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A table of contents for the *Christian Brethren Research Fellowship Journal* can be found here:

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CONTENTS

If Jesus Came	<i>Sosthenes</i>	I
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MEMBERS' ISSUE

Introduction		3
--------------------	--	---

Contributions

Towards Renewal	<i>J. K. Howard</i>	4
Notes on Pastoral Ministry	<i>Paul E. Leonard</i>	9

Correspondence

Divorce and the Christian		19
The Pentecostalism Debate		19
Why I Left the Brethren		21
Irving and the Early Brethren		21

Essays and Reviews

The Humanist (March 1966 issue)	<i>Charles G. Martin</i>	22
New Christian: the first 6 months	<i>David A. Booth</i>	23
Christian Education	<i>C. A. Oxley</i>	24
Dilemma—or Bogey?	<i>Charles G. Martin</i>	25
de Chardin and <i>The Phenomenon</i>	<i>F. Roy Coad</i>	27

Notes and Enquiries		31
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The Christian Brethren Research Fellowship

IF JESUS CAME

Discipleship is a simple idea: until we come to work it out. When we do, we are apt to find that it presents us with so many contradictions, that we are tempted to stop concerning ourselves with it altogether, and to live each moment as it comes to us. Perhaps in so doing we are not much off the mark after all. For how often is the Lord Jesus we picture to ourselves but a Jesus of our own imaginings: a product of our upbringing and our heredity, of misread scriptures and half heard sermons, and of the strange contradictory currents of our subconscious mind?

It is in the real situations of our daily life that we confront the basic meaning of discipleship. In those confrontations are tested the strength and the depth of our knowledge of the Word of Jesus, the Lord. How wide and how deep does the writ of His Lordship run? Perhaps we can test our answers to those questions by facing another: if Jesus were to come to me today, and face me in this situation—would I recognise Him? If one thing is certain, it is that His coming is unlikely to be in a manner which is expected and trite.

Yet, as His encounters with other men and women recorded in the Gospels show, it is our recognition of Him, or otherwise, which would demonstrate the quality of our faith—or if we have faith at all. Would some of us fail to recognise Him, because we look for Him in the marvelous, and the crib at Bethlehem is so commonplace? Or because we cannot believe that any good thing can come out of Nazareth? Or because our doctrine is so sound that it has become a prison for our minds? Or, worst of all, because in our heart of hearts we do not really wish to see Him at all?—

‘Thou judgest us, Thy purity
Doth all our lusts condemn’.

In considering the ordering of local churches, we spend a great deal of thought on the prior authority and example for what we do, but far less on testing the validity of our actions by that which results from them. Of course it is dangerous to judge by apparent results in things spiritual, but we may reasonably deduce that if certain ways of going about our business have deleterious effects, then we are unlikely to have understood the divine intention correctly.

These remarks are prompted by reflections on two aspects of assembly life. The first concerns the common structure of assembly government. There is ample support, both Biblical and historical, to be quoted in favour both of government by elders and of local church independence. We might well ask ourselves, however, whether assemblies, as a result of

the experiences of their early years, have not developed a system of 'shock-absorption' which is so efficient that it can be relied upon to smother both a substantial proportion of the gift given to individuals, and also any real fresh wind of the Holy Spirit within the churches. In short, have we not developed, like some by-way of biological evolution, a structure which is self-destructive by its own inertia?

Secondly, a speculation prompted by a remark of Mr. H. L. Ellison in *The Household Church*. 'A criticizing mother', he writes, 'means criticizing children. Where the mother is disappointed and unsatisfied, you will rarely find a satisfied family. Where we interpret the fact that certain functions in the assembly do not belong to the woman to mean that she may be ignored and treated as a second-rate Christian, Satan reaps rich dividends'. (p. 75.) Might it add a little more realism to our discussions concerning the part of the women of the church in its worship, if we realise that in our thoughts on this subject, there might lie a deeper cause of much more drift from assemblies than results from open disagreement on this one matter in itself?

SOSTHENES

NEWS OF THE FELLOWSHIP

Annual Meeting. The attention of all members is drawn to the announcement in this issue concerning the 1966 annual meeting.

Corresponding members of council. As a result of the resolution passed at the last annual meeting, it has been possible to invite men from several overseas countries to act as corresponding members of the council. Details will be published in a later issue, for the assistance of overseas members.

The Journal. Two issues of the journal which will be issued in the near future deal respectively with *Liturgy* and *Biblical Interpretation*. Issues containing a *Missionary Survey* and discussions on *Science and Christian Belief* and *Roman Catholicism* are also in preparation. The issue on *Addictions* has been delayed, but is still to appear: members with specialist knowledge who might be able to help with this issue are invited to write to Mr. D. J. Ellis (12 Burcote Rd., London, S.W.18).

In addition to the above, it is contemplated to run a series of issues, interspersed with the specialist issues, dealing with subjects of immediate practical concern in church life and conduct. Some members have already agreed to be responsible for individual issues of this series, in collecting contributions and summarising the discussions.

Occasional Paper. Occasional Paper No. 2 is now in the press and will be circulated when ready.

Local Groups. A number of local groups are in existence. The editor would be glad to hear from those which are willing to publish their secretary's address, in order to facilitate contact.

MEMBERS' ISSUE

Over recent months, we have accumulated a considerable amount of material from members. This has been a satisfying and encouraging aspect of the Fellowship, but with the pressure upon available space in the *Journal* it has not been possible to do justice to all the material which has been received, or to the work which members have put into its preparation.

This issue is therefore by way of an experiment, to enable us to release some of the accumulated matter. We shall be interested to receive further studies and correspondence, and it is probable that a 'Members' Issue' on the lines of this current number will become a regular feature of the *Journal*.

Where matter received is related closely to the subject matter of forthcoming issues of the *Journal* it has been retained for publication in those issues. A considerable amount of material is still retained in hand under this classification.

The main content of this issue derives from two overseas members, both temporarily in the U.K. Dr. J. K. Howard, a medical missionary from Zambia, gives us some perceptive comment on matters of contemporary urgency; while Mr. Paul Leonard, of the U.S.A. but at present engaged in post-graduate studies at Manchester University, contributes a careful examination of recent thinking in assemblies on the important matter of a pastoral ministry.

As to the monitors, there is a sound of a going in the mulberry trees. We welcome contributions from several members, and not least from a newcomer to our pages, Dr. David A. Booth. This section of the *Journal* is of immense importance if we wish to be informed on what others are saying.

ANNUAL MEETING

The THIRD ANNUAL MEETING of the Fellowship will be held at CHURCH HOUSE, WESTMINSTER, on SATURDAY, 29th OCTOBER, 1966. It is hoped that as many members as possible will be able to reserve this date. The meeting will be held in the later part of the afternoon and during the evening, and after conclusion of normal business the subject to be considered through speakers and in open discussion will be:—

A SETTLED MINISTRY

CONTRIBUTIONS

TOWARDS RENEWAL

Dr. J. K. Howard

*‘ . . . providence is a great maker of journeys,
And whoever refuses to go forward is dropped by the road’.*

These words which Christopher Fry puts into the mouth of Henry II in his play *Curtmantle* seem to me to express admirably the predicament which confronts the Brethren Movement today. The choice is either to go forward or to stagnate, to progress or to be dropped by the road, relegated to the limbo of half-forgotten religious movements which served their brief moment and then vanished from the scene. To go forward will require a radical new appraisal of all our structure, our purposes and our beliefs. To go forward will require the painful cut of the surgeon’s knife stripping off the devitalised accretions of 130 years, the outworn and out-moded paraphernalia of the Victorian Age; but if the Brethren Movement does have a genuine word to say to the World and the Church of the twentieth century then go forward it must.

Such a reappraisal will not necessarily imply the rejection of traditional orthodoxy, but it will imply a reformulation of belief and practice into the cultural idiom of contemporary society. Here perhaps it needs to be said that there is a common misconception that the early Brethren recaptured the essential first century primitiveness of the New Testament, no doubt one of the reasons why we arrogantly claim the appellation ‘New Testament assemblies’; but if we think, or for that matter if the early Brethren themselves thought, that the situation of the early Church could be recaptured, then we and they were mistaken, for it is a manifest impossibility for us to project ourselves back into the milieu of the Greco-Roman world. What those early Brethren did do was to restate certain principles and ideals of the New Testament and apply them to their own situation. Above all they restated the great principle of the ‘priesthood of all believers’ based on the fact that because of the redemptive act in Christ the whole meaning of priesthood has changed; because of the Incarnation it becomes something all-embracing. This is a principle which is again in danger from the Romeward trend of Anglicanism and its fellow-travellers, but these principles must be applied afresh to this as to every other generation. To neglect this is the way to stagnation and death.

