again, the school can encourage action on the part of the individual toward helping others if the former is conceived as a fellowship based on the concept of persons needing other persons.

If self-perfection is to be in any way complete, the learner ought to strive for integrity and honesty. Integrity toward scholarship

\textsuperscript{134}Note: This may be less idealistic than one might at first suppose. Free, independent schools are springing up throughout the world which are organized and supported along the lines which Schweitzer suggests. With the present shortage of educational monies, one is also compelled to speculate just how much more money would be available for quality teaching and improvement of instructional materials if students were expected to assume some of the custodial duties involved in maintaining a school.
is particularly important as it is only through truth that one can really find meaning and purpose in life. Honesty in all matters builds trust among one's fellow man.

Self-discipline is central to self-perfection, and this too may be cultivated by the way in which the school day and year are organized. Knowledge of Schweitzer's own schedule and the organization of daily activities at Lambarene suggest a year-round school and a long day filled with rigorous, sustained activity. While the day should be long, each individual should pace himself and should avail himself of periods of rest.\footnote{Note: At Lambarene, there was a short period of rest for anyone who needed or wanted it.} For Schweitzer, it is not so important how one gains control over himself just as long as he does it.

If one is to exist meaningfully in this world, he must learn to persevere, as obstacles of all sorts will present themselves. The student should somehow learn to gain satisfaction from busy tasks that must be performed.

It is essential that the individual learn to know the meaning of gratitude and how it feels to give and receive thankfulness. The organizational climate of the school can do much to encourage the developing person to feel, show, and learn the importance of gratitude. The climate of the school should be such that it encourages helpfulness, kindness, and thankfulness among administration, staff, and students.
The learner should realize that in order to be forgiven he must first learn to forgive. Again, the organizational climate of the school ought to be such that it is possible for students to make serious mistakes and be forgiven by both school personnel and fellow students.

The learning individual should come to know that humility is a vital part of self-perfection because it keeps one from feeling superior to others, and it helps one to become open or receptive to all points of view.

Certainly, the developing person ought to learn the importance of empathy and compassion if he is to attain self-perfection. The way in which the school is organized and the outlook of administration and staff will have much to do with the development or lack of development of this aspect of perfecting the self. Schweitzer maintains that a school and staff which are understanding and empathic of its student body, will, by example, be doing much to promote a compassionate person.

Finally, the learner should see that he himself is largely responsible for his own self-perfection. He should be willing to listen to others but should not accept all that others say carte blanche. Because Schweitzer's concept of self-perfection and the exposure to it imply prescriptive education, it must be intellectually justified or understood by the student. In other words, the student must be able to understand what he is being exposed to in order to reject what otherwise might be indoctrination.
Schweitzer's concept of self-perfection implies that the school should be organized along lines that will protect and encourage individualism rather than usurp or stifle it. Schweitzer is concerned about contemporary institutions of learning in that he thinks they are inimical to individualism because they: (a) are over-organized along bureaucratic, monocratic lines; (b) are too large and, therefore, the individual becomes lost in the mass; and (c) are impersonal and dehumanizing.\textsuperscript{136}

Schweitzer's organization of the jungle clinic at Lambarene, which he regarded as a symbol of humanity and education,\textsuperscript{137} offers some suggestions about the type of school organization which he believes would foster his concept of self-perfection. He would favor a school organization which:

1. Is based on the individual person's need for other persons.
2. Emphasizes warm, interpersonal, and friendly relationships.
3. Provides opportunities for the self-perfection of all persons.
4. Enables but not forces the student to attend school year-round for increased educational opportunities.
5. Is self-supporting and free from external pressure.


\textsuperscript{137}Based on conversation between the researcher and Erica Anderson at Great Barrington, Massachusetts, on May 5, 1972.
6. Provides for learning beyond the classroom.

7. Affords the individual learner private time for contemplation.

8. Utilizes the efforts of volunteer workers who are capable of helping and are desirous of doing so.

9. Offers students opportunities for manual labor and chances to help others.

10. Cultivates unique programs to facilitate the development of self-perfection.

Obviously, what determines the curriculum or what is to be taught and learned is that which aids the learner in achieving self-perfection. This will include all of those fields of knowledge which were discussed in Chapter Four. Because Schweitzer's conception of self-perfection is chiefly ethical, it is certain that he would assign heavy emphasis to the study of ethics, philosophy, and religion.\textsuperscript{138} While the curriculum is hardly arbitrary, it should be flexible since deeper insights into what constitutes self-perfection will be gained.\textsuperscript{139}

Since Schweitzer sees self-perfection as a process and not as an end only, the learner's attitude toward knowledge is favorable because the latter is immediately relevant to his own self. Unlike more

\textsuperscript{138}Phillips, Safari of Discovery: The Universe of Albert Schweitzer, pp. 178-182.

