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Editorial Foreword.

The articles in the present number deal with the general question of "Reconstruction" after the war. Dr. Dakin, Mr. Hayward and Mr. Rushbrooke were asked to contribute the following papers, each of which, it will be seen, limits itself to one phase of the subject. We are offered 'strong meat' by our brethren and real leadership. The Editor expresses his deepest thanks to the three gentlemen named for their ready compliance with his request. They have rendered a great service with the utmost generosity.

The Present Open Door before the Free Churches.

By Rev. ARTHUR DAKIN, B.D., D.Th.

Before the war we were talking of what is wrong with the Churches. During the first year of the war we were trying to persuade ourselves that a revival had commenced. To-day, in altogether more chastened mood, we are casting our eyes over the broad field of life to try and discover what special door of opportunity has opened to us. That in itself is a ground of hope. The first requirement surely is, that we should see and appreciate the facts.

It goes without saying that the task of delineating the actual

situation gives fine scope for the imagination. Anyone can say something on a subject so varied and many-sided, and almost anything said is likely to have a modicum of truth in it. It is fatally easy to make a selection from among the facts in favour of one's particular fad, and the danger of prescribing a pill for an earthquake is very real. Let it be taken for granted that in the present article there is the bias of the writer to be allowed for. The aim here is not to say something from which no one might conceivably dissent, but rather to give one's thoughts and feelings, leaving it to the reader to decide what is true and what is false, according as his experience dictates. No attempt is made to tone down anything in order to make it palatable. The situation is held to be so serious as to demand the frankest discussion carried out in the plainest possible terms. The present paper deals with the opportunity before us in the realm of thought, and it is hoped in a further contribution to speak of the opportunity in the matter of worship and fellowship.

There can be no doubt that the war has brought many people up against the fundamental problems. In earlier days we were resting comfortably in some pleasing delusions—about God, and man, and the world. We accepted easy solutions born out of a facile optimism. We had carried to a fine art the habit of closing our eyes to things that were inconvenient or distressing. Popular thought was generally defective, because men were so fatally given to the logical fallacy of ignoring the contrary. We had our views, our opinions, our dogmas; and instead of being engaged in the quest for truth, we were too busy seeking props to bolster up the positions we had adopted. A sermon that stiffened us in our opinions was great; one that broke new ground was doubtful; while a man who dared to disturb our mental serenity found himself generally regarded as "a good man but unsafe." Likewise we read the newspaper which said 'Amen' every morning to our prejudices; the other we consigned to the gutter. At most we wanted to meet the old truths in new garb. We could not believe that anything really new was either possible or profitable. To an

extraordinary degree our minds were closed. We had settled things satisfactorily. Thought had finished her work, given her verdict and closed her book.

Now, for many people, all that is changed. The war has dragged other facts into the light: it has pushed them before us with a grim insistence—it has compelled us to see. So that to-day we live in a world of problems. We realise their magnitude. They press upon us and dwell with us, and we neither lay ourselves down to rest nor rise to labour without the feeling that we are up against something that we do not understand. It is not that the problems are new. They are the questions that have troubled men from the beginning. Only we had dismissed them in our hours of ease. The great catastrophe has stripped the scales from our eyes, and somewhat softened the hardness of our hearts. We discover to our astonishment that while we were basking in our middle-class comfort and saying, 'All's right with the world' because most things were right with us, others, less fortunate, were all the time face to face with stupendous difficulties and found our easy optimism not bread but stone. Men of all stations stand to-day baffled before the strangeness of life.

And because they are baffled, they are seeking. Everyone knows how keen is the interest just now in such questions as providence, prayer, the life beyond, and all the matters connected with the thought of progress. The human mind is crying out for an acceptable theology and a sane philosophy. How could it be otherwise in face of present conditions? The common assumption that the average man does not philosophise and has no interest in theology is now seen to be false. It is true he seems to have no liking for the kind of theology the Church has been offering, but, nevertheless, it is a theology he needs and a theology he seeks. In face of startling facts he asks, 'Why must these things be?' It is a question he cannot avoid, and at the present time he is asking it with something of mental agony. Nor is this new attitude due to the fact that somehow the speculative side of man's nature has been suddenly awakened. Far more it arises

out of the urgency of the practical problems. Men see that by some means the social tangle has to be unravelled; righteous and justice have to be established and secured; peace has to be guaranteed. It is not true that these things will come about automatically by means of a beneficent evolution. Man has discovered in these days how much depends upon himself. Some had discovered it before the war. Now the number of these is greatly increased, and for them these practical questions are no longer interesting matters to speculate about in an odd half-hour; on the contrary, they are vital issues demanding immediate solution. Out of this sense of urgency there comes, naturally, earnest enquiry. The minds of men are open as perhaps they have not been for a century. People are willing to reconsider. Recent events have demonstrated the inadequacy of so many opinions, and upset so many prejudices, and knocked holes in this and that policy, that people find it easier now to revise their views and re-estimate their former convictions, to break away if need be from fettering traditions and even to transfer their loyalty. Probably ideas never had a better chance. The minds of many are as fertile soil well ploughed and watered, and the day of the sower is at hand. It scarcely needs saying what an opportunity all this offers to the Church. The fact that not all people are seeking makes no difference. Many are, and many too who are holding aloof. These are our field, and one feels that with wise and careful cultivation it might soon be a field yellow unto harvest.

