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THE WAY AHEAD

The egg-head or the beatnik? That is a rough translation of Mr. Willingale's contrast in the last issue - 'the cerebral and the somatic'. But simply because some people are quick to write off ideas which they find uncomfortable as 'merely intellectual', CBRF cannot afford to indulge too freely in the luxury of such contrasts. We have a burning message to proclaim - the message of the freedom of the life of God in the life of mankind; and it is our duty to state that message so plainly that the wayfaring man, though a fool, may not err therein.

Which, of course, is where all our members come in! If CBRF is to fulfil its purpose, every member must have both the liberty and the urge to contribute to its discussions. Further, unless the result of the influence of the fellowship is to send a pulse of new life through the churches and Christian activities in which members are involved, then it is failing. It is to this end that local groups of the fellowship are to be encouraged: to provide a means of harnessing the thinking and the devotion of members, by contact with one another. A group which becomes a select coterie is useless; a group might indeed be at its most useful when its members meet in formal session least often. The one essential feature of a local group is a secretary with fire in his soul; the rest will follow in accordance with local needs and circumstances.

In the meantime, here are six specific projects which local groups are invited to take up (solitary contributions also will be welcomed!) If your group is prepared to take up one of these - or any other concern which is burning in your bones - then please let the secretary of the fellowship know, and suitable guidance will be sent to you.

1. The impact of Christian service on the home, and the tensions it engenders. Comment, suggestions and conclusions are required (especially from ladies).
2. An 'Everyman's Guide' to those principles of church life and fellowship which best express the wide ideals of the 'four freedoms' (see issue No.1).
3. "Why I left the Brethren" (From suitably qualified members).
4. The recognition and use of the gifts of the Spirit in the local church.
5. Women's place in the church.
6. A study of the structure of authority within assemblies.

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Here are some of the principles which will govern CBRF:

- (a) Contributors to the journal have the utmost freedom in the expression of opinion; all opinions are therefore those of the individual expressing them, and not necessarily of the fellowship as a whole.

This is a VITAL principle for the following reasons:

- i. Progress is only made by the impact of error upon truth. We owe the basic statement of Gospel doctrine in the Galatian and Roman Letters to the existence of controversy within the early church. The heretic is the catalyst of progress; if Brethren have often degenerated it is simply because they have been too frightened of error to let go and trust God (and heresy has often entered just the same!)
 - ii. It is the group which suppresses freedom of discussion in the interests of purity of doctrine, which falls victim to the first heresy which becomes accepted within its ranks. This is the inevitable result of the suppression of freedom of speech.
 - iii. The fear of controversy (because some controversialists do not understand the rules of common courtesy) inevitably breeds insipid churches. 'Where no oxen are, the crib is clean' - but not much real work can be done.
 - iv. There are some poisons within church life which can only be purged by bringing them to a head and exposing them for what they are. One of these poisons is what E.K. Groves described in 'Bethesda Family Matters' as 'the plague of evil speaking'.
- (b) Expressions of opinion may be uninhibited and forthright, provided that they are courteous and objective. Personal bitterness and the unpleasantness of the odium theologicum will be banned for the plague (and the dishonour to Christ) that it is.
- (c) We must endeavour to apply to ourselves the standards which we apply to others. If we deplore attacks on evangelists from certain pulpits, then we must equally deplore the denouncement of others (whether within or outside our own ranks) from our own platforms. When we read of the intolerance practised in certain Roman Catholic countries, we must at least be honest enough to ask whether the attitude we deplore is not mirrored in our own hearts.
- (d) Above all, we re-affirm our belief that our Lord Jesus Christ has been given all power in heaven and in earth. Simply because there is no aspect of creaturely activity which is outside His domain, there is none which is ~~not~~ ultimately outside His judgment and His control. The breadth of our interests must bear witness to that truth.

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To my fellow men, a heart of love;
To my God, a heart of flame;
To myself, a heart of steel.

Augustine.

THE WORLD, THE FLESH AND THE DEVIL

INTRODUCTION

'It is for us to be ready to find God not within the cosiness of our own piety but within the agony of the world and the meeting of person with person every day.'

A.M. Ramsey.

'This Master Hyde, if he were studied,' thought he, 'must have secrets of his own; black secrets by the look of him; secrets compared to which poor Jekyll's worst would be like sunshine. Things cannot continue as they are....'

R.L. Stevenson.

Glorious uselessness! This, I suggest, marks the two who, in the parable of the good Samaritan, passed by on the other side. These two saw no connection between the temple services in which they assisted and the pitiful bundle of damaged humanity roasting there on the roadside 'neath an Eastern sun; but the Samaritan recognised the need immediately and did all in his power to meet it. In such he was acting as neighbour. The first two failed to recognise the need and also to connect their spiritual exercises with the real, deep need of their fellow man.

Glorious uselessness! Do we divorce our Christian experience from the pressing turmoil of today? Does our behaviour on Monday belie the worship and service of the Sunday? Too easily we adopt a double standard in our lives and we set up our lives into a series of watertight compartments, in some of which God has no evident place. In fact each of us is something of a Jekyll and Hyde. Confronted with the problems presented by this challenging and vibrant age we react by taking the easy way out and brush them aside with the comforting thought that we have better things to do - to go into our 'holy huddles' and to nourish ourselves on our 'splendid holy thoughts'.

Both Randle Manwaring and Derek Warren challenge us to become involved in the affairs of the world, to attempt to influence the moral climate of our day. Such involvement brings its problems and it is so much easier to wash our hands of our responsibilities in the world. We must find a balance in our activities; we must be aware of the possibility of being lured away from our devotion and to pass from being involved to becoming entangled in the affairs of this life. Then there is the likelihood of being misunderstood by the world who will accuse us of peddling sectional interests, and there is also the possibility of Christians carping and criticising our actions.