\textsuperscript{139}Ibid., p. 178.
traditional curriculums, the curriculum for self-perfection is for the individual. Schweitzer's love of the individual means that the learner will be more important than any subject to be studied. Even if the learner were to be exposed to a steady diet of that which would result in ethical self-perfection, the learner is free to reject such spoon-feeding without reprisal. In any case, the curriculum is only a tool for helping one perfect the self.

The reader will recall that in earlier sections of the paper it was noted that Schweitzer's concept of education is one of "drawing out" of the individual "all sorts of good ideas" which are "ready like tinder." Therefore, the characteristics or virtues which Schweitzer believes constitute self-perfection must be brought forth and understood by elicitation. Progress or growth toward perfection is viewed as unfolding. This is best accomplished by applying Schweitzer's conception of the Socratic method which was discussed at length in Chapter Three.

It is important to stress that the role of the teacher in conversation with the learner is largely defined by what may be called Schweitzer's "one-to-one philosophy." This philosophy of interpersonal relations not only consists of Schweitzer's doctrine of "perceptually

\textsuperscript{140}Schweitzer, Memoirs of Childhood and Youth, p. 108.

\textsuperscript{141}Ibid.
taking the place of the companion" but also entails applying his precept of "giving yourself to others as a human being."

Schweitzer's "one-to-one philosophy" of interpersonal relations means, in this case, that the teacher will be keenly sensitive to the learner with whom he works. He will be concerned enough and care enough that he will give himself genuinely to his students in conversation. He will be open to questions and honest in the answers he gives. The teacher should also forego many of the formalities and conventional rules that stand in the way of a warm, relaxed, and human relationship. Likewise, real communication is likely to be enhanced and the learner will be less annoyed when the teacher works without the benefit of notes. 142

In conversation of this type, the motivation for the learner stems not only from the desire to know but also from the affection and cooperation exhibited in the relationship.

As discussed in earlier chapters, Schweitzer believes that teaching by example and manifesting a "deep sense of duty . . . in even the smallest matters, is the great educative influence."143 Even here, it is the interpersonal relationship and "giving one's self to others as a fellow man" that overrides all else. The teacher who convinces

142 Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 192.
143 Schweitzer, Memoirs of Childhood and Youth, p. 66.
students by example that he sincerely cares about them and what happens to them is the only real teacher.

Schweitzer's conception of self-perfection is, on closer analysis, not just ethical in nature. It would appear to call for the development of characteristics which prepare one to function in the "real" world, and at the same time it calls for a "new man" who will endeavor to change the "real" world as it now exists. With the perfection of the individual, in both mind and character, the work of the renewal of civilization can begin.
Chapter 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND CRITICISMS

The idealism that I teach is no nebulous thing; it has stood the test of practical achievement.

When you portray me it should be not merely as the doctor who ministers to the sick. It is my philosophy that I consider my primary contribution to the world.

The aims of life and the aims of education can never be separated.

May those who have been privileged to study ... not only acquire knowledge but also, as they develop into adults, become true educators.

Albert Schweitzer

That Albert Schweitzer's philosophy possesses relevance for education has been the thesis of this study. The study has focused on the principle of reverence for life and some of the educational implications of this principle.

An evaluation of Schweitzer's thought as this bears on education must work within the limitations that all philosophy suffers when dealing with questions that arise in particular fields of activity. Philosophy, by its very nature, avoids those specific questions that would call for answers if a full-blown theory of education were to be proposed. Philosophers from Plato to Dewey have concerned themselves with education only in the most general sense. One might say that any philosophy of education gives an overview of this field, treating all matters in the abstract, rarely bringing discussion down to the level
of specific details. Hence, those who expect information from philosophical theory on the specific questions relating to curriculum, school finances, or the details of learning theory are looking in the wrong place. Philosophy, as a unique endeavor within the community of higher studies, is limited in its approach to education and must be weighed in terms of what it contributes through its traditional, self-imposed approach.

Given the limitations of philosophy, one is in a position to evaluate Schweitzer's contribution to the theory of education. At the beginning, one must recognize that, while valuing education more highly than almost any other institutional activity of man, Schweitzer at no time tried to collect his thoughts on education in a single work. Most of Schweitzer's educational theory exists in works written along other lines, in conversations held with various friends, in talks delivered to school children on his several visits to Europe, and in his autobiographical works. This study has attempted to assemble Schweitzer's significant educational thought into a single work.

SUMMARY

Schweitzer took as his major task the problem of providing a foundation in thought for the world-view of life-affirmation. If this could be accomplished, he thought, then the spiritual element of man could be rescued from the sweeping tide of materialism, a meaningful
life could be restored to the individual, and the collapse of civiliza-
tion could be aborted. Schweitzer was convinced that the precept of
reverence for life, once internationally accepted and made the leading
maxim for action, could furnish man and civilization with the world-
view needed for genuine progress. According to Schweitzer, the ethic
of reverence for life is rational, absolute, universal, and practical.

The principle of reverence for life is found in the most ele-
mental thought and is immediate and direct. Upon reflection, man will
see that the most immediate fact of his consciousness is that he wills
to live. Schweitzer asserts that this is the one thing that man knows,
and it comes from within the individual rather than from enculturation.