Now from what has been said it would seem as though the Church has to do no more than go on uttering her message and the situation is fully met. But that is not the case. Whether the Church has the truth or not, the fact remains that in a time of poignant enquiry there has been no widespread turning to the Church. Nay, many who are honest seekers have lost all confidence in the Church, and are firmly rooted in the conviction that she does not know and consequently cannot teach. That is the fact in the situation which needs to be stamped on our very souls; for unless we can find the reasons for it and do away with the

causes of it, it is simply idle to talk about the present opportunity in the realm of thought. It is by no means easy to say why the Free Churches have been failing in this regard; but the bewilderment of even our own people is evidence that of late years we have not been succeeding in giving the average man a really satisfactory grip of the faith we expect him to accept. The present crisis caught many of our members unprepared. They found themselves at sea with no guiding chart and no anchor that could hold. And if that is true, it is all the more singular and serious, inasmuch as the Free Churches have placed an almost unique emphasis on the teaching office. It means that we are missing it even at the point where we lay the stress.

Undoubtedly a new opportunity for instructing has arisen, but are we equal to it, and can we take advantage of it? Who will show us how the weakness of the past can be overcome? It would be a useful thing if the attention of the whole of the Free Church could be focussed upon this point, and if many minds would set themselves to work on the problem, for a speedy solution to it is really vital to our continued existence.

It is obviously a matter which raises the question of the ministry. But no amount of general advice to preachers will meet the case. Such counsels as 'burn your old sermons,' 'preach without notes,' etc., are mere nostrums, and only make matters worse by giving the captious yet another point of view from which to criticize the already hard-pressed pastor. One person at least is absolutely convinced that at the present time all counsels to ministers should be given strictly in private. Those who move up and down the country giving delightfully entertaining talks on preaching to audiences composed mainly of listeners, do so no doubt with the best of intentions, but one wonders sometimes whether they quite realise all the harm they do, and how much they help to weaken the Church by fanning the flames of discontent. Anyway, is it not equally a matter for the congregation? Surely any question of ministry affects both parties. How can one give unless another is willing to receive? Why not have

a few conferences, for a change, on the importance of hearing, on the way to hear, and so forth? Is it not significant that our thought is directed to the way in which truth should be uttered, while Jesus Himself was more concerned about how it is to be received? The parable of the Sower—which might well be called “the parable of the hearer”—is a needed word to-day. How many of our members, for instance, have the least suspicion that to some extent the weakness of the Church is due to their failure to learn? The minds of people have been so exclusively directed to the work of the preacher that they are in danger of forgetting the importance of their part. And have we not fallen into that error because we are still under the sway of that totally erroneous view which regards education as a mere pouring of information into passive minds much as water is pumped into a bucket? In part at least, our trouble is that our method conforms to an antiquated and wrong psychology. Greater demands will have to be made upon the listener, and it must be made clear to him how much depends upon his efforts. We have already urged that some are now more ready to be instructed. A wise Church will make much of that and endeavour to encourage the spirit of enquiry, and to preserve it for later days. The situation does give the chance to secure a far greater measure of co-operation between pulpit and pew. Christians must be educated to seek, not first and foremost what is interesting, but rather what is illuminating and instructive. So long as the idea is abroad that a minister's chief business in the pulpit is to attract and soothe, it will be impossible to get from the congregation that mental effort without which all our attempts are bound to fail. It may be that the time has come for some change in method to meet the new awakening. Certainly experiments ought to be made. Anything that will get the congregation thinking is of value; and if quiet study done in the week could be made a preparation for the Sunday's discourses, so much the better. Anyway, our problem is, not to discover how to preach, but how to get the truth into people's hearts.

As to the actual utterance of truth, perhaps I may be permitted to say what seems to be relevant, especially as the "Fraternal" is not for general consumption. Just at the present time much is being made of the virtue of simplicity. It is a pretty word, and one suspects that its popularity may be due to the fact that it throws the onus upon the minister, and tends to relieve the hearer of just that application of mind which we hold to be so important. Everyone of course is in favour of the greatest possible clearness. But, after all, Dr. Stalker's reminder that Isaiah and Job and Romans are not simple has its value. Nor are the problems on which men desire light simple. We are asked to-day to deal with the great themes, and the only way to secure clearness in these is by going deeper down in thought. Are we deep enough? It is a question which each faces for himself, but it is obvious that one cannot teach beyond one's acquirement. The times call for great heart-searching on the part of ministers, and there is evidence that it is not lacking. The responsibility of having to think things out so to be able to lead others—a responsibility which nothing can divorce from the ministerial function—is very grave, and the opportunity of the hour forces us to face it with a fresh earnestness and an altogether new courage. If the call for simplicity is a call for that, then it is well, and we heed it, even though it smites us with a sense of our insufficiency for these things.