The authority of Scripture

We have over the years rightly stressed the authority of Scripture, and on this ground we must part company with the Quakers with whom we have so much in common. They have established the rule of experience,

this has become their authority, but we have tended to the opposite extreme and have forgotten that Scripture must be interpreted in the light of experience, in the terms of concrete human existence. The authority of Scripture surely rests in its ability to speak to mankind in all conditions of life and at all periods of human history, for it derives from the authority of God Himself who speaks to men through its medium. Yet it is precisely this that should make us careful before we commit ourselves to theories of inspiration and heap our anathemas upon those who dare to disagree. If the uniqueness of Holy Scripture lies in its ability to declare the truth about man and about God at all times, and in particular in its ability to speak the truth to *me* in *my* situation, then clearly the inspiration of Scripture does not lie in externals, in the use of words and symbols, but rather in the ideas which underly those words and symbols, ideas which live forever and express to us in the depths of our being the eternal realities. Such terms as 'plenary inspiration' and 'verbal inspiration' have become touchstones of orthodoxy in some circles, but their use has led to the present situation, common in evangelicalism generally, in which we have allowed ourselves to become bogged down in a sort of superstitious reverence for words which, in its turn, has led to an over-literal application of these words to every situation. We forget that words are merely the cloaks for ideas: they provide us with images, and those images may require changing from generation to generation. We have, I believe, demonstrated, although we have not recognised, the truth that 'the letter killeth'. It is only as we reach beyond the words and the symbols that we will genuinely hear the Word of God addressing us and come to know that 'the spirit maketh alive'.

. . .

The Interpretation of Scripture

This leads on to the problem of the interpretation of Scripture, and here again we must go behind the words to the ideas and principles which these words express. The New Testament spoke to its time, it spoke in the imagery and the idiom of the first century, and its concepts, its world view, its basic premises were those of a particular era of history. If the New Testament is going to speak meaningfully to us in this day in the realm of practice and belief, then we must look below the externals for the real idea, the real principle which is there, just as we must if the Bible is to speak to us at the personal level. Only then will we be able to reclothe these ideas in language applicable to our own time, finding fresh images, and above all determining how a particular principle may be re-expressed in actions fitted to our time as Paul or Peter fitted such principles to their time.

The importance of all this lies in its application to the forms in which our belief and worship and practice are to be expressed. The need for re-defining our theological images is already apparent, and however much we may deplore some of the more unguarded statements in such books as *Honest to God*, *Soundings*, and the like, they have, nonetheless, focussed our attention on the gulf between the language and presuppositions of

Christian people and those of the 'man in the street'. At the moment however, I am more concerned with the expression of our belief and practice as a group of committed men and women. In some senses it is one of the saving graces of the Brethren Movement that it has steadfastly refrained from the formulation of constitutional statements and the like, for this will mean that any re-interpretation or reformulation and re-evaluation will be that much easier than had our beliefs and practices been enshrined in some codified form. Yet even so we shall have to contend with forms, customs and ceremonies which have become hallowed and sacrosanct by virtue of long usage, and with ideas and interpretations which have become hardened into dogma and, even more regrettably, have been formed into touchstones of orthodoxy (which latter, as many know to their cost, applies especially to views on eschatology). Nonetheless, if there is to be any ongoing, any advance forward, then our most cherished ideas and practices must be analysed afresh with an open mind and in the light of the New Testament, finding again, as did our forefathers, how underlying ideas and principles may be expressed in a meaningful way in our own situation. Both in respect of the inward relationships within the Church and the expression of our outward relations to the hostile world it is essential for us to grasp that the New Testament provides us with the principles for life, not a rigid code; nor, even with reference to the life and practice of the Church, does it provide clear cut practical directions. There is no need to labour the point: even the most optimistic of us must admit that there is a need for an urgent reassessment of our present Victorian image.

Evangelism

The need for a reinterpretation of verbal forms becomes even more apparent with respect to evangelism. This, I believe, is a matter which has not really penetrated into the cloistered solitude of some assemblies. It has not really occurred to most of us to enquire whether the Gospel we preach bears any relevance to life today, nor whether, even allowing it to be relevant, our form of proclamation is meaningful. In the final analysis our faith is pragmatic, it is an experience which works, and the moment we come to try and define that experience we have to utilise language which is based on images, and the moment we try to push beyond our images we lapse into obscurantism. This is not to suggest that the language of images is invalid, but it does mean that we must always beware of making the images into something more than they are. Images and symbols are not reality, and any attempt to distort Christian imagery into reality must be resisted. Furthermore, because we are dealing in images their value will not necessarily be the same for two generations, and as they are images we should be free to alter and adjust them to suit the particular situation. Yet it is just here, I believe, that we tend to find the most die-hard opposition to change. Our images and symbols have been mistaken for reality, and thus we continue to insist that the Gospel cannot be proclaimed apart from the use of a particular type of terminology which clothes

a particular set of concepts and ideas. Let me take but one example. What meaning can such a commonly used phrase as 'the atoning blood of the Lamb' possess for the non-initiate in our modern technological society? We must ask ourselves seriously whether our preaching of the Gospel really answers to the present situation. The reality of the human predicament is well known to every man, he is only too well aware of his bondage to the latent destructive forces inherent within the human situation, but does our preaching present the disillusioned world of today with a faith which can answer and transform the human situation? The despair and the anguish are acknowledged on all sides—does our Gospel supply the answer? More, *can* our Gospel in its present terminology, in its present symbolism supply the answer?

It has been, I believe, one of the failures of evangelicalism from its inception that it has laid its emphasis on the individual to the almost total exclusion of the community, and the individual salvation which has been proclaimed has been in spiritual terms to the almost total exclusion of the natural order. This has meant the distortion of the Gospel, for it has become inevitably divorced from reality, not this time as a result of the terminology or imagery, but because an historical Gospel has been proclaimed in non-historical terms. To lay our emphasis upon a 'salvation of individuals from time and history, not the salvation of a community through time and history', to use Tillich's words (*The Protestant Era*, 1948. p. 71) may be a gospel of apocalyptic pessimism but it is not the Gospel of the prophetic religion of the Bible. There is an unquestioned urgent need to re-emphasise the New Testament emphasis on the Church as a community; a community which, although not *of* the world, to use that well established distinction, is very much *in* it, and to re-emphasise those obligations which belong to the New Community in the world.

Christian Unity

The concept of community leads on to one further matter, namely, the position of the Christian Brethren with relation to the ecumenical movement. Many individuals have played an active part and at times a prominent part in various inter-church activities, non-denominational organisations and the like, but such participation has rarely been above an individual level, there has been little evidence of group co-operation.

Quite apart from the problem of whether the peculiarities of our church structure, with its correct insistence upon the autonomy of each local congregation, would allow us to take our place on representative bodies with other Christian communions, there is the more immediately important matter of the expression of the oneness of Christ's Body on the local level. It is here that the local congregation can, and must, play its part by sharing in the common work, witness and worship of Christ's Church with other local groups, thus demonstrating in reality that basic concept which lies at the heart of the Brethren Movement, and which is so often forgotten by us today, that the Church of God is one. We need to remember that the sin of sectarianism is one of the most heinous sins in the New Testament.

Renewal by the Holy Spirit

There is one final aspect of renewal which in reality is the most important of all. Everything that has gone before I believe to be true, but it is true only up to a point, for the issues which have been raised deal with externals and not that which is internal. In the final analysis renewal will only come through the activity of the Holy Spirit. Such a renewal will indeed shake the foundations; before it our pet theories, our futile concern with minutiae will collapse as a pack of cards. A radical appraisal of the grounds of our beliefs and practice will help, but a renewal of this nature will only come through full committal and response-in-obedience, through confession and acknowledgment of our sin—"If my people who are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then I will hear from heaven . . ." (2 Chron. 7: 14). But, and here's the rub, such a renewal cannot be found in isolation, it will only be found in full communion with the whole Church of God. If we are to find renewal, if we are to rediscover and re-express the foundations of our existence, if we are to enter again into worthwhile dialogue with our fellow-Christians of different ecclesiastical traditions from ourselves, then we must accept the necessity for change, but above all accept the necessity for humility and obedience, for confession and committal, so that under God's good hand our barrenness and aridity may be turned into fruitfulness to the glory of our Lord and the blessing of His whole Church.

Much of what we have written is essentially the practical expression of the fact that in Christ we have escaped from the narrow confines of a legalistic religion. In Christ we have been brought into the New World in which reality is righteousness, and we face the world about us in the knowledge that in spite of all its sin God has willed to redeem it, and has chosen His Church, of which we are members, to be the instrument of mediating that redemption to a sick humanity. It is thus imperative for us, not merely as individuals but as a part of God's Church in the wider sense, if we are to fulfil the divine mandate, to enter into the fulness of the transforming power of the Gospel, liberated from our pharisaical legalism, our spiritual pride and our spiritual immaturity, some of the symptoms of which we have attempted to elucidate.

In what has gone before I have tried as far as possible to concentrate upon the problems, and I have avoided giving answers. Not everyone will agree with this diagnosis, which is as it should be, since valid answers will only come through dialogue (to use current idiom) and there are no facile solutions to our problems. It is here, in the sphere of dialogue, that CBRF can, and should, play a valuable part, but if one may offer a criticism, it seems that it is failing at just this point—are we also afraid of rigorous self-analysis?