Why are we so ineffective? Anthony Weston suggests that we have lost the vision of the expected return of our Lord. 'Abound in love to all men and to the saints - that we might have a settled, firm foundation for life viewed in the context of the return of Christ.' Again, is it that we are no longer living a life of discipline? With thoughts such as these we must search our hearts and our actions.

John Redfern.

THE CHRISTIAN AND CULTURE

by Randle Manwaring

The Apostle Paul, writing, in the first place, to Christians living at Philippi, an outpost of Roman culture, gives us a timeless exhortation: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Phil.4:8). In this verse we have the most direct and positive injunction on the Christian's relation to culture, undoubtedly a most complex problem.

But, we may very well ask, what exactly is culture? There is a sense in which it is refinement, good taste, artistic sensibility; but how does this come about? As the great apostle indicates it is by thinking about all that is best in the world in which we live. Matthew Arnold has defined culture as "contact with the best that has been said and thought in the world." It may come as a surprise to some to realise that, in the world, there are so many things which are worthy of such attention by Christians, things, in fact, which are "really worthy of respect and even veneration, those whose grace attracts us, which have a high tone and have moral value worthy of our praise" (to give a paraphrase of the passage quoted above).

Christians are exhorted to fill their thoughts, as the springs of practice, with the excellent and to allow such things to shape their conduct as they reflect upon them. These matters are to be found in the world, the world which is, in the first place, God's creation and where man is to serve an apprenticeship as a moral being, looking forward to the fuller life of eternity. (Titus 2:12). It is in this world of created things that man has to learn to live, not by bread only but by the Word of God. It is the "ladder of created souls," it is the arena in which we learn to overcome the world (in the sense of its opposition to God), the flesh and the devil. It is the place where, as Edmund Burke said "He that wrestles with us strengthens our nerves, and sharpens our will. Our Antagonist is our Helper."

Christians in Society

The contemporary Christian cannot very well withdraw, as mediaeval Christians did, from the created world and the world of things and people. Rather, he should follow the example of his Master, who used the world as an opportunity for demonstrating to mankind the love of God in obedience to the Will of God. This he must do in society, not in a vacuum. But there are still those who feel that they should either find everything in a definitely Christian environment or not at all. Education, holidays, employment and social life, they say, should only be taken in a Christian context. This gives them little or no contact with the world in which they live and, of course, they can have very little direct influence on it.

In fact, they will largely have opted out of society, culture and the world. But they nevertheless cheerfully accept the amenities of life, such as the water supply, the telephone, even perhaps local education (for the younger children) and certainly the National Health Service. Such Christians have few problems to face in the world because they have actually withdrawn from it and consider it beyond redemption.

Of course, the world which sets itself up in opposition to God, to His Christ and to His Church is beyond redemption as such but the world of people and perhaps things can be saved from destruction by the Saviour of the World. Life, whether business life, professional life or social life are transient and the world of art, politics, philosophy and philanthropy are all passing away, but as the Christian finds himself involved in these things, without being entangled by them, he seeks to act as the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

In "The Twenty-Fifth Hour" by C. Virgil Gheorghin, Father Koruga, a priest, said: "The New Testament has always said that there would be an end, and that the end would be pretty rough, to put it mildly. For the New Testament, this world, societies, and indeed life itself are but temporary experience. Moreover, the success of the Christian Church and the validity of its faith does not depend, and never has depended, on its ability to save societies or prevent physical death.

"The Church did not save Roman Society, but it saved Romans who were in a doomed society.

"The Church did not save feudal society, but it saved men and women who were in feudal society.

"There is no guarantee that the Church can or will save modern society, but if it preaches its gospel it can save men and women caught in this society."

Father Koruga looked upon the Church as the actual vehicle of salvation but we know that Jesus Christ is our Refuge, our Hiding Place and our Ark of Salvation. From Him and in Him, the Christian moves out to earn his daily bread, to rub shoulders with his fellow men and to take his part as a member of the nation to which he belongs. He works in enemy-occupied territory, in a kind of underground movement yet, paradoxically, in the open, as an ambassador of Jesus Christ. As he lives in the world, not as he belongs to it, he remembers that his Lord prayed that he might simply be kept from the evil one in the world. (John 17:15).

Christian Contributions to Secular Life

A Christian thanks God for his natural talents and seeks to use them in the world. He does not belittle artistic or literary or musical ability, he uses it and allows his Lord to use it for His glory. He recalls that David the shepherd boy did not give up his music and his poetry

as things unnecessary for the life of looking after the sheep but kept it up as part of his culture and eventually God used it to give us the matchless Psalms of David. We must not despise our gifts but rather cultivate them. Similarly, we must not think lightly of influence or affluence, for both can be used to the glory of God.

One of the tragedies, as I see it, of Christianity today is that we have ceased to invade ordinary life with the Gospel. We keep to the touchlines, jeering and criticising, whilst the world goes to the devil. Happily for the world of our forefathers, it was not always so. Wilberforce and his friends campaigned for the abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire (it cost twenty million Victorian pounds!) Shaftesbury fought in Parliament for seventeen years before he saw his aims fulfilled in the passing of the Factory Act, safeguarding the health of women and children in factories and mines. Müller and Barnardo, through their children's homes, awakened the national conscience to the care of desolate children. Florence Nightingale fought her battles with the military authorities for the improvement of medical services in the army. Charrington gave up his vast fortune inherited from the sale of beer and set about holding back the tide of drunkenness and prostitution in London.

Like their Lord before them they "went about doing good." Such contributions to the well-being and enrichment of humanity form an eloquent testimony to the reality of Christian belief. With many Victorians, their faith had been born in revivalist fervour. William Wilberforce was a young man about town who, before his conversion, had won guineas off dukes at Boodles, the fashionable club and enjoyed Sunday suppers with the beautiful actress, Mrs. Siddons. Overnight, he became a Christian zealot, with new ideals and ambitions. It was said of him that he never became a prig; fashionable society, to which he belonged by birth, never wrote him off as a crank, and although it may have raised its eyebrows and smiled somewhat condescendingly, it never yawned. He was a positive, Christian reformer in public life. Have we such a man living today?