Reverence for life, as developed by Schweitzer, involves a
devotion of one's self to all other life. This is a higher life-
affirmation which brings with it an existence that will be more diffi-
cult in all ways, but at the same time, it will also be "richer, more
beautiful, and happier"\(^1\) than an existence for one's self only.

Finally, reverence for life enables man to achieve a cosmic
relatedness by becoming at-one with the Universal Will. By devoting
one's self to life--one's own and all other life--it is possible to
attain unity with infinite Being.

Reverence for life possesses civilizing power but must start

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\(^1\)C. T. Campion (trans.), *Out of My Life and Thought* by Albert
with the individual and spread in what Schweitzer generally alludes to as the natural way—from man to man—"beyond peoples and states to humanity as a whole."\(^2\)

Schweitzer believed that among the social institutions now existing, education was the institution which could best serve his ethics;\(^3\) but even here, the individual learner is to have the right to reject this ethic if he so chooses.\(^4\) Reverence for life demands a respect for others' right to self-determination. This suggests that education must refrain from indoctrinating the young even if it means that some will choose life-negation. In this way, Schweitzer escapes a totally prescriptive theory of education. His belief that upon reflection man is directed and almost irresistibly led to reverence for life permits Schweitzer to think that a spirit based on ethical responsibility can be taught and that this will "stir man" to action throughout the rest of his life.\(^5\)


\(^5\) Anderson, The Schweitzer Album.
Schweitzer does not escape a prescriptive theory of education completely because he insists that the individual person become interested in questions concerning existence. Since education is created to help the individual arrive at a comprehensive view of life and the world which can lend meaning and purpose to his life, "an existential matrix of inquiry" becomes a dominant aspect of the educational process. That is, education is not just a matter of consuming facts and ideas, or performing exercises in formal logic, or giving compliance to some propositional truth. On the contrary, education is at once a contemplative and active response to the mysterious questions of life and the universe. When the individual reflects or becomes concerned about his existence and well-being, he thinks, learns, and grows. The student learns when he is involved with his own being.

As Schweitzer interprets the educational situation, the possibility of meaningful existence on both the individual and collective levels is being throttled by the lack of an adequate ethical foundation for life. Because of the role that education can play in assisting—not directing—the individual to discover meaning and purpose, Schweitzer believes that education must be based on a well-conceived value system and that it should become increasingly concerned with the learner's ethical development. Consequently, ethical scholarship assumes a major role in the educational process. The young person should be exposed to the best in ethical thought, including the ethics
of reverence for life.

For Schweitzer, the potential for an enriched existence increases if the individual can become a "knowing" person capable of arriving at what is true on his own. This can be accomplished by gaining authentic and trustworthy knowledge. Schweitzer maintains that securing truth with any certainty becomes a process of traversing the several fields of knowledge and testing and validating it continually both by private reflection and by objective means. Learning how to find, certify, systematize, and utilize knowledge for expanding life becomes another pre-eminent motif in the educational process.

Finally, education should assist the learner in integrating knowledge to which he has been exposed into a meaningful whole which will facilitate the attainment of self-perfection. Education must strive to be congruous with what appears to be the overriding fact of human nature and life itself; namely, that all life wants to survive, develop, and perfect itself. Education which does not take stock of these facts is necessarily incomplete. For Schweitzer, it is not only what a man thinks that is important, but also what he does, is, and can be. Learning what elements are necessary for perfection and how these are to be fused into an integrated whole is an important aspect of the process of education.
CONCLUSIONS

The study of Schweitzer's central teachings leads one to conclude that man's need to find meaning and purpose in life is the logical point of departure for the development of an educational theory in that it provides the fundamental questions to which education addresses itself.

Schweitzer's philosophy in all its aspects, including his educational thought, is strongly influenced by his views on the nature of life. While he acknowledges the evidence of disorder and irregularity in life, he is impressed with what he sees as an orderly movement toward survival, development, and expansion. Life is characterized by activity and change in which things come into being, advance to maturity, and then wither away in decay. The movement from non-being to being is almost always a progressive movement towards the fulfillment of the end of all life—preservation, advancement, and realization. Therefore, Schweitzer's outlook is teleological; that is, it is thoroughly concerned with the idea of purpose. Life realizes its nature and purpose to the degree that it grows in its power to satisfy the function for which it is intended—expansion, development, and completion. In all life, the desire to develop and live itself out lies within the will-to-live.

An understanding of Schweitzer's educational thought begins with what is included in his concept of will-to-live. Viewed at its
most primitive level, the will-to-live is the desire to survive. All life seeks to stay alive and meet its several physical needs—oxygen, water, food, sleep, exercise, sex, and shelter. These needs must be met if the organism is to remain alive.