Notes on Pastoral Ministry

Paul E. Leonard

'And some, pastors . . .' (Eph. 4: 11)

Recent discussion in the pages of *Letters of Interest* and *Calling* in North America, and *The Witness* and *CBRFJ* in Great Britain, indicate that a topic of keen concern to Christians in these days is the pastoral ministry in the assemblies. Attention is particularly called to articles by Dr. Stephen Short¹ of England, John Williams,² presently of Detroit, and Will Wilding³ of Vancouver, B.C. Also of interest is a *CBRFJ* viii.⁴

The Problem Stated

The dilemma is represented as a two-horned one. The first part is allegorized in *CBRFJ* by the 'hungry sheep, who, having looked up and not been fed, has gone elsewhere'. The second is likewise pictured by 'the shepherd constantly thwarted in his attempts to feed the hungry sheep'.⁵ John Williams states the problem lies 'not in the realm of doctrine or desire, but in our practical application of unchanging Biblical principles'.⁶ Will Wilding in turn suggests that the problem in its essence 'is the denial of the operation of the sovereign Holy Spirit'.⁷ Perhaps it is legitimate to say that this latter expression lies close to the heart of the problem, but in its complication it leads to the practical failures as stated by Williams. The problem we then face is the failure, in many respects, of an effective teaching or shepherding ministry within local assemblies. We hasten to add that there are, of course, many assemblies, perhaps more than we dare hope, where these lacks do not in fact, exist, and where God is blessing the faithful labours of shepherds and teachers amongst the flock.

The Solution Stated

It has been suggested that the solution to the above stated problem rests in the persons of men equipped for a pastoral ministry who can be prayerfully invited by elders of a local assembly to come among them to carry out these lagging responsibilities. It is said that we have overlooked a basic element of God's plan for a local church in the pastoral ministry.⁸ On the contrary, it has been stated that the solution does not lie in this realm at all. Since the problem is the denial of the operation of the Holy Spirit, the solution lies in the readiness of those presently responsible as pastors and elders to recognize the prior claim of God on their lives. These will then 'come forth to the people with a humble, confident realization that all that God the Holy Spirit has given will be used for the blessing of the church and the honour of God'.⁹

A Look at the Problem

We should first ask—is there indeed a problem? What are the evidences? To some it would appear that a straw man has been created by vested interests. These interests might be variously identified as elders who feel they cannot bear the burden of ministry alone, or young men who are concerned for a full-time resident ministry in exercise of their own gifts. In fact, it is probable that both of these interests are present. They are not necessarily wrong interests, though it must be noted that they can be aroused by proper or improper motives, such as an elder's preoccupation with business affairs in private life, or a young man's undue concern for security or desire for conformity to contemporary church patterns.

We might look at some of the evidences of the existence of the problem. First, is the apparent lack among many young people of knowledge of factual content of the Scriptures. This is mentioned totally apart from any observation about their understanding of such facts as they do possess. Unless this charge be accused as baseless, it is founded on the results of some very rudimentary examinations written by teenage young people from several sections of the United States and also, presumably, from a cross section of assembly families. Most had been active in Sunday Schools and summer Bible camps for a good number of years. The scope of questions included naming the first five books of the Old Testament, naming the synoptic Gospels, who was the author of Acts, etc. The results were, on the average, quite poor. Admittedly there are other factors in interpreting these results. Not least is the lack of Bible study in the home, but in any event there is a definite indication of lack of effective teaching and stimulation to study, which in some measure must be laid at the assembly doorstep.

Another line of evidence might be adduced from a series of letters published in CBRFJ viii. Each was entitled 'Why I left the Brethren', and some of the answers are illuminating. As one brother states:

' . . . the ministry, . . . given by men who cannot know the particular needs of the church, who are rarely given sufficient time for adequate treatment of the major Biblical themes, and, alas, sometimes by men whose qualifications as teachers are by no means apparent, . . . is often superficial, restricted to a small number of themes or Scripture passages, and irrelevant to the particular needs of the church. The most depressing feature of all is that no one seems to accept responsibility for what is taught in the assembly. Theoretically, the elders are ultimately responsible, but they seem so often to leave everything to the visiting speakers'.¹⁰

Another writes:

' . . . I tested the ground as thoroughly as I could as to the possibility of a settled ministry among Brethren. The nearest I could get to this was an assembly who were considering having a pastor who would do one-third of the preaching. Such an arrangement seemed quite impractical. One would have had to have been ministering away so much that pastoral contact would have been

minimal, and this problem was surpassed by the impossibility of pursuing the consecutive ministry of the Word which is a great lack in the assemblies today . . .¹¹

The letters cited are not quoted with approbation of the writers' particular points of view, but with the feeling that some of the comments are directed at very sensitive problem areas. By citing them it is not implied that they reflect conditions in all assemblies. Yet, is there not some response in our own reflection, which leads us to believe the problem does exist in larger measure than we have been willing to admit?

Another aspect of the problem is highlighted by the following extract from a letter in the same publication:

'During the twenty years or so that I moved in assembly circles, it has been my misfortune to find an autocrat dominating the meeting, as a rule; generally one who elbowed his way on to the oversight during the difficult period of the Second World War. During the passing of the years he has succeeded in getting yes-men alongside him, for to my amazement there seems to exist little difficulty in his way to do according to his wishes'.¹²

Do we have a problem, one not of inconsiderable proportions, among assemblies today? It seems to the writer that we must answer the question in the positive. The nature of this problem is such, that if avoided, it will simply grow larger. It strikes at the very roots of those groups who gather to Christ in the pattern as found, we believe, in the New Testament.

Has the problem been stated accurately? The three sources cited earlier have all defined the problem from a different vantage. Will Wilding has looked from the vantage point of the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit. This seems to be the place to start. There has been a denial of operation of the Spirit of God in the life of the local church. Where He has been grieved, blessing has been withdrawn and only the barrenness of man-made activity remains. John Williams has noted that the failure lies in the practical application of Biblical principles which we claim to observe. We have failed to make our faith and fellowship a living vital force in the Christian community.¹³ This failure is inherent in the prior failure to recognize that only in submissive willingness to be used as instruments of the Holy Spirit can there be the demonstration of Spirit-filled lives. Only such willingness can lead to effective teaching and shepherding.

Now we must ask another question. Granted the problem has been recognized and more or less defined. If we are to find a solution, we must first understand some of the factors which lie behind the evidences we see.

The first factor to be mentioned is an *historical* one, cited by Prof. F. F. Bruce of Manchester. He states ' . . . There has been the powerful influence of the Darbyite doctrine of the ruin of the church, which excludes the possibility of reproducing primitive church order today, and therefore of an eldership according to the New Testament pattern'.¹⁴ Darby's views on this matter were controverted in his own day, especially by a Swiss Christian by name of August Rochat.¹⁵ However, his wide influence has led to a fluidity of local church government, such that where in principle

all were responsible, in fact no one was responsible. It follows that every area of church life suffers, including the pastoral and teaching ministries.

The second factor is an *economic* one. It may possibly be more pertinent to the British than the North American situation. It has been suggested that the present generation of spiritual leadership has fewer men of independent means, who can give their time to the ministry of the Word. It may be true that an earlier day produced more men of independent means who gave themselves to the ministry of the Word. We live in days when it becomes increasingly difficult to attain such financial independence. However, it is to be suspected that if indeed this is a significant factor in our problems, it simply indicates that the presence of such godly men in the past has been abused by God's people so that they have never gained a proper sense of responsibility in the matter of physical and spiritual support of ministering brethren.

The third factor is submitted by the writer as one of a *cultural* character, with heavy undertones of spiritual prodigality on the part of a generation of leadership within local assemblies. The post-war generation is sometimes called the 'lost' or 'lonely' generation. There is a reluctance to identify with others or sometimes even with oneself! Explanations are manifold, including the insecurities of a world enmeshed in cold war tensions, the threatening presence of 'the bomb', the breakdown of the institution of the home with the attendant collapse of discipline, and the general moral laxity of an affluent society. This theme is poignantly expressed in the current 'manifesto' of American University intellectuals entitled *The Triple Revolution*. This document, published in 1964, outlines the current revolution taking place in the industrial, social and military worlds. It then suggests a course of legislative action, leading to a 'right to income' clause. This would guarantee to every man the inalienable right to an income regardless of ability or inclination to work. It is stated that the further objective of this action is to provide more leisure for education. Education, we are told, encourages persons relating to 'persons' rather than to 'things'.¹⁶ This then is the heart of the motivation for such an approach. We live in an age when youth find it difficult to relate to others. We must restructure society so as to provide opportunity to become 'unlost', that is, 'newly related' to other people, a basic need of every human being.

Harry Blamires, in a work entitled *The Christian Mind*, develops the thought that the Christian today does not consistently carry his distinctive Christian outlook into the world in which he lives. He states that in fact there is no longer a Christian mind.¹⁷ The mind has been fully secularized. While the Christian meets for worship with a distinct group, he is in reality fully a part of the secular world as described by Vance Packer¹⁸ and W. H. Whyte¹⁹. Is it not to be suspected then, that the Christian also carries into the assembly of God's people, in a reverse though analogous manner, the attitudes described above with reference to interpersonal relationships?