Our Lord was such a good mixer that He did not embarrass the loose-living woman by His goodness, and He so commended Himself to Matthew's worldly friends, following the party at Matthew's house, that, afterwards, "all the publicans and sinners drew near unto Him to hear Him." (Luke 15:1). He found it quite easy to talk to the nymphomaniac by the wellside with the result that she became both a believer and a soul-winner. As Christians we have to keep ourselves "unspotted from the world" (James 1:27) and yet, as the Lord Jesus did, to make our contributions towards its improvement in the lives of other men and women. But you cannot reach people at the end of a barge pole; only by meeting them at some meeting point on some common social, commercial, cultural or domestic ground. Christians who are members of the local council or in Civil Defence, or members of an orchestra or on the magistrates bench or in the special constabulary or members of the Round Table are called to exercise their Christian influence in their calling and according to their

ability. They are the salt of the earth; they are "a letter that has come from Christ" (2 Cor.3:3 N.E.B.). For this work they will need, above all, a Christlike character, a genuine reflection of His indwelling presence.

The Arts

In the realm of the Arts, we come across the very springs of life, where the Christian faith once had a most positive influence. In fact, it is interesting to recall that the ancient University foundations of Western Europe had their roots deep in the Christian faith, where scholars found their inspiration for academic and personal life. The present day position seems very different - Christianity has largely been elbowed out of the arts, science and culture to a degree unknown in earlier centuries. This accounts, to a large extent, for the bankruptcy and sordidness of much that goes under the name of culture. We live in an age of disintegration in which very largely we have debunked the old values and swept away the old landmarks but, as yet, there is no new dynamic and no rock to take their place. Evil as a cult is so assiduously portrayed in contemporary drama and fiction that, as one critic says, it is becoming as boring as the cloying sweetness of the Victorians.

Alex Stuart is a front-rank romantic novelist. In a recent edition of "John o' London's", she wrote:

"But the romantic novelist treads a lonely road these days. She is scorned as a do-gooder, derided as an out-of-date idealist. If she dares - as I have dared - to suggest that the public is becoming weary of the diet of seduction and rape served up to it as literary, television, film and theatrical entertainment, then she is accused - as I have been accused - of trying to smear her fellow writers; or of being 'unrealistic'..."

Modern fiction, which helps to shape our culture, overdraws the picture by writing about vice as if it were the norm - a commonplace and unavoidable experience. Admittedly, the novel should be a faithful representation of life but life should not be represented as being lived in the gutter of immorality. Virtue must be faithfully drawn for its part in normal human experience. The worst aspect of the cult of sexual depravity is that it sears the consciences of the young through the paper backs and the public libraries. Browning said, "Go practise, if you please, with men and women - leave a child alone, for Christ's particular love's sake."

Sir Walter Scott exercised a profound influence on British culture through his novels. He wrote:

"I have been, perhaps, the most voluminous author of any day; and it is a comfort to me to think that I have tried to unsettle no man's

faith, to corrupt no man's principle, and that I have written nothing which, on my death bed, I should wish blotted." He died in the knowledge that the Bible was the book of books. Asking his son-in-law, John Gibson Lockhart, to read to him, he was asked from what book? "Need you ask: there's but one," he replied. Lockhart read from the fourteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel. He listened and said: "That is a great comfort."

We must remember that faithfulness to life and artistic integrity are both important requirements in the life of the creative artist. You cannot ask a painter to paint pictures in the way you want them to appear; he must be true to his art.

Joseph Addison, who wrote the fine hymn "When all Thy mercies, O my God", is remembered in Westminster Abbey by the inscription "To the noblest purifier of our literature". "The Spectator" of his day wrote of him: "he intends to enliven morality with wit and to temper wit with morality."

A short while ago, I wrote to the Times Literary Supplement a "Letter to the Editor", complaining that there had been obscene and vulgar lines in poetry which the Editor had included. The lines were such that I would not care to include them in this article but although I received a polite acknowledgement of my letter, it was not published. However, I have noticed that no more poems of this offensive kind have since appeared. I hope I may have had some influence on the literary taste of the journal concerned. Poetry being my main cultural interest, I have sought, God helping me, to read and to endeavour to understand, most of the poetry being written today, but I confess that it is a lonely path, particularly when it comes to finding a journal which will publish a poem of mine with a Christian theme. The Christian weeklies fight shy of poetry, presumably because they think there is no taste for it amongst their readers and the literary weeklies and monthlies are not really interested in a minor Christian poet. Imagine, if you will, my thrill when one of the literary weeklies announced my second slim volume with the description "vivid representations of the Christian faith". But my slender success does not daunt me. For many reasons, I press on. Wordsworth mentioned one of these reasons when he wrote:

"If thou indeed derive thy light from Heaven,
Then, to the measure of that Heaven-born light,
Shine, Poet! in thy place, and be content:"

Secular Interests and Culture

It is most regrettable when a Christian becomes a person of so few earthly interests that he is unable to sustain a conversation on ordinary topics. In those circumstances, he will become extremely boring and boorish, unknown outside strictly Christian circles, without much culture and certainly exercising no influence on the culture of his time.

Such a person would do well to remember that Paul's mind was exercised in things sacred as well as spiritual. He had a good knowledge of the sports of his time and the Greek poets of his day. With these things he refreshed his soul and they enabled him to write with relevance of the faith which was his very life.

This is only one aspect, albeit a very important one, of the value of "secular" interests. They may equip us for the service of God, they should enable us to have points of contact with our fellow men and they ought to provide us with the necessary refreshment, the rest and change.