But not all the hard thinking will meet the case unless it finds its outlet in fearless speech. The controversy against us in the minds of many is, partly that we do not state openly *all* that we believe, and partly that we refuse to have anything to do with some of the most urgent problems of life. It is difficult to deny either charge. Much is heard just now of the demand for reality. That is the natural outcome of the spirit of earnestness that is abroad. Men seek desperately, consequently they expect to be treated honestly. Yet is not the insistent demand for reality a proof that it is felt to be lacking? We have often criticized the Anglican who reads his creed with mental alterations, but we have

not always noticed how the Free Churches have suffered from the same subtle falseness. The professorial advice "Don't preach your doubts," has often been taken to mean "Don't say anything that is likely to be controversial." How many congregations have had the opportunity of knowing the *whole* mind of their minister on, say the general questions of textual criticism? Is it not true that the older views have been allowed full freedom of expression, while a measure of suppression has been the rule with regard to newer views, even when these are no longer mere opinions but assured results of research? Even the Churches that have boasted of having no formal creed have been equally hampered by a tottering tradition, and the effect of this is seen in the present chaotic state of Christian knowledge. It is not so much our speech that has condemned us as our silence. People have been allowed to rest in ignorance. The preacher has often had one thing in mind and the congregation another, and the minister has known it and has acquiesced. An incident that occurred recently reveals the situation. Someone wrote in the "Nation" criticizing the new Free Church Creed, and asserting that it is only a re-annunciation of the old doctrines more or less in the old form. A reply was immediately forthcoming from a minister of the advanced school. He points out that the said creed does not mention (1) The Fall and original sin (2) The infallibility of Scripture, etc. (10 points in all.) Then he adds — "Surely, when in an official or semi-official declaration of faith, such doctrines are not so much as mentioned, the least we can infer is that they are no longer insisted upon." One could not wish for a better indication of the difference between the average lay mind and that of the typical minister. The minister takes silence as denial. The layman does nothing of the kind. He expects explicit statement, and surely the layman is justified. It is not in the province of this article to discuss the social problem, but with regard to that, the chief complaint against the Church is that she persists in maintaining an attitude of sphinx-like silence on the great matter of principle, viz., whether the sources of wealth ought to be in the

hands of a comparative few or in the ownership of the community. Unless the Church can scrap her opportunism in the interests of truth, the present opportunity in the realm of thought is not for her, but for those who have learned the value and necessity of perfect frankness and plain unequivocal utterance.

One knows the difficulties in the way of such openness. But the situation makes it imperative that these difficulties be faced. Nor is it beyond our wit to find a way to overcome them once we have the will. In the first place, we have a right to expect more from our leaders and college professors. Clear and unmistakable deliverances from them would be a most valuable moral support to the rest of us, and would have a decided influence throughout our Churches. In the second place, ministers might do more to help each other. Is it not time for those on whom this problem presses to band themselves together for moral and spiritual support? It is our pernicious isolation that numbs us and makes us afraid. And lastly, could not a really effective attempt be made to lay the situation in all its bearings before our laymen, that they might see the difficulties and help to solve them. Our people ought to be told plainly that many men find it hard to be frank owing to the conditions of Church-life, and they ought to be asked to unite with us, in an atmosphere of genuine concern and prayer, in order that together we may find a way out for the good of the Church and the blessing of the world.

There is of course no intention whatever in this article to be in any degree censorious or to cast any reflexion on any. It will be read rightly if it be regarded somewhat in the light of a personal confession. One realizes that the opportunity in the realm of thought is simply tremendous. The door is wide open, but alas! there are barriers. One yearns that the barriers may be removed, and the appeal here is, that combined and sustained effort should be made to clear the way, that the Church may be able to pass through to the broader field and there find a larger life.

Healing Preachers.

There are many men who live in the pulpit simply by their faculty of healing ; they are what we call pastoral preachers. The people think there can be no preacher like the man they love. Why? He is not a genius. No. He does not pile climaxes. Never. What does he do? He visits us in our houses; when the little child is ill he has a comforting way with him, and he so kneels at the cradle that we never forget it. He knows the Bible in all its adaptation. When that man gets up in the pulpit they want nothing from him but his face, his benediction of a face, his quiet, gleaming, radiant love. That is how it is that many men who are not preachers succeed in the pulpit, because they have been in the houses and among the affliction and the heart-break and the uttermost distress of their people, and therefore none can occupy their position in the affection of grateful hearts. Thus we all can preach in some way. Some preach in eloquent words, in vivid sentences, in telling and resonant paragraphs, and climaxes; they stir the blood as with the blast of a trumpet. And others have the pastoral gift; they know how to go up the creaking stairs without making a noise, they know how to speak without creating a fluttering and hurtful excitement. They say, "Let us pray," and the very saying of it is a prayer, and an answer too. I call upon you to honour such men; they are servants of the Lord Jesus. They know the mystery and the joy of the healing kingdom. We may want such men some day; I do myself. I never send for a very eloquent man to talk to me when my heart is breaking, but for some Methodist preacher who knows all about the ways of the kingdom, who *has had a great hospital experience in the treatment of broken spirits*, and he can talk me back again into the joys of resurrection and spiritual certitude.

Dr. JOSEPH PARKER.

The Lead of the Churches in Social Reconstruction.

By Rev. E. E. HAYWARD, M.A., C.F.

"I believe the fading hold the heavens have over the world is due to the neglect of the economic basis of spiritual life. What profound spiritual life can there be when the social order almost forces men to battle with each other for the means of existence?"

—GEORGE RUSSELL in "*The National Being*."