Can we find instruction in the present situation? Is it possible that the 'lost generation', including Christians, has inherited from a preceding

generation a grand scepticism of the world in which we live, of moral and spiritual values to which we hold, and of the need or means to trust or help another person? Are not these latter elements particularly significant in the pastoral and teaching ministries? This preceding generation is the one from which the major teaching and pastoral care should be coming in this day. One cannot pastor nor be pastored, teach nor be taught, who is not first willing to be intimately related to another person's joys and sorrows, loves and hates, excesses and wants. This is something of the full measure of Christian fellowship and apart from it all must suffer. Are we living in a day when a whole generation, which has lived through two global wars, has been hardened into a measure of cynicism which permeates even to the heart of the church? Have men found themselves separated from their contemporaries by experiences of war and never succeeded in retaking their place in the structure of their world, including the local assembly? Perhaps this thesis would account for the many individuals, contemporary with present assembly leadership, who have never developed a gift of ministry of the Word or of pastoral responsibility. If so, this would account for the present critical lack of sound teaching and warm pastoral ministry, so desperately required for the ongoing life and vitality of assemblies of the Lord's people. Might this not also account for the prominent existence of the so called 'autocrat'—who elbowed his way on to the oversight during World War II? It cannot be denied the Diotrephes spirit is easily aroused (3 John 9-10). However, has it not been also the case, that many a sincere and godly man found himself alone in real concern for an oversight? Especially would this be likely during the time of which we speak. As the years pass, it is not unnatural to consider this elder as the voice to which we listen. The danger is then compounded by the failure of other gifted men to take their place in the ranks of spiritual leadership. It is true that the Diotrephes spirit is to be judged in no uncertain terms, and is often found in a leader with little gift who feels compelled to suppress other gifts. But at the same time it leaves one wondering what responsibility rests with those who have failed to assume their place and thus allowed such a condition to develop.

Will Wilding suggests, on well documented authority, that the failure to advance on the part of assemblies is not a problem peculiar to this portion of evangelical Christianity alone. It should be observed that the weakness in the area of teaching and pastoral ministry is likewise a problem of concern to most bodies of Christians. For example, the writer is acquainted with one small Baptist denomination which claims a shortage of fifty men just to fill empty pulpits of existing churches. Carl H. Henry, in a recent issue of *Christianity Today*, cites in relation to general doctrinal instability in Christian training, the noteworthy 'decline of Ministerial candidates'.²⁰ Furthermore, it has recently been stated by the Chief of Chaplains of the U.S. Army, that apart from a few prominent bodies of Christians, nearly all quotas for military chaplains in the Armed Forces are being unmet by their respective groups.²¹ What do these facts contribute to our understanding of the problem under discussion and to solutions suggested?

A Look at the Solution

We come now to a brief examination of the solutions as earlier proposed. It would appear from the presentation that the two positions are mutually exclusive. Is this necessary? The practical advantages of a 'settled pastoral ministry', as outlined by John Williams, are certainly to be desired.²² However, is it not possible to achieve these same advantages through the proper functioning of pastors and teachers as encouraged by Will Wilding? This would apply, at least, to the advantages of consecutive teaching ministry, relevance of teaching to the needs of the congregation, and the ministry of visitation. We wonder if the fourth stated advantage, that of dispelling a public image of oddity on the part of the Brethren is valid.²³ If the ultimate objective is availability and approachability, this too can be achieved by a multiplicity of leadership. While full-time pastors in other fellowships of Christians are seeking ways and means of involving elders in spiritual responsibilities of the local church, we write it off as a 'strange' front and move in the opposite direction.

On the other hand, we suggest it does not do justice to John Williams's argument to say that he implies a 'pastor' would or should carry the full load of consecutive exposition of Scripture and Scriptural doctrines, public ministry and visitation.²⁴ This could well be a logical outcome of a full-time pastoral ministry indiscriminately used. But it does not appear to be Williams's intention that such a man would carry the full load. Rather, he would enter into these ministries, and, in co-operation with elders, seek together to carry them out in a more thorough manner.

At this point we should ask some questions. First, is there Biblical evidence for a full-time resident pastoral ministry? For an answer we suggest the reader carefully examine the Biblical arguments marshalled by Williams and Wilding. For a further exposition of Scripture, relating specifically to the teaching ministry, it would be well worth obtaining a copy of *The Ministry of the Word*, by Stephen S. Short. (This booklet can be obtained from C.B.R.F. Publications at the address shown inside the back cover of this *Journal*.)

An examination of the relevant Scriptures dealt with by the above writers, has led to the persuasion that the Biblical pattern is actually a two-fold one. First we observe the general organization of the local church, where a multiplicity of leadership and gift exist, including those for the pastoral and teaching responsibilities. Along with this, we see evidence of resident, full-time, pastoral-teaching ministries, as in the case of Timothy (I Tim. 1: 3) and Titus (Tit. 1: 5).

An argument brought into the discussion by Dr. Short shows the significance of the function of the Jewish synagogue in the time of Christ.²⁵ Since it appears that the early church was largely patterned after the synagogue, even being called such on one occasion (James 2: 2), it is of value to know something of the workings of this institution of diaspora Judaism. We will simply refer to one aspect of it, which is the liberty of ministry which existed in its meetings. We read often in the Gospels that 'Jesus entered into the synagogue and taught' (Mk. 1: 21, 39; 6: 2). In the Acts

we read that the Apostles also had great liberty in this regard (Acts 9: 20, 13: 5, 17: 17, 19: 8, etc.). Responsibility was divided among the synagogue leadership. Even the Rabbis, being learned teachers of the law, were expected to have a trade which could provide them with the material needs of life, if necessary. The Apostle Paul himself conformed to this pattern, being a tent maker by trade (Acts 18: 3). However, the Apostle did not always feel constrained to seek employment, as at Corinth. Contrariwise, he encouraged Timothy and Titus to give themselves wholly to the work of the Lord in a particular area. This seems to be evidence that this sort of ministry was a part of the early church, and under certain conditions should also pertain today.

What are these conditions? From an analysis of the letters to Timothy and Titus, it would seem that the conditions are related to the inherent difficulties attending the establishing of new local churches. Paul encourages Timothy to 'abide' at Ephesus (I Tim. 1: 3). The work he then exhorts him to accomplish, includes combating false teachers as represented in Ephesus by Hymenaeus and Alexander (I Tim. 1: 18-20), establishing the foundations of sound doctrine (4: 11-16), a word of prophecy (4: 14), and some comments pertaining to the overall administration of the local church (5: 1-6: 21). Likewise in the letter to Titus, Paul gives instruction concerning the rudiments of the natural but sound safeguards in the local church structure of Crete. These include the institution of elders (Titus 1: 5), instruction in sound doctrine (2: 1), proper relationships between individuals distinguished by age, sex, marriage and place in society (2: 2-15), relationship of Christians to the state (3: 1), and manner of dealing with those guilty of teaching false doctrines (3: 10).

The conditions calling for full-time help in pastoral-teaching responsibilities in the local church then, would seem to be those conditions prevalent in a new or immature testimony where it is necessary to deal with these basic factors. It could conceivably be true that a local church many years old has never matured in these matters, so that the assistance of a Timothy or Titus is needful in bringing about local autonomy of function where the leadership can and does carry on these responsibilities as they should.

The second question we ask concerns historical evidence, within assembly life, of a practical implementation of the pattern we see in the Scriptures. It has been said that we learn from history only the lesson that we don't learn from history. Also we claim to appeal to Scripture alone as our sole authority in doctrine and practice. Nevertheless, we have already called on history to explain a factor in the development of the present state of affairs, namely J. N. Darby's teaching concerning the ruin of the church. It would not seem unfair then, to ask for the witness of a contemporary of Darby's to speak to us his mind concerning the ministry of the Word. The man to whom we turn is Anthony Norris Groves, a man of God, who, while practising the Biblical principles we seek to observe, gave his life to missionary effort in India. After presenting a strong argument for the advantages, and Biblical precedent for Christian workers to be equipped and occupied in a secular employ, he goes on to present the other side in the following quote from his writings:

'I have no question but that those whom God has called to minister should wait on their ministry and give themselves wholly to it . . . recognized pastors and teachers are essential to the good order of all assemblies; and as such are required and commanded of God; . . . though I should not object to meet with those who had them not, if it were the result of the Lord's providence in not giving them any, I should feel quite unable to join personally those who reject them as unnecessary or unscriptural'.²⁶

We might wonder if Groves is not contradicting himself. However, in the context of his total ministry, it would be more charitable to understand him as recognizing the value of a 'witness in the world', by secularly employed Christians, while at the same time clearly stating the necessity of utilizing a full-time pastoral ministry when so supplied in the providence of the Lord. We must assume that, in his opinion, such provision would be sought to meet specific need in the local assembly.

Our third question concerns the contemporary nature of the proposed solutions. We refer here to earlier discussion. Other Christians are asking serious questions as to the effectiveness of the full-time resident pastor. In their case we may not doubt that the problem lies at the opposite extreme from ours. The total responsibility has fallen on one man who is innately unable to bear the burden. However, even if he could, it would not be the sort of ministry to develop the body, since there must be wide development of gift to achieve proper growth in the whole organism. The contemporary emphasis among other Christians would thus encourage us to take careful stock of our situation. The installation of a pastor is not going to be the panacea of all ill. Rather, it could well be simply the 'coup de grace' to the patient. On the other hand, the plea that the presence of a full-time pastor would throttle the liberty of the local assembly and restrict the free ministry of the Holy Spirit in the midst is not valid. Rather, the presence of such an individual could provide the channel of gift through which the Spirit would accomplish His work of developing local gift to the place where this channel were no longer needed. We need to return to a balanced understanding of the Biblical pattern. Here we have found a basis for multiple leadership in the local church along with the utilization of the full-time pastor under certain conditions. It would be understood that the objective of such a ministry would be to continue only until such time as it became apparent that the local shepherds and teachers were indeed carrying the burden.

Some Practical Suggestions

We shall conclude this study with some suggestions of a practical nature:

1. In approaching the problem in the individual assembly, it will be absolutely essential to recognize the flexibility we see in the Biblical pattern. Only elders and full-time workers, who are spiritually sensitive to the needs of the assembly and the leading of the Holy Spirit, will be able to make the proper judgments.