A story has come down to us from very early times which, even if un-canonical, serves as a telling illustration of the power for good there is in apparently trivial things. One day a visitor called on St. John, who at that time was busily at work, writing his sublime Gospel. Expecting to find the apostle engaged in deep meditation and in prayer, the stranger was amazed to find him enjoying himself with his pet parrot. When the visitor expressed his surprise, the disciple replied: "The bow that is always strung loses its strength." The story continues that John returned from his relaxation to write the fifteenth chapter of the Gospel. God had, in fact, a rested and a peaceful mind at His disposal for the writing of the truth of abiding in Christ. There is an ever-present need, in twentieth century life - sacred and secular - for relaxation of tension.

Although we must never limit the power of God by thinking that He is limited to working through what is good taste artistically, we ought to use our artistic ability in the service of God. He can work through shocking music, banal hymns and in ugly mission halls but that does not exonerate us from trying to influence architecture, music and poetry for the better. Good workmanship and good taste honour God (although He is outside it all, in one sense) and the Christian, whether as an informed critic or a creative artist, can be a potent force in the formation of national life and the Church's life, through culture. It is said that the best traditions produce the best revolutionaries and certainly the Christian Church, the best of all traditions, has produced, at least in earlier centuries, her share of progressive revolutionaries. It has been recorded that a saint like Thomas Aquinas had a transforming energy in society and in civilisation, because he was a revolutionary in the matter of culture.

Worldly Culture and the Nature of Worldliness

The Christian will find that much of the culture of the world will be deemed unsuitable for his attentions. In fact, any culture which rejects the claims of Christ outright cannot attract the affections of the believer. He can follow music, painting, philosophy etc. because in these things he is "allowed" to be a Christian and his conscience is not offended in the things which he allows. But pornographic literature and erotic art descriptions, for instance, deny the sovereignty of Christ.

True culture is experienced where thought-forms are brought into captivity to the mind of Christ and are made subject to the knowledge which we have of God. "The great aim of culture", wrote Matthew Arnold, "is....to ascertain what perfection is and to make it prevail."

The Christian is continually warned by his Lord of the danger of allowing things which he seeks and things which he possesses to cramp and even stifle the things of the spirit and, in particular, the word of God. There is the danger of anxiety about things required for sustaining our physical life and although, in our affluent society in the western world, we have largely forgotten the meaning of want, for thousands of Christians in other parts of the world there must be a strong temptation to be anxious over things to eat. (Matt.6:19-34). There is also the danger of "cares and wealth and the pleasures of life" causing people to "bring nothing to maturity" in the life of the spirit (Luke 8:14 N.E.B.) None of these things need necessarily be evil - generally they will be quite harmless in themselves but misused and luxuriated in they become fatal. The misuse of things and the over-dependence on things is part of the nature of "worldliness". There is nothing evil in wealth, only in craving after it, revelling in it, depending on it and being in a state of idolatry towards it.

Paul said "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake." (1 Cor.9:23). This involved the apostle in a life of identification with the people amongst whom he lived - the intellectuals, the military authorities, the philosophers and the religious zealots of his day. But he never diluted his witness to the world by becoming "worldly". In other words, his heart was never captured either by an inordinate desire to satisfy the appetites of his old nature (the lust of the flesh) or by the showy glamour of all that the Christless world thought splendid (the pride of life). Further, he was not swayed by appearances - he learned to judge things by their moral worth; he did not desire in the way that Samson desired Delilah (the lust of the eyes).

A negative conception of Christianity is foreign to the New Testament and there is no scriptural warrant - only danger - in drawing up a list of prohibitions. Where do you draw the line? Wherever you do so, you let off a good many people and you become dreadfully critical of other Christians, in sitting in judgment on them. "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its mould." (Roms.12:2 - Phillips) is a better command to obey than the "traditions of men" which, regrettably, are taught by some as commandments. The root of the matter is the most important safeguard: "never give your hearts to this world or to any of the things in it." (1 John 2:15 - Phillips).

THE WORLD, THE FLESH AND THE DEVIL

by Anthony J. Weston

"Jesus, I my cross have taken
All to leave and follow Thee"

One has seen the inside of bad Italian inns, - but only long enough to shudder. We prefer clean plates and clean bedclothes, - yes, and a decently servile boots to carry our case up staircases with respectably thick carpets. Perhaps as we are bowed into dinner we may hum the lines of the hymn with which this paper opened; and if it does not stick in one's throat, we may perhaps catch the haunting echo of the voice of a greater man than you or I, who once placed his head between his hands and repeated them in the bare hovel of an Italian Boardinghouse. J.N. Darby was old at the time, or perhaps even this vague trace of self pity would not have escaped him. I wonder if perhaps for a flash he saw a tempting vision of all "the world the flesh and the devil" had to offer. Did he see in his mind's eye "Markley", the large English country house in Sussex where he was born? I went to see it not long ago and wished I lived there. "The Darbys are such nice people to know". Then there was his father's place in Ireland - Leap Castle. He might have thought of school days at Westminster and the even more subtly tempting promise offered to the Trinity College Classical Gold Medalist and the prospect of a glittering career at the Irish Chancery Bar.

Sometimes when we find that "this world's glory is costing me too dear" we would do well to think of that old man in his filthy lodgings. "Jesus I my cross have taken...." Or listen again:

"This world is a wilderness wide;
I have nothing to seek or to choose;
With no thought in thy ways to abide,
I have nought to regret nor to lose."

This is a hymn sung on occasions at the morning meetings of some Assemblies. I personally cannot sing it with a vestige of sincerity, but I believe that of the tiny band of ascetics who could have sung it without hypocrisy - Darby, who wrote those lines, was one. The theme is constant in his verse:

"In the desert God will teach thee...."

"Though thy way be long and dreary...."