According to Schweitzer, in human beings there is not only the desire to stay alive but also a tendency to want to progress and perfect one's self. Schweitzer thinks that the desire for self-realization is characteristic of the single-celled organisms but that it is instinctive. In human beings, the desire for expansion becomes a conscious process, and the tendency toward self-realization gradually becomes dependent upon cognitive activity rather than mere instinct. Because man possesses the power to reason, he becomes able to reflect upon his self and his relation to the world. According to Schweitzer, once man begins to reflect upon his existence, he is dissatisfied with what he is at any one given time and wishes to become something more.

Another characteristic of the will-to-live at the human level is the desire for relatedness or the will-to-love. Schweitzer maintains that man possesses the desire for companionship and feels a need for group relationships which is manifested in the development of societies and mutual interests. Man also wishes to love and be loved, and this desire leads to close friendship, genuine concern, sympathy, and feeling.

Schweitzer also thinks that man has a desire to enter into
union in a much broader and more universal sense which comes forth in his largely religious search for an "at-oneness" or "wholeness." As a being with the capacity for reason, man also needs to know the meaning of his life which reveals itself in his search for the truth regarding the nature of the cosmos and his relation to it.

Finally, Schweitzer does not confine the will-to-live to the animate only but also applies it to everything that exists. It symbolizes the infinite Will-to-Live or creative force within everything that exists. Everything, including man, is related.

How much deeper does Wilhelm Stern go than did Darwin? According to Darwin, experience of the never ceasing, universal danger to existence produces in the end nothing but the herd-instinct, which holds together creatures of the same species. According to Stern, there is developed by the same experience a kind of solidarity with everything that lives. The barriers fall. Man experiences sympathy with animals, as they experience it, only less completely with him. Ethics are not merely something peculiar to man, but, in a less developed form, are to be seen also in the animal world as such. Self-devotion is an experience of the deepened impulse to self-preservation.6

Man's predisposition for relatedness is not just herd-instinct, selfishness, or enculturation. A primitive reverence for life is given in the will-to-live. Upon reflection man comes to realize that his own self-realization is threatened unless he renders adequate expression of this concern for all living beings. He desires to give, as well as receive, assistance and love. It is in this way that man can discover

a relatedness that insures the integrity of all parties involved and permits him to be a part of a larger community in which his potential as a human being can be expanded and actualized. In this way, man moves from creaturehood to manhood to brotherhood.

Thus, it is apparent that a teleological outlook is fundamental to Schweitzer’s thinking and is expressed by him in terms of the actualization of latent potentialities given in the will-to-live. The will-to-live contains both a desire for self-preservation and the desire for love. For Schweitzer, education becomes a process of assisting the individual to refine and to elevate the will-to-live to the level of genuine concern for all life or, as he would put it, self-perfection based on a higher life affirmation.

Here, then, Schweitzer’s teleological outlook drawn from his view of the nature of man forms the basis for a complete philosophy of education. Both the process and end of education are guided by the self-same principle; to assist the individual in realizing the potentialities—from the biological to the spiritual—residing in human nature.

Since man is a being with the power to reason, he alone among all living beings possesses the capacity for giving direction to the course of his own development. Unlike the lower forms of life, he is actually a participant in the fashioning of his own destiny. By establishing educational institutions, the more experienced can assist
the young to identify and develop their talents. For Schweitzer, however, education is not something imposed on students from the outside by a teacher; rather it is an inward process of personal examination and self-questioning. It is something the learner must essentially do for himself, and this is the necessary result of the idea that man has the responsibility for fashioning his own existence. Because he believes in the reality of this responsibility, Schweitzer asserts that the young learn by private reflection and by discovering, or being led to discover, on their own rather than just listening to teachers.

Schweitzer believes that the best way to assist the learner in finding meaning and purpose in life is through the Socratic method. The teacher's function is to arouse the learner intellectually and emotionally. The learner must become involved with any subject matter to which he is exposed if it is to provide any sort of meaning for him.

Schweitzer is convinced that any method of teaching or assisting the learner is more effective if it entails concern and love for the learner. He believes that "giving oneself to others as a fellow human being" brings out the best in others. The teacher who so acts exemplifies reverence for life. Out of reverence for the learner, the teacher lends warmth, purpose, and personal relevance to the intellectual undertaking. Considerations of personal relationship are uppermost in education. Intellectual progress, the learning of skills, and the
development of appreciations are never to be cultivated in and for themselves but only as they contribute to helping the student find meaning and as they foster reverence or love for other persons. Close attention is given to the role of feelings and to inner meaning rather than to outward performance alone. By practicing reverence toward the learner, learning is enhanced and the teacher initiates a process that should spread from person to person until reverence or love becomes universal. In this way, education assumes a role in changing or reconstructing the world by focusing on changing the individual person.