When I was asked to write an article on this subject there immediately came into my mind a valuable piece of work that has already been done along this very line of thought. In this work it has been my privilege to take a very small part. I cannot do better, in introducing the subject, than briefly to explain this matter a little more in detail. Most of my readers will know that in connection with all the Churches there now exists some official Social Service organisation. Thus, there is the Catholic Social Guild, the Congregational Union Social Service Committee, the Friends' Social Union, the Presbyterian Social Service Union, ten such Unions in all. There also exists an organisation which seeks to co-ordinate the work of these various Social Service Committees. This goes by the name of the Inter-denominational Conference of Social Service Unions, and is a body upon which representatives of all Churches sit. It has been the privilege of the writer to represent the Baptist Union (Social Section) at this Conference since its inception some seven years ago. The latest endeavour has been the drawing up of a manifesto on "Christian Social Reconstruction." A great deal of time has been spent upon this work during the last year. It was hoped that the appeal would be widely read and deeply pondered. It has already been largely noticed in the press, but we realise that such a statement as we have drawn up needs far more than press notices if it is to fulfil the purpose for which it was written. We wish, first and foremost, the ministers of our

churches "to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest" it. The churches will surely follow if the ministers will boldly take the leadership. And the general public will follow if the Christian churches will but give an earnest and courageous lead.

I shall make no apology for producing 'in extenso' the statement as drawn up by the Conference. I will only add that it has been a delightful experience to work on this body side by side with Roman Catholic, Anglican, Friend and Unitarian. It has caused the writer to realise that, in spite of the wide divergencies that separate the various communions of the Church of Christ, slowly there is being discovered that true "unity of the spirit" which binds all Christians into one. It is the spirit of the common service of mankind—the spirit of Him who came not to be served but to serve, and thus to give His life a ransom-price for many. It is this spirit which the Christian men both in our camps and at the Front, have re-discovered during the dark days of this horrible war. These men will look for true *and practical* manifestations of that spirit when they return after the war. The all-important question is, will the churches lead in the great work of social reconstruction which such a spirit will demand?

A Scheme of Christian Social Reconstruction.

This Conference has long and anxiously considered the task of social reconstruction which awaits us in this country. Its members recognise that Christianity has a unique part to play in such social reconstruction, and they take this opportunity of setting forth their unanimous conviction as to what that part should be.

They are led to do so, first by the need of impressing upon the nation the importance of Christian principles in social reform; secondly by their hope of quickening the social conscience and co-ordinating the social efforts of the various denominations; and thirdly by a desire to express their fundamental agreement in the social principles of Christianity and the main lines of their application.

The contribution of Christianity to social reform is of a spirit rather than of a cut-and-dried programme. It may appear vague and general when compared with the precise and detailed recommendations of the politician. But it certainly supplies two great needs for the lack of which so much effort in the past has been mischievous or barren; it gives us *guiding principles* and a *compelling motive*.

1. No social work can ultimately be of value unless it is based on secure *principles*. Men must be clear as to their aims before they can profitably discuss methods. Our manner of treating our fellow-men will depend upon our opinion as to the nature and destiny of human personality. Our housing schemes will be conditioned by our Christian ideal of the family. The Christian spirit should affect man in all circumstances of his life, and the application of Christian principles to social conditions will give a unique coherence and security to our work.

2. Moreover, the *motives* for social reform supplied by Christianity are of undisputed power. It is recognised that, however important legislation, whether restrictive or positive, may be, real social progress depends throughout upon the deepening and broadening of the sense of personal responsibility.

The first part of this scheme sets forth the chief social rights, claims and duties of men according to the Christian conception of life, and the Christian ideal of the family and the State.

The second indicates briefly some of the modern evils which are largely due to a neglect of Christian principles.

The third indicates various means by which our social conditions may be brought into closer conformity with the Christian standard.

I. RIGHTS, CLAIMS AND DUTIES.

THE FAMILY AND THE STATE.

Christianity enforcing the dictates of reason, asserts that every man, receiving his life from the Creator, has the duty of maintaining and developing it according to the divine purpose.

Destined for eternal life and called to a divine sonship through Christ, every human being is of inestimable worth and the material takes its value and significance from the spiritual.

1.—**Right to Life.** Hence every man on coming into the world has a God-given right to life. This right to life implies the right to such necessities of life as food, clothing and shelter. In an industrial system such as ours, this practically resolves itself into the right to a "living wage," by which we mean not a mere subsistence wage but a wage sufficient to maintain a reasonable standard of life. If employment cannot for any reason be provided, it must be recognised that a man has a right to maintenance.

2.—**Employment.** The community has a moral obligation so to order its economic and industrial system that employable persons can normally find employment.

3.—**Rest and Recreation.** Man has a reasonable claim to such leisure and opportunities as may enable him not merely to work efficiently, but to lead a full and happy human life, and fulfil the claims of religion.

4.—**Marriage.** Since men and women are normally intended by God to share the responsibilities and blessings of married life and to rear children and send them into the world healthy and equipped for right living, any action on the part of individuals or of the community which tends to defeat that end must be condemned by the Christian conscience.

5.—**Education.** Man has a reasonable claim to education in religion and moral character and in such knowledge and practical training as will enable him to lead a worthy human life, and to take his place in the social order according to his capacity.

DUTIES. All rights imply duties, and every person is under the obligation to respect the rights of others and, further, to perform certain duties the neglect of which, apart from its consequences to the individual, is the direct cause of grave social evils. Thus, for instance:

(i) **Self-Control.** *Moral self-control* is a duty upon which

Christianity insists, and for which it provides the most powerful and effective motives and aids. The stress laid by Christian teaching upon temperance and purity has the most important social as well as individual consequences.

(ii) **Work.** *The duty of working* is repeatedly put before us by divine precept, and work of some kind is both a necessary protection against physical, moral and spiritual atrophy, and also the normal expression of personality. It is, moreover, due from every man as his contribution to the common welfare.