In painting a picture of J.N.D. as an ascetic conqueror of the world, the flesh and the devil, I must inevitably cite at some length the famous description of the "Irish Clergymen", "A fallen cheek, a bloodshot eye, crippled limbs resting on crutches, a seldom shaved beard, a shabby coat, a shabby suit of clothes and a generally neglected person. It was

currently reported that a person in Limerick offered him a halfpenny, mistaking him for a beggar!.....

This young man had taken high honours at Dublin University and had studied for the Bar, where under the auspices of his eminent kinsman he had excellent prospects, but his conscience would not allow him to take a brief. In no other way could he gain access to the lowest orders.....

"He was moved by a self abandonment fruitful of consequences. He made me more and more ashamed of political economy and moral philosophy and of science, all of which ought to be counted dross, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.

"For the first time I saw a man earnestly turning into reality the principles which others professed with their lips alone....."

In expressing his renunciation of the world, the flesh and the devil by an asceticism which cultivated the severest austerity of life, Darby was by now no means alone among the early Brethren. They were characterised by this trait.

Thus: G.H. Lang on Anthony Norris Groves - "He was well educated, had mastered his own profession of dentistry so as in a very few years to have an income of £1,500 per year (worth then very much more). When only twenty years of age he devoted himself to scientific objects and was a leading member of the Atheneum Literary Society." A little later Lang writes of the step taken by Groves and his wife in "dedication of all their substance to Christ as a complete surrender involving as a natural consequence that when they went out in faith they did so without personal resources."

Of William Kelly the 'Christian' wrote on his death: "He was the son of an Ulster Squire. He was educated at Dublin University, where the highest honours in Classics were his. He deeply deplored the flimsiness of faith today compared with the former robustness of character, the increasing worldliness of believers and growing lack of devotedness."

J.G. Bellett was called to the Irish Bar, like Darby, and like Darby renounced his career. Captain Percy Hall similarly resigned his commission.

Of Chapman who gave up for Christ his career as a rising Solicitor, it was commonly said that a brilliant future lay before him. "He was constantly invited to select parties in the West End. Few of those who had dealings with R.C. Chapman guessed in later years that this man who often had to look directly to the Lord for his next meal, could look back to a childhood whose earliest memories were of a great and richly furnished house, a staff of servants and a coach bearing the family Coat of Arms."

Of Captain the Hon. W.H.G. Wellesley it was recorded "one great feature of this revival is that God raised up men of affluence and influence to receive these poor labourers into their dwellings who have in this world neither one nor the other to recommend them. One honourable gentleman, Captain Wellesley, had forsaken this world's wisdom and greatness.....

Sir Edward Denny, 5th Baronet, with an income of £13,000 a year, lived in a cottage in Islington.

Thus it is with good reason that J.B. Neatby in his 'History of the Plymouth Brethren' records what I have sought to stress, that such asceticism was for long a leading feature of all early Brethrenism and postulates the desuetude of the early pattern, with, I feel, regrettably much justification.

I do not deny that there are genuine examples of self-denial among contemporary Brethren, but I do maintain that we should be hard put to it to find in this country many men who practice the kind of heroic self-abnegation I have instanced.

Having come so far, I prefer to draw no conclusions, but merely to proffer a handful of comments (first of all as something of an advocatus diaboli) of a more or less discursive character.

First, the early asceticism was born largely of a conviction not merely that Christ might return to earth in the 19th century, but that he would do so. Most of us today believe that He may come in the 20th century; few would commit themselves to the conviction that He will.

Secondly, I think I may without impropriety suggest that though the intensity of our self denial has undoubtedly diminished, I remain convinced that it is my Christian friends (inevitably largely Brethren) that are the more characterised by self sacrificial giving.

Thirdly, I am sure that many 20th century Brethren give quite as sacrificially of their time, not in that they give more of it, but in that the hours they do devote to Christian things constitutes a far higher proportion of their leisure. Many of the men to whom I have referred were gentlemen of independent means.

Fourthly, I think we must beware of measuring our spiritual power solely by our physical self denial. "I gave to my Assembly the 6d that I might have spent on an ice-cream, therefore my Sunday School lesson will be more effective" is a simple non sequitur. If it were not, St. Simon Stylites sitting on his solitary pole would have been a more dynamic Christian than John Wesley; as it is, he is a figure of fun.

Fifthly, there is an inherent danger in extreme self abnegation

that it may fail to avoid the temptation besetting the Pharisee who fasts with his head unshaven and unwashed. Dare one mention that even Darby's simplicity of life was stigmatised as "affection" by the contemporary Professor Newman?

On the other hand it must be admitted that it is difficult not to read the history of 1825/35 as the history of men of a spiritual power and stature very difficult to match today. It is impossible to believe that it was wholly coincidental that they were also monumentally ascetic.

I would shudder to commit that rank hypocrisy of advocating a return to a close following of their traits. I know that I for one am not prepared for it. Let me but advocate this as an acknowledgement (however insubstantial) of the heroism of their inspiration to us; that we would do well as Christians to allow our lives to become more and more disciplined with the increase of our spiritual maturity; that our money (even if spent on ourselves) be not frittered away in impulse buying; that our leisure time (even if not spent in tract distribution) be given - as our tastes dictate - to reading modern biography, listening to Bartok or even writing magazine articles, rather than to Coronation Street, and that we so control our bodies as to indicate that we appreciate that our New Testament expressly states that bodily exercise profiteth - albeit for little.

In doing so we will not conquer the unholy trinity by which this article is inspired, but we may perhaps stop them making any further advance.

Of course we will retain our indulgencies. On this again let the aged J.N.D. have the last word: "I have not been ill but knocked up and over-worked..... I work morning and afternoon as far as I can and in the evening let the strain go and indulge in the Word and feed on His love."

"Oh God, to us may grace be given....."

