

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

Introduction

In this issue of the Journal, we come to a practical consideration of 'The Christian Home', and how timely this is! We are all used to hearing it said that the family is the basic unit of our nation, and that the moral life of the nation as a whole is directly related to the quality of the family life within it. Yet the current trend in our circles today is for 'the Assembly' to be the centre of our Christianity to the detriment of the expression of our Christianity in the home. 'Charity begins at home', we say, and rightly so; how much more so should our Christianity.

The Englishman's home is traditionally his castle, and all too often this can be seen in its worst form in the lives of some Christians today who leave their Christianity behind at 'the Assembly' and raise the fortifications around their 'castle' lest their home life be disturbed and disrupted, as they think, by Christianity's influence in this citadel of their lives.

We need to re-examine the undue emphasis which the Brethren place upon meetings in the local church, and ask ourselves whether we could not make a more vital impact for Christ by the use of our homes in His service. It is with this in view that this edition of the Journal has been produced, and the three main contributors focus attention on some aspects of 'The Christian Home'.

In the introduction to his contribution entitled 'Bible Study Groups in the Home', Dr. J. M. Houston speaks of 'the importance of home-based Christianity' which, he says, is far more vital than the nominal attendance at places of worship. 'For if we rely essentially on public worship for our faith, instead of making it the expression of our private devotion to God, it will sooner or later become barren and empty'. He goes on to give some invaluable practical help on holding Bible study groups in the home. He speaks from the experience of these groups among the members of his own local church, and it is to be hoped that others will be encouraged to commence similar groups in their own homes. Already much blessing is being experienced through such groups attached to evangelical churches within the Church of England.

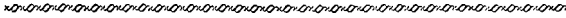
A unique feature of this edition of the Journal is that two of the articles have been written by ladies. Their approach is very refreshing and, after all, what is more natural than for a woman to be the one to speak of the things upon which, as Hannah Moore once wrote, 'the almost sacred joys of home depend'. We greatly value the woman's point of view on 'The Christian Home'!

Mrs. Marion Timmins, who is the Editor of 'The Women's Page' in 'The Harvester', has written something more about the well-known 'evangelical widow' in the particular context of our system of ministry,

and forcibly reminds those husbands who are preachers that they still have a responsibility to their wives and children. Mrs. C. W. M. Argent in her article brings a sensible and up to date approach to the subject of 'The use of the Home', in the widest sense of the term, speaking of the home not only as a place 'where two people live together making a common life, each finding in the common experience fulfilment and happiness', but also as a centre of witness and a place of friendship where wise and understanding counsel is always available to those in need of it.

Some criticism has been levelled at earlier issues of the C.B.R.F. Journal on the ground of their intellectualism; here is an issue which is wholly practical.

DAVID H. THOMPSON



Most people have forgotten nowadays what a home can mean, though some of us have come to realise it as never before. It is a kingdom of its own in the midst of the world, a haven of refuge amid the turmoil of our age, nay more, a sanctuary. It is not founded upon the shifting sands of private and public life, but has its peace in God. It is the woman's calling and joy to build up this world within the world for her husband, and to make it a scene of her activity. Not novelty, but permanence, not change, but constancy, not noisiness, but peace, not words, but deeds, not peremptoriness, but persuasion, and all these things inspired and sustained by her love for her husband—such is the woman's kingdom.

BONHOEFFER



Have you noticed the lines on the face of that greatest of men—Abraham Lincoln? They were there in large measure because he married a woman who could not or would not share his real life.

A. HERBERT GRAY



Marriage demands and promises gracefulness, that paradox of discipline and freedom. Our modern world has become so graceless largely because it lacks spontaneity. The structure of our technological society leaves little scope for its development; most occupations discourage it. In a society governed almost exclusively by impersonal and often inhuman considerations, marriage offers some of the few remaining chances to become human and humane.

WERNER AND LOTTE PELZ