THE FAMILY AND THE STATE. Christianity lays the greatest stress upon the maintenance of a pure and wholesome family life. The family is the primary society and serves as the depository and the channel of the moral law. Respect for the domestic virtues is the necessary basis of social peace. At every turn in our work of social reform we must test our methods by their effect upon the home, avoiding all that would detract from the sanctity of marriage or weaken parental responsibility.

As regards the State (in the sense of public authority) the Christian spirit avoids the two extremes of *laissez-faire* on the one hand, and, on the other, all usurpation by the State of functions which naturally belong to the individual or the family. The principle to be borne in mind is that public action or organisation is not a substitute for private, but supplements and completes it. Moreover, the healthy State expresses and gives form to the willing co-operation of the whole of the community.

II. MODERN EVILS. RIGHTS AND DUTIES NEGLECTED.

A very brief survey of modern social conditions will show us how far we have neglected the Christian standard above indicated.

1.—**Right to Life.** The sacredness of personality is not sufficiently recognised. Men, women and children are still often regarded as mere wealth-producing machines, and lives are wantonly sacrificed or crippled in our industrial system. Adequate

food and clothing are not within the reach of a large number even of industrious people.

This is the result, in large measure, of the actual working of our wage system. It has been wrongly assumed that there is necessarily a conflict of interests between employers and employed. The truth is, that were both to consult their highest interests, a cordial co-operation would take the place of the present fierce competition. Industrial conditions are far too largely determined by mere economic forces, and the industrial groups have not sufficient opportunity for self-government.

As for the housing problem—it is acute in town and country alike. In many districts there are not nearly enough houses, and the character of many of the dwellings leads to a high death-rate amongst infants, the physical and mental stunting of those who survive, the fostering of drinking habits, the discouragement of "house-pride," and to many other moral and social evils.

2.—**Employment.** The problem of unemployment is one of the most serious which we have to face owing to the vastness of its scale, especially during periods of industrial depression—its far-reaching effects, its demoralising influence upon character and its peril to national welfare.

3.—**Rest and Recreation.** Many workers, and even children, have not those opportunities for rest and suitable recreation which are necessary for their welfare.

4.—**Marriage.** In certain sections of society there are still grave economic and social obstacles to matrimony. Those who are responsible for the conditions in which, for example, many shop-assistants, men servants and clerks have to live should realise how grave is the restraint upon marriage, and how great the temptations to immorality which result. When men and women are married, manifold social influences and pressures tend to encourage an unnatural restriction of the family, with the grave moral and social evils which accompany such restriction.

5.—**Education.** Education needs reform in many respects. The age at which children leave school is too low, the half-time

system is unsatisfactory, children are kept at school when they are medically unfit or underfed.

Again, not enough stress has been laid on the formation of character and the training of the will; nor have children been sufficiently prepared for the responsibilities of citizenship. Opportunities for higher education, technical training and domestic instruction have been inadequate. Above all, our education as a whole is seriously deficient in definite Christian principles.

DUTIES. But if rights have thus been overlooked, it is no less clear that duties have been neglected. The duty and possibility of moral self-control in the matters of temperance and purity have been either ignored or minimised; and work, instead of being regarded as an opportunity of serving God and one's neighbour by its conscientious fulfilment, is often looked upon as merely a tiresome necessity.

In short, we have the spectacle of a society which, despite the Christian piety and zeal of individuals and groups, is far from having been Christianised in its organised relationships. The Gospel of Christ is not recognised as the supreme law in politics, civic life, professional dealings, commerce and industry. There are those who say that it could not be the supreme law in these matters; but we are convinced that nothing short of the Christianising of man in all his relations can succeed in solving our social problems and guiding to the highest purpose the manifold activities of man.

III. SUGGESTED REMEDIES.

Finally we come to the main lines along which social reform must be conducted in accordance with Christian principles. On matters of detail, no doubt, there is room for differences of opinion, but our agreement on general principles will carry us far.

The sacredness of personality must be by every means upheld. Our legislation must reflect the truth that persons are more sacred than property. Men, women and children must be

recognised as beings endowed with a spiritual nature and a God-given destiny.

1.—**Right to Life.** The maintenance of a *decent standard of living* is a fundamental need. So long as wages remain the normal way by which man has access to the fruits of the earth, the main point to insist upon *as a matter of strict justice* is the payment of a *living wage* in the sense explained above. As regards the employment of women—when their work is equal in value to that of men they should be given an equal wage, so far as economic values determine wages.

The wage system can only be made equitable by lifting it above the level of mutual distrust and unrestricted competition. Its more flagrant abuses may to some extent be remedied by a gradual and prudent extension of the Trade Board system and by the giving of a legal sanction to a minimum standard in the manner of the Coal Mine Act. But our aim should be to develop such a system of industry as will represent a spirit of co-operation rather than that of competition. It is urgently necessary that workers should have not merely a fair share of industrial profits but also a place in the control of industrial conditions.

The real significance of the *housing* problem consists in the fact that the house is the material framework of the home, and the home is the abode of the family wherein the sacred and intimate relations of husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, find their fulfilment or their perversion. The central point of view from which the housing problem ought to be regarded is therefore that of the mother. It is her business to develop out of the young lives that come under her care healthy men and women who shall be effective in the broadest and best sense of the word. In addition to this she has to care for the grown members of the family, making the home a place of rest from toil, a refuge from the stress of the competitive world, a centre for reinvigoration and the amenities of domestic social intercourse.