2. There must be caution, lest in exercise of our liberty in this matter we actually lose the liberty in a rigid clerical system.
3. According to some, there is a paucity of young men preparing for, or engaged in, the full-time ministry of the Word among the assemblies. If this is true, it is a serious matter. For the pioneer work of evangelism and establishing new local churches, there must be men of God who can give of their time as Timothy and Titus did. They must not only 'do the work of an evangelist' (2 Tim. 4: 5), but as Timothy, must also be equipped to instruct young Christians and give guidance in the raising up of a local church.
4. Among other factors, two things stand out as essentials in the preparation of these men for their task. First, there must be spiritual and academic preparation for a ministry of the Word. This will involve no small amount of effort on the part, not only of the individual himself, but also of praying, spirit-filled elders who can encourage the young man along the way. Secondly, it seems essential that this young man also be equipped with secular training in a field where he could and often would find employ. Not only does this conform to the Biblical pattern, but it is also of immense value in equipping a man to be able to speak in a relevant way to his generation.
5. Parallel with this preparation on the part of young men, there must also be the spiritual and practical preparation on the part of elders in assemblies everywhere. Mr. G. C. D. Howley has written, ' . . . for all our services the finest training ground is the life of the Christian church, sharing the fulness of church life and fellowship . . . '27 It is here that young men will receive their first impetus toward a desire for the things of God, a desire that can lead them on to the place where they become effective in the ministry of the Word. It is here that they must receive encouragement from elder men of God. There must be more men, like Eli of old, who are perceptive to know when God is speaking to young Samuels and who can give wise counsel in that crucial time. It is here that the door of encouragement and opportunity must be opened as the gift flowers. It must be nourished and given opportunity for expression lest it wither. Then it is these godly elder men who will bear the responsibility for directing gift into a place where it contributes to the developing of the Body of Christ in the most effective way. There will be a full-time resident ministry for some, for three months or three years, or longer. For others, it will mean undertaking secular employ in an area where they can enter in a vital way into the work of a local assembly, providing gift for ministry, both teaching and pastoral.
6. The ultimate objective must be to have a corps of young men in this generation who can give themselves, whether full-time or secularly employed, to the service of God's people in teaching-pastoral responsibilities. While many would at first have ministries in presently existing assemblies where there is need, the goal must be that a great number, in due course, would be thrust forward into pioneer work in pro-

claiming the Gospel and teaching new groups of believers who thus form new assemblies. There are encouraging signs of re-awakening interest on the part of young people in the assemblies for missionary labours abroad.²⁸ If we are on the threshold of new expansions in fulfilling the great commission, it is of the utmost importance that we strengthen the foundations at home. Only assemblies of Christians, properly shepherded and nourished in the Word, can maintain the vision and provide the strategic prayer and financial support essential to the carrying forward of the message of the Gospel to the near and far corners of a weary world.

1. Stephen S. Short, *The Ministry of the Word*, CBRF Occasional Paper 1, 1965.
2. John Williams, "and some, pastors", *Calling Magazine*, Winter 1964.
3. Will Wilding, *Scrutinizing the Pastoral Ministry*, *Calling Magazine*, Summer, 1965.
4. *Why I Left the Brethren*, *Christian Brethren Research Fellowship Journal*, No. 8, June 1965.
5. *CBRF Journal*, *op. cit.*, p. 2.
6. John Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
7. Will Wilding, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
8. John Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
9. Will Wilding, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
10. *CBRF Journal*, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
11. *CBRF Journal*, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
12. *CBRF Journal*, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
13. Cf. H. L. Ellison, *The Household Church*, Paternoster Press, 1963, pp. 33-40.
14. F. F. Bruce, (art.) *The Church and its Ministers*, in collection of addresses from the *High Leigh Conference of Brethren*, 1955, p. 46.
15. E. H. Broadbent, *The Pilgrim Church*, Pickering & Inglis, 1931, p. 378.
16. *The Triple Revolution*, The Ad Hoc Committee on the Triple Revolution, California, 1964, p. 10.
17. Harry Blamires, *The Christian Mind*, S.P.C.K., 1963.
18. Vance Packer, *The Status Seekers*.
19. W. H. Whyte, *The Organization Man*.
20. Carl H. Henry, *A Molder of Modern Theology is Gone*, *Christianity Today*, November 19, 1965, p. 31.
21. Chaplain (Maj. Gen.) Charles Brown, Address comment on occasion of Military Chaplaincy Anniversary, July, 1965.
22. Williams, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-22.
23. Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
24. See Wilding (*op. cit.*, p. 18) for interpretative comment on Williams's statement (*op. cit.*, p. 15). See also in this regard the *Further Note on Pastors*, *Calling Magazine*, Fall, 1965, p. 26.
25. Stephen S. Short, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
26. E. H. Broadbent, *op. cit.*, p. 360.
27. Cited by Wilding, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
28. See e.g. current issues of *Conflict*, published by *Literature Crusades*, P.O. Box 203, Prospect Park, Illinois.

Correspondence

DIVORCE AND THE CHRISTIAN

M. J. D. Light (Mvara Secondary School, P.O. Box 23, Arua, Uganda) writes:—

The article by Mr. Counter in CBRFJ xi has prompted me to write and ask some questions.

A Christian is anxious to uphold marriage and family life. I would suggest that in any reform of the divorce law the Christian's greatest concern should be to uphold marriage in practice as well as in theory. A Christian must emphasise the desirability of reconciliation and try to improve the possibilities of this in any reform of the law.

Opponents of the present law suggest that, by making divorce possible only after a crime has been committed, the law encourages people to commit sins which they would not otherwise have done. Moreover, the whole system discourages reconciliation. I wonder whether readers would agree with an American writing to the Listener on March 3, 1966, who said that 'fifty per cent of those filing for a divorce (in America) are said not really to want a divorce, and hope someone will stop it, but nobody does'. The writer goes on to argue that the whole system makes reconciliation more difficult.

The alternative to the present system appears to be divorce by consent. No proof of adultery would be required, for example. The supporters of such a system believe that safeguards could be put into such a system to deter couples from divorcing each other too lightly. Do such safeguards exist? Any attempt to forbid marriage for a period after a divorce has been given would probably be unacceptable to public opinion. Compulsory 'arbitration'—or perhaps I should say intervention—before the divorce has been finally granted has yet to prove its value. Los Angeles has such courts and also one of the highest divorce rates in the world.

Finally, may I ask for more information? In particular, I would be interested in a comment on Mr. Abse's bill which recently caused so much interest. May I close with this question: why should we Christians force those whose marriage has broken down to commit further sin in order to obtain a divorce? It has been said that this attitude helps to preserve the sanctity of marriage; but if it makes reconciliation harder, then surely it is a position which the Christian cannot support?

THE PENTECOSTALISM DEBATE

G. J. Polkinghorne (53 Cedar Rd., Sutton, Surrey) writes:—

Might I be permitted to raise one or two points regarding Mr. D. G. Lillie's Critique where he comments on the book reviews in CBRFJ ix?

The 'daring assertion' he dislikes is a quotation from G. B. Cutten's book on *Speaking with Tongues*. Cutten, of course, wrote as a psychologist and passed his judgment from that standpoint, but his assessment must surely give pause to 'tongues' enthusiasts.

I am not sure that the term 'gibberish' is Cutten's. He mentions his impression of tongue speaking as 'frenzied or ecstatic utterance of sounds unintelligible, except to a charismatic interpreter', while my Dictionary defines 'gibberish' as 'rapid, gabbling talk; unmeaning words', which seems to me to be equivalent. The term 'barbarian' (1 Cor. 14: 11) is exactly of the same force—according to Arndt, 'speaking . . . a strange, i.e., unintelligible tongue'.

'Damning with faint praise' is a catch-phrase often used nowadays and literally taken from Cutten. I judge that he uses the first word not in a 'profane' sense but in the more general sense of condemning, that is, rejecting as of little or no value. Cutten is of the opinion that Paul was reluctant to ban totally this phenomenon, but by the coolness of his attitude, he indicated that he had small regard for it. Perhaps Mr. Lillie would prefer Eduard Schweizer's less colloquial assessment in Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, sub voc. *Pneuma*—'Stili more significant is his notable depreciation of speaking with tongues'—and in a footnote he makes it clear that he is referring to 1 Cor. 14.

Another Correspondent, who is at present in fellowship in a pentecostal church, writes concerning points of doctrine which seem necessarily to accompany the pentecostal insistence upon a 'second crises'. These points occasion concern to our correspondent, who raises them as follows:—

1. Watchman Nee, in his *Normal Christian Life*, lays emphasis in his chapter on the Holy Spirit, on Rom. 8: 9.—'Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his'. Realising the significance of this verse for pentecostal doctrine, our correspondent turned to George Jeffrey's *Pentecostal Rays*, and was 'horrified' to find that Jeffrey explained Rom. 8:9 by distinguishing between the Spirit of Christ (effecting regeneration) and the Holy Spirit.* On this our correspondent comments: 'If G. J. is correct, many if not most Christians are not even partakers of the Holy Spirit and therefore unable to display the fruits of the Spirit. Therefore, how valuable does conversion remain to be . . .?' (Jeffrey avoids this by making the 'fruits' the effect of the 'Spirit of Christ', not of the Holy Spirit!)