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Many who bear the Christian name in our day conceive of salvation as something to be enjoyed. They suppose that it brings them deliverance from the penalties of sin and a guarantee of immortal bliss, a peace and poise of spirit amidst all the vicissitudes of life, and an assurance of their continued existence beyond the grave. And they have no conception of a salvation which lifts them into the will of God, and makes them living centres of divine influence.

H.H. Rowley.

"THE WILL OF GOD IN MY LIVING"

by P.D. Warren

Romans 8 and verses 3 and 4:

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." (A.V.);

or in the New English Bible translation:

"So that the commandment of the law may find fulfilment in us, whose conduct, no longer under the control of our lower nature, is directed by the Spirit."

Matthew 5 and verses 13 and 16:

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour wherewith shall it be salted? it is henceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid; neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

John chapter 17 verse 6:

"I have manifested" prays our blessed Lord "Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world."

Verse 11:

"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world."

Verse 18:

"As Thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world."

"The call to express the will of God in our living as individuals" -

While this is certainly the most important part of my subject, I propose to confine myself to warning of two current errors, one doctrinal and the other practical.

I believe that an ever present danger for those who have a deep appreciation of all that God has wrought in salvation and are soundly instructed in the doctrine of justification by faith, is to give too little attention to righteousness of life, and therefore we have what we can call evangelical antinomianism. The slogan "Let go, let God" has no

doubt helped many in the understanding of our relationship with God for the purpose of salvation, but it is dangerous in leading us to think that it is only the mystical or narrowly religious side of our life that matters, and that practical doing is of second or no consequence. Hence men of little or no faith often put us evangelicals to shame in practical good living. "My brother", says James in his epistle, chapter 2, "What use is it for a man to say he has faith when he does nothing to show it? Can that faith save him? As the body is dead when there is no breath left in it so faith divorced from deeds is lifeless as a corpse."

I turn to warn you of a danger from a practical point of view, and that is a dichotomy between the religious and practical sides of our lives. A business acquaintance of mine said to me of a business friend of his who is a very good and zealous Christian "John does not mix his religion and his business." And he didn't mean that John didn't shout texts to his work people. There was something far more sinister in what he meant. A second example is that occasionally one finds in evangelical Christian work a remarkable absence of those principles of fair play, courtesy, consideration for others, and instead, as one finds so often in the sphere of worldly business, all the cut and thrust of capitalist competition at its worst. This kind of spirit in our relationships with one another in the sphere of Christian work is a tragedy, and a travesty of that for which we stand. A third example is this, and we all know of cases, where in the conduct of religious controversy the laws of defamation have been offended and things have been said holding men up to the contempt and ridicule of their fellows which if made the subject of actions in the Courts would have resulted in substantial damages. The men defamed are content to leave the issue with God, and those who perpetrate this grave wrong, continue unbridled and think they do God a service. Brethren, these things among us ought not so to be. I would ask in this connection that there might be rather less concentration in our ministry on what is loosely called positional holiness and far more time given to the working out of the Biblical principles of, and the application to, our life and times of practical holiness. "So that the commandment of the law" in the words of the great Apostle in Romans 8 and verse 4 "might be worked out experimentally in us whose conduct or manner of life is no longer under the control of the lower nature but is directed by the Spirit."

"The call to express the will of God in our relationships in society" -

1. The problem stated.

The likening of our influence to that of salt and light by our blessed Lord in the Sermon on the Mount implies a moral impact upon the world in which we live. But the problem is to maintain a moral distinctiveness on a society that is morally sick. Our blessed Lord moved freely among publicans and sinners. He was known as their Friend. Very few of us are. We are, unhappily, rather more like the Pharisees, and I sometimes think that it is a social miracle that men move into our society

at all. The Lord Jesus Christ touched the fire but was not singed. He showed us how to live on this earth and He said to us "As my Father hath sent me even so send I you." That is the problem, to maintain a moral distinctiveness in a society that is morally sick.

2. A wrong solution -

This may be called Christian escapism. We will consider first the mediaeval version. The organised church very early concluded that the problem of living in the world and yet maintaining a moral distinctiveness was insoluble for the ordinary man. Eusebius as early as the second century writes "Two ways of life were thus given by the law of Christ to His Church, the one is above nature and common human living. It admits not marriage, child bearing, property, nor the possession of wealth, but wholly and permanently separates from the customary life of man, devotes itself to the service of God alone. The other life more humble and more human permits men to unite in pure marriage, to have children, to undertake office, to command soldiers fighting in a good cause, allows attention to farming, trade and other secular interests." A kind of secondary piety is attributed to them and the mediaeval church followed and developed this line. It is implicit in much mediaeval theology that the only person who can achieve perfection in this world is the one who flees from it and embraces the ascetic life of the monk or nun. Since it is clearly impossible for every Christian to do this there is introduced the double standard and in university language the monks and nuns get honours and you and I can aim only at a pass! But this is clearly contrary to Scripture and particularly to the Scriptures that head the paper. The disciple is sent into the world and as Martin Luther said "The Christian man who applies Christian standards to the vocational tasks confronting him in the workaday world was a better servant of God than any monk in the cell, and the Christian mother who cared for the all-round welfare of her children was keeping a vigil more sacred than any nun!" John Keble's well-known hymn perfectly expresses the Christian ethic:

"We need not bid, for cloistered cell,
Our neighbours and our work farewell,
Nor strive to wind ourselves too high
For sinful man beneath the sky;
The trivial round, the common task,
Will furnish all we need to ask:
Room to deny ourselves, a road
To bring us daily nearer God."