Schweitzer further believes that because man desires a relatedness with all life and is dependent upon other life in a variety of ways, seeking intellectual union or relatedness is not enough. Theoretical knowledge of the world must be supplemented by experience. Meaning is enhanced when one not only knows but also feels a kinship with all existence, not in an abstract but concrete way. While thought is important, it is through community of feeling that one can find meaning. Man must be actively involved with other life. This implies that education must become immersed in life and, also, that education is, in a real sense, life in its entirety. Education becomes a process of living and not just a preparation for future living. The young person learns about life by living it and experiencing it in as many dimensions as possible. The school becomes a place in which the learner
can experience relatedness by entering into primary relationships with other students and with teachers. Because the individual's desire to be related cannot be completely satisfied in this manner, education has to be considerably broader than the formalized efforts of schools alone. Because he wishes to achieve a wider and more universal relatedness, education expands. Man strives to become united in a meaningful way with the world at large, and this may be achieved by mystical experience, religious worship, and/or communion with nature. Education, then, becomes a process of living and is continuous.

Schweitzer is convinced that education can cultivate reverence by developing what is already within the individual; namely, the desire to survive and the need for relatedness given in the will-to-live. By exposing the young person to as many facets of life as possible and by giving him opportunities to reflect about life, he should come to see the solidarity and interdependence of life. By practicing reverence toward the young and by drawing out this attitude, the educator makes reverence for life concrete. The feeling of reverence can be enhanced when the young are given opportunities to practice it within and beyond the school and experience the spiritual rewards which it brings. Thus, education assists the developing person in finding meanings and purposes which are congruous with his nature and, at the same time, provides him with the means of enhancing other life which comes within the sphere of a particular school and those persons who attend it.
In his educational thought, Schweitzer, in characteristic manner, seldom spells out particulars. Gabriel Langfeldt, a Norwegian psychiatrist and Schweitzer scholar, comments that it is typical of Schweitzer that he rarely provides a clear formulation of his views. Such caution on Schweitzer's part leads to confusion and bewilderment in working toward precise interpretation. Nevertheless, Schweitzer's educational thought does provide a broad vision of a future-centered education that is aware of the threats and promises of a technological civilization which has forfeited its human direction and is zealously committed to building personal and cultural renewal into the structure of an emerging world society. If Schweitzer's educational thought speaks to any subject, it is the need for modern man to become conscious of his obligations to humanity and to all life. As Schweitzer sees it, mankind has arrived at a point where it is facing extinction by its thoughtless exploitation of the natural environment and by the threat of nuclear war. If man seriously reflects, he must realize that it is only through "the spiritual act of commitment to humanitarianism" that he can save himself. In efforts to become more humane, reverence for life "has arisen in our time; it is at home in our time and geared


to the distresses and requirements of our time."9 Schweitzer is con-
vinced that the general public must be awakened to the crisis it faces,
and it must be awakened to the saving possibilities inherent in the ethic
of reverence for life. The precise task of education is to set about
awakening the public in these two areas. 10 If education can find the
means to complete this task, then it will have started what it is
potentially capable of: planting the seeds of spiritual revolution
which can transform the individual and civilization. 11

While Schweitzer is vague in providing the details for educa-
tion, there are several specific, important conclusions to be drawn from
the investigation of Schweitzer's precept of reverence for life and
what it implies for learning and instruction. The more significant
educational implications are as follows:

1. Education is regarded as a process of assisting the
individual to find meaning and purpose in life. It must provoke "ele-
mental thinking" which starts from the fundamental questions concerning
man, the universe, and the meaning of life. Education should increas-
ingly search for, take into account, and draw out potentialities
which are resident in human nature. Moreover, education ought to be

9 Ibid., p. 62.

10 Based on conversation between the researcher and Erica
Anderson at Great Barrington, Massachusetts, on May 5, 1972.

11 Ibid.
available to all persons and special efforts should be made toward extending educational opportunities to those persons who are less privileged—the disadvantaged, the exploited, and the powerless.

2. The final end of education is individual self-perfection. Self-perfection involves the development of whole persons—the harmonious integration of intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and moral qualities. With the development of complete persons, the work of building a world-civilization based on an ideology of humanitarianism can begin. Immediate ends include growth, liberation, self-responsibility, social cooperation, studious reflection, objective intelligence, and critical thinking.

3. As it is related to culture, education is indebted to the best of the past, is in continual interaction with culture, and strives to reconstruct and perfect it by focusing on the spiritual perfection of each individual.

4. In regard to curriculum, education should underscore the teaching of live students, not lifeless subject matter. Education must work toward unity of knowledge, stressing underlying principles and the fundamental structures of various subject matters. It is obligated to develop a universe of discourse which is free of technical language and "obstructive erudition" in order that all learners may better comprehend. Education should become more sensitive to the attitude of the learner toward knowledge and less concerned about feeding and filling him with
encyclopedia knowledge. The learner should be able to choose knowledge which is important to him from a curriculum which is considerably broader than is presently the case and which is change-conscious. The technological and vocationalistic should not be stressed at the cost of the aesthetic, moral, and humanistic. Certainly, art, philosophy, and religion should receive increased emphasis as subjects for study. The curriculum should develop along lines which will enable the individual to find meaning and purpose in his life and to emerge as a self-integrated person.