2. Turning to a detailed study of the Scriptures, our correspondent then came to two conclusions: (a) that 'we are each baptised in the Holy Ghost at conversion', and (b) that pentecostal doctrine on this point depends upon a few scriptures, mainly in Acts, and is impossible to reconcile with Paul's silence on the necessity of any such 'second crisis' and his assurance that the believer is a partaker of the Holy Spirit and complete in Christ.

3. He makes the further point that the two crisis teaching is divisive, not least in pentecostal churches themselves, where two schools of thought on this very subject are becoming apparent.

*Despite the first part of that very verse!—Ed.

WHY I LEFT THE BRETHREN

H. R. Thomas (Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, Glos.) writes:—

Surely the main problem . . . is not one of doctrine, or strictly speaking of procedure, rather it is of an attitude of mind found among other members of the church . . . Broadly speaking the same attitude is found in all branches of the Church . . . a reluctance to question that which always has been considered sacred, and a desire to prevent others from doing so either, which can only lead eventually to shallow Christians and the ultimate suppression of Truth.

But still looking at other churches, there are other movements . . . which sound particularly 'Brethren' to my ear. For instance there is the present Anglican movement towards a greater involvement of the laity, and as mentioned elsewhere in CBRFJ viii the radical Christian's idea of the 'abolition of religion'. . . One would have thought that the concept which is implied by the words 'existential involvement' would have been more easily acceptable by members of churches which consist only of people who are still very much in the world, whose ministers are laity.

Surely the abolition of religion can never be safe unless the 'religion' that is abolished is that which Brethren once abolished . . . surely the greater attention paid to the laity must come to the honest conclusion eventually that it is the people who are the church and that it sinks or swims by them, and that a minister is just an artificial prop which succeeds in holding up a church long after its spirit has died. Surely the involvement of the Christian in the world must lead either to the loss of any distinction between the world and the Christian, or lead to the difference being made clear between being 'in' it and 'of' it.

IRVING AND THE EARLY BRETHREN

Timothy C. F. Stunt (49 Heathfield Rd., London S.W. 18) writes:—

I find that I omitted to include in my article (CBRFJ x) on Irvingism the best example of all. In the early Plymouth meeting there was a man Thomas Dowglass/Douglass who was evidently held in great respect. He was at Exeter College a little before Newton though he does not seem to have taken any exams! When the Powerscourt questions were discussed at Plymouth in 1834 those who 'chaired' the meeting and whose answers were later published were J. L. Harris, B. W. Newton, H. Borlase, and T. Dowglass.

It was this Dowglass, if you please, who later became an Irvingite and wrote an account of the Cath. Apost. Church between 1825 and 1850 and various other Irvingite tracts, as well as an exposition of the book of Job as an allegory of the church. I have only seen that, hitherto, suggested in one of Lady Powerscourt's letters. So . . . I missed the prize example because unlike Bulteel, Dowglass seems to have remained.

Essays and Reviews

Contributions from the Monitors

THE HUMANIST (MARCH 1966 ISSUE)

How 'answers to prayer' appear to the humanist is illustrated by the editorial reference:

'the Dutch Reformed church throughout South Africa prayed for rain to end the drought. The rains came and irrationalism was strengthened by what seemed proof that God is well disposed to Dr. Verwoerd'.

Janet Caldwell (American physician and pathologist) in 'A Pathologist's Theory of the Resurrection' contends that 'if Jesus had suffered from a mild form of tuberculosis much that is puzzling would be explained'. A sustained effort to explain the (agreed) empty tomb; except for different medical details this seems of a piece with other 'swoon' theories, and does not attempt to account with the change worked in the disciples.

Antony Flew reviews a new edition of Pierre Bayle's *Historical and Critical Dictionary*, which is, apparently, a 'treasury of scepticism'. Again Flew seems to me unusually naive over the problems of suffering:—

'For the *Dictionary* contains a forceful statement of every classical sceptical argument, and it deals faithfully with all the futile efforts made by Christian theologians to deal with the decisive dilemma so succinctly posed by the Epicureans: "Either God cannot abolish evil or he will not; if he cannot then he is not all-powerful; if he will not then he is not all-good".'

Flew finds it hard to believe (and so do I) that Bayle was a professed Christian, but concludes with a paragraph on the New Theology which, he feels, poses a similar enigma to Bayle.

D. F. Heath. The obsession with the problem of suffering is shown in another article 'Should we attack Religion?' by D. F. Heath:—

'I have found after long experiment that the best attack is one straight to the central belief—the Crucifixion. "Do you believe in the kindness and goodness and wisdom of a being who could put to the exquisite torture of crucifixion a beloved son, when he was all-powerful and could have attained the same ends in a kindly and much more efficient way? Would you, as a very much inferior and ignorant being, inflict such horrors on a child whom you loved in order to do some sort of good to others which you could do by other means?". I have found this attack most effective. It has usually been met with nothing but silence. I think that maybe it is the emphasis on the inefficiency of the whole thing that is the telling point'.

Readers of this Journal had better make sure they can express themselves clearly on the efficiency of the atonement in case they meet Mr.

Heath or his readers! May we also ask if our preaching sometimes so separates Father and Son that we overlook the fact that it was God who was in Christ reconciling the World to Himself? Col. 1: 19-23 (RSV esp. in v. 19) gives a deeper and worthier view.

Correspondence continues to show how 'we' seem to 'them':—

'The Christian creed is not only an insult to human reason but also a menace to our democratic ideals, as it fosters an abject spirit of submissiveness and destroys the dignity of man'.

One correspondent wants humanism to stop talking about Christians being wrong and to do something useful! 'As Christianity is irrelevant to most people today, so is an organisation whose activities are centred on chatting about it. I would be delighted if the name of Jesus of Nazareth were never to be mentioned in these pages again'.

Dr. Szrednicki appears to have satisfied one correspondent with his dismissal of the *ontological* argument. He is now asked to tackle the *cosmological*:—

'If we are to prove that religion is not really necessary, it is not sufficient to show that we can live without God. We must be able also to demonstrate that creation can exist without a creator'.

CHARLES G. MARTIN

NEW CHRISTIAN—THE FIRST SIX MONTHS

The Anglican ginger group running the monthly *Prism* replaced it last October with a fortnightly in the format of *New Society* and *New Scientist* and with an interdenominational Editorial Board, avowing a denominational focus, though natural, to be of unnecessarily limited vision. The issues of *New Christian* until now shown an ecumenicity of the style of the ecumenical movement, nothing less, but thus far unfortunately little more. For example, except for one recent editorial comment on the weakness of SCM in missionary zeal and biblical theology as compared with IVF (24 February, p. 3), when evangelicals of any branch of the Church get a press at all, it is a bad or ambiguous one. This reader spotted a mere two news items out of hundreds: the Evangelical Alliance survey on a United Church and related matters; and some words of Billy Graham on Christian responsibilities towards governing authorities, interpreted as approval of US policy in Vietnam (it being less than four months to his visit to England at the time of this review).* Perhaps evangelicals do little of public significance—but *that* little? Presumably this is because, in the words of the first issue's lead editorial, they 'feel under no necessary obligation to spread those interpretations of the Christian Faith which were undoubtedly of enormous value to people of other ages and other places but which no longer speak to the Europe of the 1960s'. The same editorial appealed for their attempts at honesty to be complemented by readers' letters and further writings pointing out error and omission. Though the 7½d. a week cannot yet be recommended generally to CBRF members as incontrovertibly well-spent money, those of us who do see *New Christian* and who might

*The 21st April number gives Graham's campaign front page mention, and also reviews Pollock's biography of Graham: but both condemn without qualification his alleged 'neurotic piety and reactionary teaching'.

have a talent for journalistic aggression by news or comment may be able to help the Editor and his Board see that conservative evangelical attitudes are not necessarily as others stereotype them.

In this respect at least, *New Christian* seems to be failing in one of its three aims: 'interpretation of different parts of the Church to each other'. But it has certainly made incisive contributions to the 'interpretation of world affairs in ways . . . which discover the kingship of Christ over the whole created order', far beyond traditional moral issues and not tied to political neutrality or to left or right. And for the facets of the Christian Faith which are presented, the interpretation is usually 'in language and ideas which are appropriate to the 20th Century', their third aim.

The theological explorations over-represent the familiar self-labelled 'New' wing, but the practical contributions are far more down to earth—ranging from crime, welfare, The Samaritans and the Notting Hill Housing Trust through to Rhodesia and Vietnam, or again to books, cinema and TV, religious or more often otherwise. Sometimes the copy reads almost like, say, *The Christian*. An article on *Feed the Minds* was fierce on both use of the money and its raising. The writer reckoned that Christian jobs could/should only be done with Christians' money, noting that the subscription lists were filled with 'conservative evangelicals and institutions', while 'men of goodwill', in the phrase of the appeals, are more eager to support 'cathedral monuments of the past'. More recently, the Bishop of Coventry was represented as having made a fire-eating speech on the theme that 'sexual taboos make us kind' in a report which, as letters complained, cravenly said too little or too much. The quotations in *Religion!* lampoon the apparent importance in some quarters of services to bless pets and of clerics' wives' legs, but quotes from other quarters might make some of us less than amused—angry, and perhaps swallow or think twice.