Now the modern version. Is there not a social isolation practised by evangelicals which cuts them off from the ordinary men and women for all practical purposes as surely as the monastery or the nunnery walls? This has been assisted by the large concentrations of population in which we are accustomed to live, because these large concentrations of population have produced instead of the vertical delineation of society according to their geographical grouping, a kind of horizontal lining up of society

determined by social or religious factors. No longer do we find in these large conurbations our community of interest with our fellow workers on the farm, our neighbours in the street, or with the folk in the village, our community being the geographical locality where we live or work, but there is another organisation of society on a class basis and there easily arises out of this the refinement of the religious social grouping and we are cut off from the rest of men. One of the dangers of the wonderful fellowship that we find in our Assemblies is that we tend to become a self-contained social group finding our pleasure, rightly so, within our circle, making our friends within our circle, and thus drawing a non-physical, but none the less real, wall around ourselves. Thus we deprive ourselves of the opportunity of communicating that which we have learned of God to those among whom we live and who are greatly in need of our ministry. We cease in other words to be salt. In a large pot needing savouring, we remain in the packet. Our life is in a small corner of the room and we are so huddled together that we cannot be seen. Our problems of evangelism arise very largely from this fact and because of it we find ourselves unable to communicate. As our blessed Lord moved among men there went from Him virtue and healing. He communicated from a nearness that was both physical and social to the spiritually and morally sick.

3. Towards a right solution - the manner of communication.

The way in which we communicate that which God has entrusted to us to those who need it. The first way in which we communicate is by example. There is a modern community who seem to have functioned as salt and light as few others. I refer to the Quakers of whom G.M. Trevelyan writes: "To maintain the Christian quality in the world of business and of domestic life and to maintain it without pretention or hypocrisy was the great achievement of these extra-ordinary people."

How wonderful it would be if we, who in the mercy of God are perhaps more orthodox doctrinally, and have the truth of God in the way that our dear Quaker friends seem to have let it slip, if in this day and generation as part of the revival, for which many of us pray, it could be said of the Christian Brethren something like that. That we communicate to those among whom we live a Christian quality in a world in which Christian ideals have been let slip, so that our Assemblies are no longer a haven of refuge from the wicked world outside, but a base from which a moral influence of acknowledged quality permeates society.

Secondly, by precept. Is there a more positive role than example that we as Christians ought to exercise in the society in which we live? Should we speak openly against that which is evil? Should we engage in community with our fellow men in working for that which is good? Edmund Burke said "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing." Recently, the Anglican Archbishop of Accra, with the backing of all the church leaders in Ghana, made a statement criticising

certain aspects of the Ghana Young Pioneer Movement. He referred to its Godlessness and some of the phrases and songs prescribed for the children to sing. At the beginning of the meeting the leader says "Nkrumah is our Saviour" and the response from the children is "Nkrumah is our Messiah". "Nkrumah is our Saviour" and the response from the children "Nkrumah will never die". I can well understand that men of God and leaders of the community of God find it impossible to sit by and let that sort of thing gain ground in their country - particularly if they have memories long enough to include the development of the Hitler cult in Nazi Germany. And this man, a leader in the Church of God, with the fellowship and at the request of all his brethren made a moderately worded statement by way of protest. He was deported. Should he have spoken or should he have kept quiet? Of course, we realise that here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come. Of course, we realise that our citizenship is in heaven. But this surely does not absolve us of moral responsibility for what goes on in the community in which we live? Was Isaiah misguided when, in the presence of God as recorded in Isaiah 6 he said "Woe is me for I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips", thus identifying himself with his people's sin? Do the Scriptures really relieve us of the duty of seeking, as much as in us lies, that the affairs of the world in which our lot is cast should accord with the moral principles of the Kingdom? We have only to read the prophecy of Isaiah and of the other prophets to see that they certainly conceived their duty to include duty of speaking out in relation to the society in which they lived.

Thirdly, positive exertion. Positive exercise of influence in society. God is interested in men and women of the world as a whole; enough for Christ to die for them. And whilst primarily He is concerned with their individual salvation, secondarily He is concerned with their welfare, otherwise He would not have let you and me down here with so much guidance as to how we should live in society. The Old and New Testaments are a unity of God's revelation. And this unity of God's revelation reveals to us a God who was interested in nations and not only interested in His chosen nation. Witness the sending of the prophet Jonah to Nineveh, and His patience with that great city and the postponement of the judgment that was to come on Nineveh for over an hundred years because they repented at the preaching of Jonah. This Bible, which is a unity, has shown us that God uses nations in the accomplishment of His purposes, and again not only His chosen people. He used heathen nations and refers even to King Cyrus as His servant to bring about His providential purposes in the course of history. Is there not a call to us to exert ourselves positively in the development of the society in which we live. I am sure if we do we shall be acting in accordance with the will of God expressed and revealed to us in Holy Scripture. Of course, it may be our view that politics is a dirty game which Christians should avoid or that it involves loyalties likely to clash with Christian convictions or that it necessitates unhelpful relationships. But is it right in God's sight to leave the management of civic, national and international affairs entirely in

the hands of the secularists? Is not the man who plays a truly Christian part in the City Council or in the House of Commons one whom we all admire and thank God for? And yet it is not through our encouragement that he is there, nor is it in any very definite sense our prayers that sustain him with wisdom and Christian purposefulness. I remember the story told of the late Lord Caldecot (then Sir Thomas Inskip) who was one of the very few men who stood up in the House of Commons in the 1928 debate on the Prayer Book and defended the Reformation Principles which the new book was thought to undermine. He bore the brunt of that debate upon his own shoulders. After the battle had been won he went into a small room outside the House but in the same building where were gathered a group of evangelical Church of England Christians. Grateful for what he had done, they thanked him profusely. After days of battle and nights of work he was near nervous exhaustion, and with the sweat pouring from his brow replied: "Oh dear yes, but how much more wonderful it would have been if I could have had some allies with me to help me in the House." We thank God for men like the late Sir Thomas Inskip. We thank God for William Wilberforce and the Earl of Shaftesbury who did not shun political activity for fear of being contaminated. Were they not in our history the salts that work? Today we recognise the call of men to responsibility in industry and commerce and we look with pride and affection upon those men from our own Assemblies who hold leading positions in the industrial and commercial world. We regard it as perfectly right that our brethren should take prominent positions in the Civil Service and leading parts in the professional associations, but for some reason or other we draw the line when it comes to government in the elected chambers of our country and I ask you to think, is this logical or right? Surely infiltration is the scriptural principle and a principle that should apply throughout the society in which we live. You and I should be free to seek before God His will for our lives as to the vocations in which we should spend our time, and, consistent with the principle of the stewardship of time, allow Him to lead us over the whole sphere of society. The problems that there are in some spheres should not be a deterrent but a challenge, and I submit that believers in these days have a duty not only by example but also by precept and infiltration to play a truly Christian part in every responsible section of the community to which God gives us opportunity to go. So that through us the light of God's truth might be made known and that we might exercise the ministry of salt.