5. In regard to methods, education should stress private, reflective dialogue with the individual self, scientific inquiry or the discovery method, field trips, demonstrations, projects, lectures, independent study, the student tutorial method, literary and biographical models, a tender-hearted but tough minded Socratic model, and the teacher-as-paradigm model.

6. Education must become more aware of the physical environment which it creates for the learner than it has in the past. Architectural design should be conceived along lines that will permit more individual privacy and quiet for contemplation of the self. The school should be located in a setting in which the outward gaze lends itself to self-introspection. If this is impossible, the school setting should simulate Nature and natural life should be a part of the school campus and the individual classroom.
7. Education ought to become increasingly concerned with the organizational structure established for learners and staff. Current organizational structure of schools tending toward over-organization, bigness, and impersonal institutionalism which fosters dehumanization and alienation must be terminated. Ways must be found to effectuate an organizational climate in which learners and staff can relate to one another on an individual basis frequently, where student interaction can occur often, and where the overall atmosphere is warm, interpersonal, and friendly.

8. Education ought to place a heavy emphasis on the teacher. However, such an emphasis on the teacher should assume a different thrust than has traditionally been the case. That is to say, the teacher relinquishes the role of teller and tester, becoming instead, a helper, provocateur, catalyst, and an arranger of situations which facilitate learning. This is not to say that the teacher will never be an information-giver; obviously, there will be times that the learner will want to avail himself of the knowledge which the teacher possesses. The teacher is one who questions, encourages, draws out, and awakens the learner. It is the helping relationship characterized by empathy and concern growing out of "giving oneself to others as a human being" which exemplifies the teacher in Schweitzerian pedagogy.

9. Education in general and teaching in particular are to be considered noble undertakings and lofty professions. Both assist in
helping the individual and civilization to achieve spiritual perfection. As a profession, teaching is unique because it enables one to combine contemplation with action, word with deed, and scholarship with service.

Schweitzer's philosophy has special relevance for contemporary education and teaching because he saw what is now painfully apparent for some:

We are moving towards a complete revolution of society. The old ideas about everything, from family to private property, are changing. Productive work is now the law for all. In this new ordering of society there will be no room for professions whose representatives appear as idlers. 12

10. Education must seek to put the individual learner back into the center of the educational process. The individual learner should be given the chance democratically to participate and share in wider aspects of school life. According to Schweitzer, the individual person is never to be sacrificed for any end. 13

CRITICISMS

Any criticism of Schweitzer is legitimate only if it considers the "spirit of the times" in which he lived and the historical-cultural


forces which were at work during his lifetime. Schweitzer was a man who was caught, so to speak, between the centuries. In his childhood, he was deeply influenced by close relatives who championed the ideals of the Age of Enlightenment. As a result, Schweitzer was profoundly convinced of the efficacy of human reason. He valued many other ideals of the Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries, such as: a "philosophy which led and guided thought in general,"\(^{14}\) which worked on behalf of human happiness and progress,\(^ {15}\) and which produced "universal convictions about civilization;"\(^ {16}\) the concern for solving practical problems of living; an attempt to bring humanism and science together for the benefit of mankind; the interest in the moral good; a belief in peace among all men; the regard for "the development of the individual to true manhood;"\(^ {17}\) and the concern for producing a unified "theory of the universe from which valuable ideas spread among mankind."\(^ {18}\)

Yet, the greater part of Schweitzer's mature years was lived in an era in which various aspects of life were becoming fragmented. Intellectual thought—philosophy and religion in particular—were concentrating on matters which were academic and, more or less, secondary; the unity of life in general was on the wane as there was

\(^{14}\) Schweitzer, *The Philosophy of Civilization*, p. 3.
\(^{15}\) Ibid.
\(^{16}\) Ibid., p. 6.
\(^{17}\) Ibid., p. 2.
\(^{18}\) Ibid., p. 51.
no common universe of discourse, faith, or ideals; the individual was
becoming lost in the mass; and scientism, technologization, dehumaniza-
tion, narrow specialization, and over-organization accompanying the
industrial revolution were beginning to remove man from the center of
affairs. As Schweitzer saw the picture, fragmentation was carrying the
day. Neither the individual man nor civilization as a whole possessed
any sense of totality, unity, or wholeness. Man had entered an age of
uncertainty and insecurity and was losing control over himself. He was
divided, rootless, dislocated, and schizoid to a point bordering on
"pathological disturbance."\footnote{Ibid., p. 53.} Finally, modern man was becoming unsure
of the nature of human nature, and the picture of the human being was not
a clear one at all. For Schweitzer, it was clear that both the individ-
ual and civilization needed rescuing. Schweitzer believed that mankind
was moving rapidly toward the beginning of the end and that a new
renaissance based on reason and ethics must be brought about.