The occasional number is dull from almost any point of view, but No. 10, for example, includes perceptive evaluation of a contribution to psychology of religion, a review by Monica Furlong slamming three Hodder & Stoughton authors on sex (no better at meeting the issues than any of the recent plethora of booklets from evangelical sources), and one of the Bishop of Woolwich's occasional articles, this time carrying his view of the priesthood of all believers to practical suggestions strikingly close to assembly practices in some respects.

DAVID A. BOOTH

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: FURTHER PUBLICATIONS

The author of *Teenage Religion*, Harold Loukes, has had published another book *New Ground in Christian Education* (S.C.M. Press) which argues that 'the authoritative transmission of a received tradition must give way to the open search for living truth'. According to Mr. Loukes, the Scripture teacher must not claim to have received the truth, he must not speak with authority but 'without an aim and without a syllabus' he should sit down and embark on a dialogue with his pupils beginning with actual life seeking to draw out its deeper significance.

Another new book, *Readiness for Religion* by Ronald Goldman, (Routledge and Kegan Paul) also condemns Bible-based teaching in schools as ineffective as religious education. The Bible is deemed unsuitable especially for junior school children. In place of the Biblical content of religious education, Dr. Goldman advocates 'life-themes'. Discussions about Homes, Hands, Feet, Seeds, Holidays, Bread, Milk, Fire, Myself, Light and Air will, he claims, cause children to see that religion and life are one. At the end of the book Dr. Goldman reveals his purpose. It is 'to bring Tillich into the classroom'.

Members of CBRF will be aware of the movement to establish a religion with the Bible and the Lord Jesus Christ relegated to minor importance, and of the movement to abolish religious education altogether. The nation's children and our own are affected. Have we not a responsibility to consider the arguments for Bible-based teaching and to defend *Christian Education*?

C. A. OXLEY

(Mr. Ward Gasque, in a recent letter, puts an interesting American comment upon British practice in relation to church-based Christian education: '. . . their building is quite attractive, but little consideration for Sunday school facilities (according to what we expect in America). It seems to me that one of your greatest needs here is in the way of Christian education in the local church. It might be worthwhile to do a CBRFJ issue on this sometime'.

Readers may recollect some very pertinent comments on this subject by Mr. Alan Willingdale in his *Introduction* to CBRFJ vii, comments which aroused disappointingly little reaction. If any educationalist among our members would be prepared to take up this subject, the editor will be glad to hear from him.)

DILEMMA—OR BOGEY?

The editor suffers from mildly apoplectic reactions to any apparent use of guilt-by-association techniques. He was glad therefore to receive the following review from Mr. Martin's objective pen:—

Billy Graham—the Pastor's dilemma (by Erroll Hulse. Maurice Allen (Publishers) Ltd.)

The 'dilemma' is not whether to support Billy Graham or not, but whether to speak out about it or remain silent. Hulse has decided to speak out. He has some right to do so, since he tells us that when he arrived in England ten years ago he threw his energies into helping with the Wembley Crusade which thrilled him and was, to him, 'Pentecost multiplied by seven'. The book recounts his retreat from this enthralled position under the headings:

Evaluation. Do the results match up to the claims made for them?

Doctrine. Is the whole counsel of God declared by Dr. Graham? This section becomes an analysis of the concept of free will under headings: 'The Origin of Free Will', 'The Basis of Free Will', 'The Consequences of Free Will'.

Co-operation. Dr. Graham's changed attitude. Dr. Graham has moved a long way, according to Hulse, since he apologised in 1951 for advertising a book by a 'modernist', H. E. Fosdick. Now people of non-evangelical views (the Bishop of Southwark is mentioned) are invited to co-operate in the Earls Court Crusade. Dr. Ferm's thesis that Jesus and Paul were 'co-operative evangelists' is examined in a section contributed by 'my friend, Michael Boland' and found wanting.

Finally Mr. Hulse sums up his attitude in a chapter 'Earls Court—a mixed blessing' dealing with a number of questions in a straightforward and honourable way.

Those who know Mr. Hulse will expect a forthright, hard-hitting, well-written statement. They will also expect him to be extremely sensitive to anything which 'portrays a Christ forlornly locked outside Holman Hunt's door, dejected and frustrated by the fact that the handle is on the inside'. (p. 30.) I share his repugnance for such a Christ (and understand, anyway, that Hunt's *Light of the World* is intended to illustrate not Rev. 3: 20 but John 8: 12), but see no reason why the Christ should not be great enough to respect the autonomy He has given without being forlorn or frustrated thereby. In fact I find the 'doctrine' section frustrating. With all my heart I believe God saves those He chooses and that no flesh shall glory in His presence: that regeneration is the work of God—one does not 'born' oneself. But equally I know that 'convert' is always in the NT an active verb, something I do, and 'repent, believe, come', are all words describing human action. To set these two sets of ideas in opposition is unbiblical and useless. They form coherent pictures each in their own word-planes which are distinct. But Mr. Hulse appears to be constantly setting these either in opposition, or expecting to find a time order (which is impossible, since time can only exist in the human plane and cannot be completely correlated to the other, any more than the plan and elevation of a house can 'contradict' or be completely correlated):—

'Dr. Graham undoubtedly believes in the work of the Holy Spirit but he retains a place in salvation for free will, so that in the final analysis it is always man, not God, that decides who will be saved'.

'The idea now prevails that God is obliged to do this miracle for every man who fulfils the requirements' (but 'obligation' is a temporal relation only possible in the human plane. God is obligated to no man).

'The simple formula is very common: 1. Acknowledge . . . 2. Believe . . . 3. Ask . . . 4. Thank . . . Having now followed the formula, I am born again! (1, 2, 3, 4 and 'born again' can exist each in their respective planes without the confusion of the inserted temporal connection 'having now').

'Faith and repentance comes as the result of regeneration . . . ' (they belong properly, each in their own plane, without the confusion of the temporal link 'as a result of'—though this phrase could stand if it was not thought to bring such confusion).

On the question of co-operation, I have no authority to speak. There are obviously problems to be probed, and need for thinking out what is involved in compromise. Is there no halt between the insularity of the exclusives and co-operation with all comers?

In spite of my frustration mentioned above, I feel this book ably poses areas of thought which should command our serious attention. There is, I feel, a danger that we shall regard the Crusade as a tonic rather than a tool: something to put new life into a wilting Church, rather than a useful tool to be grasped and intelligently used by a strong church. I am sorry if shaky converts get sent to shakier churches. I am delighted if they go back to the strong churches who took them to the Crusade and there, by continued biblical ministry and socially relevant example, grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord.

There are some good quotes in this book to think about:—

‘Q. Why is it always the Reformed who criticize while the Arminians get on with Evangelism?’

A. As a statement of fact this is not true to experience. Arminians often have this impression because they tend to think of evangelism in terms of special meetings, calling for decisions and visible results, and are slow to realize that many churches gain all their converts through routine preaching alone. All preaching should be instructive, prophetic and evangelistic’. (p. 86)

‘We are often so pre-occupied with our meetings that we cannot, or do not care to extend warm friendship to outsiders. Organisation is so much easier than the time and effort it takes to spend with those whose manners and language may be distasteful to us’. (p. 88)

‘If a church is in a low condition an evangelistic campaign is prescribed as the remedy. Because this kind of thinking is so prevalent great expectations are held out for the Crusade at Earls Court in 1966. It is hoped that this mammoth effort will bring revival to the languishing churches. There is a grave weakness in this reasoning’. (p. 15)

We should thank Mr. Hulse for not keeping quiet. Perhaps as a post-script I might add a statement of Billy Graham’s I noted down in 1955, ‘You can’t come to God just when you like—you can only come to him when His Spirit is drawing you’ *Peace with God*, pp. 125-6, seems to me unexceptionable.

CHARLES G. MARTIN

The authorised biography of Dr. Billy Graham—*Billy Graham*, by John Pollock—has now been published by Hodder and Stoughton (359 pp., price 25/-), and deals with many of the issues raised by Mr. Hulse.

DE CHARDIN AND THE PHENOMENON: AN INITIAL IMPRESSION

(Note: Quotations are from the Fontana edition)

During the course of the last two or three years the writings of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, appearing in English translation, have created a

vogue in this country. With the publication in paperback form of two of his major works—*Le Milieu Divin* (Collins Fontana 3/6) and *The Phenomenon of Man* (Collins Fontana 5/-) he now becomes readily accessible to the mass market.

The man himself, with the strong kindly face depicted on the back cover of the paperback edition of *Le Milieu Divin*, is of more than passing interest. A Jesuit priest, who received the Médaille Militaire and the Légion d'Honneur as a stretcher bearer in the First World War, he was also an able naturalist, becoming Professor of Geology at the Catholic Institute of Paris in 1922. Within a year or two, however, his ideas and the popularity of his teaching alarmed his superiors, and he was sent into virtual banishment in China. There he became fully involved in palaeontological research, being directly concerned in the important discoveries concerning *Sinanthropus* and other Asiatic hominid finds. Throughout his life he met with disapproval and discouragement from the Roman Catholic hierarchy, while remaining loyal to that church. Permission for publication of his books was consistently refused him, and as a result they were not published, even in his native French, until after his death in 1955.

The Phenomenon of Man is undoubtedly his major work, and it is to be hoped that a later issue of CBRFJ which deals with the relationship of science to Christian thought, may contain comment on it from a suitably qualified scientist. This review can be no more than a layman's first impression.