The housing problem appears to be one with which private enterprise is unable to cope single-handed, and hence, according

to our Christian conception of the State, the community has the duty of supplementing private initiative. This does not necessarily mean bureaucracy and an inelastic system; there is room for individual initiative and experiment, for private enterprise, for societies of public utility; but it does mean that all these must be included in a co-ordination of planning and organisation which is directed in the first instance to the supply of sufficient and adequate houses in which homes may be formed, and not to mere profit.

We may add that the duties of motherhood are of so great importance to the State as well as to the individual, and the danger of indiscriminately drawing mothers into the industrial system is so serious that the whole question of the industrial employment of women and what has been termed "the endowment of motherhood" has a new consideration.

2.—**Employment.** The organisation of industry is a most difficult and delicate matter about which there is much legitimate variety of opinion. But as Christians we must insist that the aim of such organisation should be not merely increased production but human welfare; and society must consider and provide some efficient method of dealing with unemployment and the unemployed.

3.—**Rest and Recreation.** The provision of rest and recreation must be brought home as a duty to the consciences of individuals and safeguarded by the community. Efforts which impose an undue physical strain may be called for in times of national crisis, but must not be perpetuated for selfish interests.

4.—**Marriage.** It is imperative that society should deal radically with the industrial and social conditions which hinder marriage and which encourage an unnatural restriction of families. In this matter we must appeal with all possible earnestness to the religious and moral conscience of the country.

5.—**Education.** As regards education, in accordance with the principles already laid down, the various religious bodies should

unite in a common effort to introduce reforms in our educational system which will secure :

- (i) That children are properly fed and in sound physical condition while they receive compulsory training.
- (ii) The reduction of the size of classes and improvement of the status of the teachers.
- (iii) The abolition of the present half-time system and the raising of the age for leaving school.
- (iv) Continued education, part time but obligatory, non-vocational as well as vocational, during the all-important formative period of adolescence.
- (v) The effective encouragement of teachers in their efforts to prepare children for home life, work and citizenship by the inculcation of good moral habits.
- (vi) Full opportunity for education in the definite principles of religion, with full provision for spiritual liberty.

But there are other aspects of education which demand attention in the light of Christian principles. The whole movement of adult education is an attempt to satisfy the claim of the individual to self-development. No doubt industrial efficiency must be kept in view in our educational system and promoted by scientific and technical training; but the liberal cultivation of the mind for its own sake must be provided for, and in this work the religious bodies have a great opportunity for service.

DUTIES. With regard to the duties above specified, the chief contribution of the Christian spirit will be the awakening of men's consciences and the strengthening of the sense of personal responsibility. Not only will this result in the diminution of anti-social habits but it will come to reflect itself in the mind of the community as a whole and will lead to effective legislation.

Since the temperance problem, for instance, is largely the outcome of other social defects, we must not confine ourselves to preventive measures but must seek to remove the causes, *e.g.*, bad housing, defective education, lack of healthy opportunities for fellowship, etc. Here again we must emphasise the need for a

widely diffused sense of personal and social responsibility. This sense of responsibility must express itself, among other ways, by wise legislation. It is imperative that the State should secure a really effective control of the liquor traffic and should exercise that control both by diminishing the present excess of facilities for the sale of drink and by constructive action.

The serious social evils of betting and gambling must be met partly by the substitution of reasonable interests and amusements and partly by legislation prohibiting professionalism and press facilities for gambling.

Sexual vice, with its attendant train of social evils, urgently requires drastic legislative treatment, reinforced by the Christian spirit. To the removal of public incitements to vice and the discreet instruction of the young must be added the practice of that individual self-control which Christianity enjoins. The laws which seek to regulate the relations between men and women should place an equal value on chastity or continence in both sexes. Infidelity to marriage vows should not be condoned in the husband while visited with heavy punishment in the case of the wife. There are too many traces in our law and its administration of the un-Christian assumption that immorality is wrong only in women.

With regard to the use of money it is particularly important to spread Christian ideals. Christianity regards wealth as a trust. The right to property is not absolute but conditional. The rich man is a steward of his possessions and the right to ownership in general can only be justified when it is shown that such ownership conduces to the general welfare and results in an equitable distribution of the fruits of the earth. A selfish and anti-social use of money and the monstrous evil of luxurious extravagance are alike condemned by Christian teaching.

It is the genuine love of God which gives to love of our fellow-men its fullest meaning and intensest power. A good Christian will be a good citizen and will be anxious to remove those social and economic evils which tend to cramp the spiritual life of the people. As Christians we have a special responsibility and a special opportunity for devoted social action.*

*Copies of this may be had from the Hon. Sec. of the Interdenominational Conference of Social Service Unions, Miss LUCY GARDNER, 92, St. George's Square, London, S.W. 1. Price 1d. each. 10d. a dozen. 7/6 a hundred.

Christianity as Super-National.

By Rev. J. H. RUSHBROOKE, M.A.