Schweitzer, then, attempted to pick up and re-assemble the
pieces of a world which was disintegrating. In his desire to describe
the fragmentation of the individual and civilization, Schweitzer shared
a concern that others of his age also possessed including such figures
as Nikolai Danilevsky, Oswald Spengler, Arnold Toynbee, Walter Schubart,
Nikolai Berdyaev, F. S. C. Northrop, Alfred Kroeber, Ortega y Gasset,
Schweitzer was unique in that he offered a plan for the restoration of civilization which stressed: (a) the "supremacy of reason over human dispositions," (b) the ethical transformation of mankind, (c) the individual as the starting point for the restoration, and (d) the importance of ethical action based on reverence for life. Finally, Schweitzer was different from others because he was a living example of his ideas. While others were largely talking and writing about the possible collapse of civilization, Schweitzer was making his life an argument for the ethical perfection of the individual, and a guide for civilization.

Schweitzer's plan for the perfection of the individual and civilization appears to have been influenced by Simmel's psychology of "becoming" and his view that all life craves expansion to its fullest extent. Life has many characteristics and is continually moving toward wholeness or completion. If wholeness and perfection are to be reached, the many characteristics must be brought into unity and harmony. Again, it is Schweitzer's own unity which makes him different. Schweitzer's uniqueness lies in the ability he possessed to combine reason with feeling, intellectual work with manual labor, scholarly works with direct human service, the artistic with the useful, the ideal with the practical, and his own self-interests with the interests

\[20^{\text{Ibid.}}, \text{p. 23.}\]  \[21^{\text{Ibid.}}, \text{p. 36.}\]
of others. Schweitzer's many-sidedness but wholistic approach to life must be attributed to his belief that life and existence can have value in themselves and that life must be preserved, developed, and elevated to its highest level.

While Schweitzer's place as a great man in history appears to be assured and while he must be commended for drawing attention to the important part which the ethical must play in life, his thought is not without its problems.

First, Schweitzer is guilty of single-factor analysis concerning his discussion of the decay and possible restoration of civilization. Although he admits that the material element in civilization is important, Schweitzer argues that the fundamental support of all civilizations is ethical and that the major cause of decline of past civilizations is lack of a proper ethical foundation. While there is truth in such an assertion, it seems likely that scientific, political, economic, and social factors are also necessary for an adequate explanation concerning the rise and fall of civilizations.

It is also possible that Schweitzer's view of the Eighteenth Century is altogether overly-generous and too optimistic. It is true that some individuals exalted reason, but there were many others who did not. Likewise, Schweitzer's view of civilization since the Eighteenth Century may be too pessimistic and hopeless. Any genuine sense of perspective would indicate that there has been progress and
that while man may be in serious trouble, there is still time before complete cultural and spiritual collapse.

Schweitzer's belief in individualism and his contention that "the only conceivable way of bringing about a reconstruction of our world . . . is first of all to become new men ourselves under the old circumstances"\textsuperscript{22} seems extremely one-sided. To ignore any organizational efforts— even with their vested interests—to transform civilization would seem to be extremely naive strategy. It is true that Schweitzer believed that organized education could take the work of reconstructing civilization in hand, but even there his faith rests in the perfecting of the individual first.

In working out his ideal of reverence for life, Schweitzer makes some assumptions which are highly suspect. He seems to think that reason is the governing quality in man, that rational thought is the same in all persons, and that the first act of consciousness is the will-to-live. In light of what Freud and the behavioral sciences have discovered about the irrationality and unpredictability of man, Schweitzer is on less than solid ground here. Also, Schweitzer seems to think that if people can be taught the ethic of reverence for life, they will automatically know how to practice good and know when life is being enhanced or when it is being retarded. In some situations where

\textsuperscript{22}Ibid.
ethical decisions are to be made, such assumptions may be warranted, but certainly there are many situations which do not lend themselves to knowing what does and does not elevate life. Does knowing good insure that a person will do good? Schweitzer seems to think so!

There is also the problem of how Schweitzer can say that the Creative Force is not working towards any goal, that it appears to be senseless, and that Man is not nature's goal but at the same time, argue for reverence on the grounds that it enables man to achieve cosmic relatedness. According to Schweitzer, "the Creative Force does not concern itself about preserving life. It simultaneously creates and destroys. Therefore, the will-to-live is not to be understood within the circle of Creative Force."\(^{23}\) In spite of this, he decides to devote his will-to-live to the Infinite will-to-live which surrounds him through ethical action:\(^{24}\) "With consciousness and with volition I devote myself to Being."\(^{25}\) To relate himself to infinite Being is the one way that Schweitzer can give his life meaning. This can best be explained by one of Schweitzer's own remarks concerning himself: "Like all human beings, I am a person who is full of contradictions."\(^{26}\)

\(^{23}\)Joy, Albert Schweitzer: An Anthology, p. 250.

\(^{24}\)Schweitzer, Out of My Life and Thought, p. 182.