It should be emphasised that a Christian should not approach *The Phenomenon* without first obtaining some acquaintance with de Chardin's deep spirituality and personal faith, as expressed in *Le Milieu Divin*. His strategy in *The Phenomenon* is to deal with his subject strictly as a naturalist, writing from within his subject, and making no assumptions favourable to his Christian beliefs. Moreover, it is a formative book (though a difficult one to read; both because of the excessive latinity of the translation, and because of the author's confusing habits of coining words and of thinking in concrete images, which seem as often to obscure as to illuminate what he is saying). The reader will find that the book fertilizes his own pre-existing ideas in an exciting fashion—but as a result what he takes from the book will include a great deal of what he has already brought to it! For these reasons, the publishers have not found it incongruous to introduce the paperback edition of *The Phenomenon* with a foreword by Sir Julian Huxley, whose basic philosophy is far removed from that of de Chardin.

To de Chardin, the theory of evolution is far from a danger to Christian belief: it is rather a self-evident fact which enhances his wonder at the creative activity of God. In his epilogue to *The Phenomenon* he writes:—
'Though frightened for a moment by evolution, the Christian now perceives that what it offers him is nothing but a magnificent means of feeling more at one with God and of giving himself more to him. . . . And it is in no way metaphorical to say that man finds himself capable of experiencing and discovering his God in the whole length, breadth and depth of the world in movement'. (p. 325)

His viewpoint takes its start from the conviction that the universe shows not only perpetual self-consumption—entropy, the dissipation of energy—but also a positive and constructive feature, which he calls the principle of increasing complexity, a principle which leads directly to consciousness. Viewing the development of the universe in the light of this principle, he sees a series of marked and accelerating ‘breaks-through’. First came the crystallisation of the worlds from the stuff of the universe, to be followed by the advent of life, and then with true consciousness the power of reflection and thus thought and purposiveness. Yet, he insists, this ‘inwardness’ of things was there from the beginning: the ‘within’ of things gradually and progressively conquers the external, as the earth is surrounded not only by a ‘biosphere’, a layer of life, but also by a ‘noosphere’, a layer of thought.

Today we stand on the threshold of yet another break-through, and one with frightening alternative possibilities. This is the phenomenon of collectivity—of men, as social beings, acting and developing more and more as a social entity, rather than as individuals.

It is significant that it is just at this point that de Chardin sees the inherent danger of the process. This collectivity can issue in something which will be destructive and fatal:—

‘The Million in rank and file on the parade ground; the Million standardised in the factory; the Million motorised—and all this only ending up with Communism and National-Socialism and the most ghastly fetters. So we get the crystal instead of the cell; the ant-hill instead of brotherhood. Instead of the upsurge of consciousness which we expected, it is mechanisation that seems to emerge inevitably from totalisation’. (p. 282)

But de Chardin will have none of this: and for a vital reason. Collectivity, in his view, is balanced by another aspect—personalisation, the internal deepening of individual consciousness.

At this point he brings his study to its profound climax—and, significantly, it is at this point that the man-centred humanism of Huxley begins to lose him (p. 19). He has projected the ‘within’ of things back into the very first elements of matter: now he projects it, by analogy, forward as part of the essential nature of things. So the whole drama of creation (for at this point it is not begging the question to use that term) converges upon the ultimate: upon what he calls the ‘Omega Point’. This ‘universal centre of unification . . . must be conceived as pre-existing and transcendent’ (p. 338). For the Christian, then, at that point stands the ultimate triumph of Christ. It is almost a commentary on Eph. 1: 9, 10 and similar passages.

Inadequately, this summary may yet give an indication of the scope and the breadth of de Chardin’s conception. Its tenor is not altogether unfamiliar. Something not dissimilar appears, in a Christian context, in the last chapter of C. S. Lewis’s *Beyond Personality*; and in a humanist context in the space fiction novels of Arthur C. Clarke (it is not without

significance that Clarke, having rejected the God of the Christian, seems to go about conjuring up substitutes). But de Chardin does not put it forward only as a bright idea, but as a thesis supported by a wealth of scientific learning and ascertained fact.

The weaknesses of the conception are also apparent. The projecting back of the 'within' is the first obvious one (although it is interesting that, while the Christian may object here, it is not so easy to see how the materialist can do so). The projecting forward to the 'Omega Point' is another, although if the first is established this also becomes less easy to counter. de Chardin, as a Jesuit, was unlikely to be ignorant of the theological difficulties of his thought, and he deals with these in a post-script and an appendix. If he is in difficulty with the problem of evil, then he is in the same situation as every thinker who has preceded him, from Aristotle on.

In conclusion, the conservative will be intrigued to find that de Chardin is as careful to leave a loophole in his system for our first parents as any I.V.F. writer might be! (p. 206 n.).

F. ROY COAD

Second Thoughts on the New Morality, the report of the 1965 Swanwick Conference of Brethren, is now available, and may be obtained from your Christian Bookshop or from E.C.L. 60 Park Street, Bristol, 1. Price 5/6 post free.

Young Men's Bible Teaching Conference, 1966
Balliol, St. Peter's and Pembroke Colleges, Oxford,
9 - 11 September, 1966. Theme: CHRISTIAN MATURITY.
Details from Mr. J. J. Rose, 63 Stoke Lane, Westbury-on-
Trym, Bristol.

Notes and Enquiries

It is hoped that the contributions to 'The Bookshelf' by Mr. David Alexander will be resumed in a later issue. In the meantime, we are glad to set out a miscellany of items of interest to readers, and requests for help in matters bibliographical and otherwise.

International Association for Reformed Faith and Action

We are glad to draw the attention of members to this Association, which is somewhat similar in its methods and interests to CBRF, although on a much more exalted plane and in a somewhat different field. The first of two 1965 issues of its *Bulletin* contains the addresses presented at the Fifth International Reformed Congress held in the Netherlands in August 1964, under the title *The Church's Mission Today*, and contains papers from internationally known Reformed scholars. One, entitled *The Challenge of the New Testament Church* by Dr. Lothar Coenen of West Germany is of especial interest to Brethren. The October 1965 issue is on *The Christian and the University*.

Details are available from Dr. David R. Hanson, 8 Sotheby Rd., Highbury Park, London, N.5. The *Doctrinal Basis* and *Purpose* are set out below:—

Doctrinal Basis

The Association proclaims the sovereignty of God, revealed in the Lordship of Jesus Christ, over the world and thus over every department of human activity.

In accordance with the historic Reformed confessions of faith the Association submits unconditionally to the authority of Holy Scripture as the Word of God, thereby recognising it as the sole standard of reformation in this and every age of the Church.

The Association accepts, as being consonant with Holy Scripture, the ecumenical symbols of the ancient Church, namely, the Apostles, Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed.

Thus the Association asserts that it is in true succession in faith and doctrine from the Apostles, through the ancient Church and down through the Reformers to the present day.

It is the confident hope of the Association that God will grant to the Church of this age the gifts of the Holy Spirit in order that, in obedience to Holy Scripture, it may respond to the needs of this age, as our fathers in the faith responded to the needs of their age.

Purpose

To promote God-centred living through faith in Jesus Christ.

To this end the Association regards as its special task:

- (a) the strengthening and advancement of the Reformed cause throughout the world;
- (b) the encouragement of fellowship between Reformed Christians of every land;
- (c) the facilitation of the interchange of Reformed thought and experience.

The B.I.O.L.A. Library collection of Brethren material

Dr. Arnold D. Ehlert of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, 13800 Biola Ave., La Mirada, Calif. 90638, U.S.A., writes:—

‘I have now completed the formal compilation of my checklist of works by assembly writers. While in London during January and February, I checked each author against the catalogue of the British Museum Department of Printed Books, verifying entries that I had already listed, and adding new ones. I now have over 5,000 titles listed by nearly 400 authors. This includes pamphlets of four pages and more.

Plans are to publish an essay describing the literature and its distinctive characteristics, with a list of the authors, magazines, publishing houses, and initials of those who wrote under initials. This can probably be released within a year.

I should be happy to correspond with any collector who feels that he may have titles that are extremely rare, and that I might not have encountered in my searches’.

Requests for Information

Mr. Robert Boyd, 11 Grange Terrace, Fort William, Inverness-shire, asks for information concerning **F. E. Raven** of Greenwich, the well known ‘exclusive’ leader of an older generation: date and place of birth, place of up-bringing, parentage, date and place of marriage, wife’s name, parentage and place of up-bringing, and any connections with other denominations in either family. Any information should be sent directly to Mr. Boyd.

Mr. Mark E. Walker, 25 Rue Forgeur, Liège, Belgium, is interested in **J. N. Darby** as a translator of the Scriptures and ‘a very exact and extremely productive philologist’. He would be interested to see an article dealing with this subject, and listing Darby’s various Bible translations with dates. Information—and in particular an article—on this subject would be gladly welcomed by CBRFJ.

Thinking About Words

Mr. H. Dennett, 34 Abbey Road, Sompting, Sussex, is becoming well known for his studies in Christian communications and his philological interests. Members who wish to receive his interesting occasional papers are invited to write to him for details. Mr. Dennett is also responsible for *The Graphic Guide to Modern Versions of the New Testament*, a detailed assessment of nearly forty modern English versions, published by Bagster at 12/6d. Obtainable (plus postage) through booksellers, or (in case of difficulty) through E.C.L., 60 Park Street, Bristol, 1.

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