*The time through which we are passing is full of menace. The external dangers are manifest—the immense strength of the one State in Europe that stands for the old ideal of military domination, the risks of food shortage at home, the emergence of bitter party strife and so forth. But we are concerned with an internal, a deeper and more subtle menace, to the Christian ideal itself as it is held in the minds of followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Its peculiar subtlety appears in this, that men are assailed precisely on the levels of their nobler thinking. Patriotism, sadly perverted as it often has been, is a virtue; and they who have entered most intimately into the spirit of British History, and understand Britain's contribution to human progress, have discerned the hand of God in the whole development. Milton's "God's Englishmen" has been to them more than a phrase; and for what their country essentially is, and for all the enrichment that, if true to herself, she may yet offer to the life of the world, they have loved her with passionate devotion. By no means blind to her faults, they have nevertheless been gladdened by the revelations of her stern fidelity to solemn international engagements and to the call of the weak. Their souls have been thrilled by the sight of millions of her young men voluntarily offering themselves, the most eager of all representing the very flower of the Churches. All that has been endured during these three and a half anxious years has confirmed and intensified their love of Britain, and the knowledge that her victory is the pre-condition of a new and better international order has made the nation's cause splendid and holy. But this standpoint—which we fully

*Mr. Rushbrooke has written this article under trying circumstances. He has been far from well, and had it not been for the difficulty in which the Editor would have been placed by the non-delivery of the M.S.S., Mr. Rushbrooke would have cried off. His kindness and courage in thus fulfilling his promise are doubly appreciated.—ED.

adopt and hold—has its own perils, and they have revealed themselves in many directions. The sense of our rightness in the main issues of the conflict too easily tends to develop an all-round self-satisfaction, which in its extreme form would approximate to the intolerable Pharisaism of the German preachers and professors whose utterances alienated the world at the outset of the war. The sense of the immense guilt of the war-makers—the Prussian military party—is liable to be transferred into an indiscriminate hatred of the German people as having supported them, and to lead us to overlook the vast difference between the schemers moved by aggressive purposes, and the masses on whose fears these schemers have so successfully played. A powerful writer has insisted—with truth as long as the words are fairly interpreted—that we are warring against “naked evil;” but the blindness which at once assumes every German to be a conscious instrument of “naked evil,” and morally reprobate, is both intellectually and morally a grave defect. Further, our consciousness of the righteousness of the national effort, our whole-hearted admiration of the response of our young manhood to the call of duty, tend to arouse fierce impatience with those who, as President Wilson has said, desire peace without understanding how to get it. The “conscientious objector” becomes an offence, and it is easy to misrepresent his position. To the majority of his countrymen he appears as a traitor—which in rare cases he is—or a coward—and the ranks of those claiming to be “conscientious objectors” are not free of such; but in many instances—probably a majority, though numbers are irrelevant—he represents with perfect honesty a special point of view. He claims to be guided by a higher law than that of the State; and intense patriotism seeing in the Britain of to-day an instrument for attaining a lofty human and Divine purpose, is impatient with the appeal to “a higher law.” It tends to regard the authority of the State as final and decisive; and in the manner in which it does that, it moves away from Christianity. We have no difficulty in allowing for the psychology of war-time, but we cannot admit a

“moratorium for Christianity,” and the denial of the right of the individual to stand or fall to his own Master is subversive of thought and ideals.

We can scarcely imagine the proposition that Christianity is super-national needs to be argued. That the authority of God in Christ stands even above the claims of country is an elementary truth to which every one would render at least lip-service. Deliberately to place another authority alongside or above that of our Lord is impossible. The danger arises not in the region of theory, but in the realm of practice. Maxims like “*salus populi suprema lex*” are carelessly accepted—as in Mr. Bonar Law’s recent unfortunate use of the idea in the House of Commons—without the effort to bring them into relation with central and vital Christian principles. The Apostle Paul long since taught that in Christ Jesus is neither Jew nor Greek; but the saying has a perfectly obvious modern application, which men tacitly refuse to regard. Lord Hugh Cecil, who by a strange irony stands to-day as the defender of liberty of conscience under the absolute authority of God, uttered a weighty warning in a speech on the 14th May last.—

“Of course Nationalism in a degree is a very desirable thing. It is only the largest expression of that *esprit de corps* which runs through our lives, and is upon the whole and in the main an edifying and wholesome influence. But the peculiarity of Nationalism, which makes it different from any other form of *esprit de corps*, is that it implies or permits the suspension of the moral law.”

After illustrating the point by referring to University life, he added: “It is precisely because in all these subsidiary illustrations of *esprit de corps* . . . you have always something higher, the observance of the national law of the country and loyalty to the State, so that whether a man is devoted to his school or his college, or his regiment or his trade union, or whatever body he may belong to, he always has at the back of his mind

the sense of a higher loyalty—of something which has a still more assertive claim upon him, and therefore the thing is kept within bounds. . . . We shall do no good unless we get people to feel that there is something higher than their loyalty to their country—that there are obligations to all mankind. But I need not say . . . that this doctrine of there being something higher is one of the most elementary commonplaces of the tenets of Christianity.”

If we take a lower point even in war time, owing for example no obligation to the German people, or setting up a doctrine of “reprisals” that is nothing else than the “eye for eye, tooth for tooth,” which Jesus condemned, let us do so with our eyes open, and recognise that we are forsaking Christianity. And if we shrink from such a recognition in theory, let us beware lest a principle we dare not avow should in fact govern our practice.