Schweitzer's belief that reverence for life is absolute becomes as much of an argument against the ethic as it does for it. Reverence for life is absolute in every direction. No life must be injured or killed except under necessity and even then, tremendous guilt is contracted. Viewed in this light, nothing short of sacrificing one's own life will satisfy the demands of reverence. Schweitzer writes:

Nor will reverence for life grant me my happiness as my own. At the moments when I should like to enjoy myself without restraint, it wakes in me reflection about misery that I see or suspect, and it does not allow me to drive away the uneasiness I feel. Just as the wave cannot exist for itself, but is ever a part of the heaving surface of the ocean, so must I never live my life for itself, but always in the experience which is going on around me. It is an uncomfortable doctrine which the true ethics whisper into my ear. You are happy, they say; therefore you are called upon to give much. Whatever more than others you have received in health, natural gifts, working capacity, success, a beautiful childhood, harmonious family circumstances, you must not accept as being a matter of course. You must pay a price for them.27

Reverence for life which is life-affirming has now swung full circle, returning to life-denial; that is, practically nothing short of everything is enough. Schweitzer's ethic ends in self-contradiction, or of overwhelming guilt for the deviations made from its absoluteness. In speaking of the ethics of reverence for life and their tyrannical character, Schweitzer observes:

They do not abolish for him all ethical conflicts, but compel him to decide for himself in each case how far he can remain ethical.

and how far he must submit himself to the necessity for destruction of and injury to life, and therewith incur guilt.\(^{28}\)

In the same way, Schweitzer's concept of self-perfection also involves a strong element of life- or self-negation. However, Schweitzer's desire for wholeness and unity cause him to give ground here, and he tempers self-negation by calling for harmony between affirmation of one's own self and one's devotion to other selves.

In his educational thought, Schweitzer continually faces the problem of how to deal with what amounts to epistemological dualism. That is to say, he wrestles with and attempts to combine his commitment to the primacy of the will and his intense desire to ground all aspects of his thought in reason. In the end, Schweitzer believes he is successful in making willing (subjective) and knowing (objective) relational and just in case, he covers himself nicely by saying that this is really a harmless dualism anyway. Yet, one gets the distinct impression that he is begging the question. He desperately wants to convince himself and the reader of the efficacy of his position but does not quite succeed. In any case, Schweitzer's "mysticism of reality" is not very convincing as it carries an impractical ring and must inevitably raise questions as to the role of science in education, the importance of transmitting the cultural heritage, and the value of imparting the stock of wisdom which mankind has acquired. Nevertheless,

\(^{28}\text{Ibid.}, \text{ p. 317.}\)
it is to his credit that Schweitzer stresses the importance of both the objective and subjective components of knowledge. In the final analysis, Schweitzer appears to call for an educational theory which is based upon intuitive thought joined with rational and sensory reason. Most educational theorists ultimately settle on a position that tends to exclude one or the other. As a result, the knowledge to which the learner is exposed is incomplete.

A major question which manifests itself regarding the educational implications derived from Schweitzer's central teachings is when are the young ready to deal with the fundamental questions of being? Schweitzer offers little in the way of a specific answer here. He does say that young children know a great deal more than they tell adults. He also hints that there is a fundamental impulse to reflect about such questions starting much earlier than we have been led to believe. Such impulse to reflect about questions of the universe may begin as soon as early elementary years. Naturally, this varies with each individual child, but in general the child is capable of meditating on these questions in some form very early in life. About this matter, Schweitzer has nothing further to say.

In regard to subject matter to be studied, Schweitzer would add

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29 Based on conversation between the researcher and Erica Anderson at Great Barrington, Massachusetts, on May 5, 1972.

30 Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization, p. 56.
considerably to an already burgeoning curriculum. He does not explain just how the learner is to examine and consume all the knowledge that is rapidly emanating from practically all of the several disciplines. He does hint that by studying the underlying principles of knowledge and by extending one's study time, new levels of quantity and quality learning can take place.

Schweitzer is relatively silent on the matter of evaluation of learners. It is certain that he considers written examinations to be of little value and at best a routine nuisance. He offers nothing in the way of alternatives except that educators should arrive at a more humanistic way of evaluating human beings.

In summary, Albert Schweitzer was a teacher, but he was a great deal more. He exemplifies a unique way of life and presents a challenge to contemporary civilization. He is especially unique in his compassion for the oppressed, his identification with the disadvantaged members of society, and his enthusiasm to render direct service to the exploited. Schweitzer illustrates the spirit of world brotherhood. More importantly, he recognizes that world peace entails more than a new approach to international relations, more than the reorganization of existing institutions; it demands a new philosophy of life, a new system of education, and a new individual.

Finally, Schweitzer committed to living example those ideals which education in the Twentieth Century would do well to consider—the sanctity of the individual, the sacredness of all life, and the creativity of the human spirit.

We must be men of the future who allow their hearts to speak along with their reason. Only then will we develop into what we are meant to be: not supermen but real men, living and acting in the spirit of profound humanism.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{32}Anderson, \textit{The Schweitzer Album}, p. 53.
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