The frank assertion of the super-national character of Christianity, with its corollary of the absoluteness of the moral law, is vital not only to a true attitude towards men of other nations, but to the discharge of the highest patriotic duties of our own. The Christian Church must act as the conscience of the community, i.e., it must prize the acts and spirit of the community in the light of universal standards. (There can be only one moral absolute or universal standard—the will of God. To set up the State as possessing unrestricted authority is to ensure moral chaos: it implies as many moral absolutes as there are States—a contradiction in terms. This essential Prussian theory lies at the root of the confusion of to-day.) Her one task in relation to public life is to bring it, so far as her insight permits, to the judgment-bar of God. She can never accomplish this by a cringing submission, by deference to “national necessity,” or by echoing the judgment of the average man and newspaper. Her task is to expound and commend only such a national loyalty as is consistent with loyalty to the Highest, and to pronounce all other “patriotism” unworthy. We do not mean for a moment that she is entitled to pose as a hostile and suspicious critic of all the detailed regulations

and restrictions which a Government may deem necessary in an exceptional time: her task will often be to urge upon her members their duty of cheerful compliance with the *fiat* of "the powers that be;" but she will view everything in the clear light of her own constitution as the Church of God. She will have her word to speak against profiteers and against professional agitators; she will hold herself free to criticise the measures of statesmen; and the weight of the expressed judgment will depend entirely upon the standard of reference which she maintains. She will be super-national in her treatment both of the internal and the external affairs of a people; to repeat a phrase, she will act as the conscience of the community.

We have already said that the call to guard against the menace of a merely national outlook is urgent. The Churches have not spoken half as clearly as they ought concerning the public shame involved in the treatment of conscientious objectors to military service. Let us not be misunderstood: we think them mistaken, and we know that the question is complicated by the dishonesty of some of them. We concede, too, that the claim of the "absolutists" who, on the ground that the State is at war, would withhold every form of service by which the State could in any direct or indirect way be benefited, is impossible—fatal alike to democracy, to social life, and to common sense. The deprivation of votes is a very light penalty in these cases—the least any organised society could inflict on those who repudiate its very basis. A more logical objector would refuse to enjoy any advantage conferred by a society whose demands exposed through its chosen instruments he refused to fulfil. But we know that the "absolutist," troublesome as he is, is not typical; the type is rather that of the man who at a single point is acutely aware of the collision between the demand (as he interprets it) of the Authority that he and we alike recognise as final, and the demand of the subordinate authority to which he and we alike owe a subordinate allegiance. He will do all he honestly can to meet the demand of the subordinate authority, and it is both unjust and inexpedient

to penalise him. He represents a principle which, differ as we may from his special interpretations of it, is of the highest value; and even his assertion of it "out of season" may itself be a supreme service to his country. In other days, when judgment was unbiassed by the stern pressure of these times, our souls have been thrilled by the words of Lowell;—

"We owe allegiance to the State; but deeper, truer, more
To the sympathies that God has set within our spirits' core:
Our country claims our fealty; we grant it so, but then
Before man made us citizens, great Nature made us men,"

Nor can we be satisfied that the Church has expressed a judgment worthy of her super-national character regarding other issues of the highest moment affecting the prospects of peace and the establishment after the war of new conditions that shall in some measure justify the vast sacrifices. In two directions there appears to be a definite call to assert the supreme claims of the moral law. It is impossible to overlook the immense mischief that has been wrought in neutral and enemy lands by the "Paris resolutions" foreshadowing "economic war after the war." Neutrals have discerned in these an Allied purpose of selfish aggression, and their sympathy has been alienated: whilst in enemy countries the peoples have been rallied to the support of their countries Governments by dread of economic ruin. The Churches' judgment, however, will not be based on considerations of political or military prudence. In the light of justice and humanity, what is to be said? Are the unconditional threats of economic warfare consistent with the establishment of ideal relations between the peoples? Are they in line with a Christian ideal? (Of course we do not refer to such problems as the guarding of "key industries" in order to prevent our nation—or any other—falling into economic dependence upon another people; this is a special question, and decision would be based upon quite other grounds from those of the proposed economic boycott.) Here President Wilson has taken a clear line in insisting that it must depend upon Germany herself whether she shall be admitted to the fellowship of free peoples: and the Church, unless she divests herself of all super-national character, and abdicates her function of moral

criticism, cannot adopt any lower position. Again, the question of the public ratification and the publication of international agreements as a pre-condition of their validity has become acute, and it is one on which the attitude of the Church cannot be less clear than that of international socialism. A just judgment of the causes of the present war will undoubtedly find the primary and immediate cause in the aggressive purposes of the Prussian rulers, but it will not overlook more general conditions. These rulers have been able to carry with them the German People, but it is an entirely false inference that therefore the German people and its rulers must be held equally guilty. It is right to recognise that for the purposes of the war it is impossible to count on any cleavage in the field of action; but the moral judgment takes account of motives, and here there is a real cleavage. Whilst the rulers have been actuated by aggressive purposes, the masses have been led by fear. They were induced to believe in a vast conspiracy threatening their very existence; and the general conditions under which international diplomacy has worked, made the fiction credible. For these conditions we have our measure of responsibility—not a leading share as some critics have alleged; and it is for us to cast off the shackles of the old order, and surely for the Churches to demand full frankness and publicity in the future intercourse of States.

Finally, we would state emphatically that these reflections are not intended to suggest that the Churches of Britain as a whole have acted unworthily. No one could compile from the utterances of British Church leaders such an appalling collection of chauvinistic rhetorical outbursts as Professor Bang of Copenhagen has gathered from German ecclesiastical sources. Before the war, the Churches of Britain strove earnestly to avert it, and the outbreak of hostilities has never been allowed to silence the voice of reason and humanity. This we thankfully acknowledge and assert. What we desire, however, is, firstly, that a menace which is real and increasing should be recognised; and, secondly, the Church should clearly recognise and maintain her character as a witness for God, and therefore for humanity. She must be supernatural or she ceases to be Christian.