Some specific problems to do with our living in this contemporary age -

(a) The first problem is our relationship to culture and knowledge. One of the reactions from which our Assemblies still suffer is to despise academic teaching. It is true as a leading Presbyterian said to me a short time ago, that one of the biggest hindrances to spiritual blessing and gospel advance in the Presbyterian church is its academic ministry. On the other hand we have suffered from too much ignorance, and the problem is to get the balance. Let us covet the brains and the spiritual power of the great apostle Paul. God has given gifts to the church and

there is a great heritage of Christian learning which is ours to study. Let us not despise what He has given and really get down to reading. It will enrich our understanding of the sacred Scriptures and so make us the more able ministers of the new covenant. But the apparent conflict between knowledge and the Faith troubles many and gives rise in this sphere to the sort of escapism of which I have been speaking in other spheres. I have used the word knowledge and not science because it applies to students of philosophy, history and the social sciences every bit as much as the biologists, physicists and the chemists. It leads some to have a split mind in relation to their faith. They learn and accept most or all that they are taught and they keep that in one compartment of their minds and on Sundays they operate through another. Surely it is proper that all these subjects should be studied and taught and thought about theistically. It is argued that science should be allowed to develop free of any theological pre-suppositions. If by science is meant the careful observance and relation of phenomena, social or natural, then the 'Christian scientist' is as free as anyone. But the inference to be drawn from these observations and these results is a matter of philosophy, and here the Christian must reject any conclusion that is contrary to the revealed Truth of God. There are three practical pleas arising from this:

First, that our 'Christian scientists' and philosophers should think and write and help those of us not trained in the sciences to see that the anti-Christian and a-Christian conclusions of some of our popular scientific writers and broadcasters are not the only valid conclusions to be drawn from the observed facts.

Second, could not our elder brethren encourage young men engaged in scientific study and research to share their problems with men of experience, and under no circumstances to smear them with the charge of heresy the moment they express an idea which seems to conflict with our traditional beliefs. Remember that the student is introduced these days almost daily to concepts which challenge his beliefs and if he is going to face them as he should and not hide his head in the sand as many do, he should and will need to think deeply and long, and he is entitled to the love and the understanding of his brethren. The conclusions by men of science are never static and our interpretation of Scripture too should never be static. As John Robinson has said as he bade farewell to the Puritans sailing for America in 1620 "I am verily persuaded" he said, "that God has yet more truth to break forth from His Holy Word." Let us bear this in mind and keep flexible minds in relation to these interpretations and to seek ever to be grounded upon the Person and the Work of Christ and upon the revealed Work of God in Holy Scripture.

Third, I would like to plead for us to continue to take seriously the wide open door of opportunity for Christian men and women to teach in our schools. The boys and girls of today are the men and women of tomorrow and the Roman Catholics are quite right in their assessment of the importance of Christian education. There is an open door not only for Scripture

teachers but also for teachers of all subjects and you, as you go into the schools to teach physics, chemistry, maths, history, whatever it is will be making a Christian contribution to the education of the boys and girls under your charge. There is a very special opportunity here for our Assembly young men, because teaching is a profession which can tie in very well indeed and very conveniently with a ministry of Bible teaching in the church.

Now last on this subject of culture a word about art. The widespread use of television has brought to the fore again the place of eye-gate in the communication of truth. The building of the new Coventry Cathedral has also brought into public controversy the role of art in the communication of religious truth. Religious art was more straightforward in mediaeval times and none of you can have been round the galleries of Rome or Florence or visited one or more of the great continental churches and seen the paintings within them without being impressed by the power, usually wielded for God, of the artist's brush. The vast majority of pictures in these places are biblical. In view of the great influence of eye-gate in those times, I wonder if we are right to allow the powerful television medium to remain today in the hands of men of no religious faith and the religious programmes in those of men whose views are so different from ours. Here again there are immense problems and the job of getting in can only be done by infiltration over a long period, but because of our inadequate concept of the will of God for us living in this society we evangelicals are miles behind. It is important to realise in this connection that strong Christians are needed to do this work, not converts from the TV world. It is a monstrous injustice to think that because John Smith has been working for the television and been appearing before the screen regularly and is converted that he is the chap to do the job. John Smith to begin with is a weak Christian and John Smith will want to get away from that which has dragged him down for so many years of his life, and understandably so. This is a field that is difficult and it is a field therefore that should have the attention of the strong Christians.

One final word about art. The truly beautiful is harmonious with the truly moral but the soul that knows not God may misuse his artistic gifts and pander to the baser instincts of the flesh. That which simply inflames passion or directs the minds to the courses of conduct that are unworthy or exhibits a non-Christian standard of values does not lose its taint because it is decked in the garments of high literary or artistic merit. Therefore, Christian artists, consecrate your gifts to God and let art, your art, never be a cover for anything unworthy of Him.

(b) The political and industrial organisations.

It is my belief that we should be ready to take a more active part in these things so that there may be in these spheres of society those who can express the will of God. One of the arguments for abstention

is that our Lord never took part in political affairs, but a little thinking may suggest that this argument is not a valid one. Our Lord did not engage in trade after He began His public ministry, and if He had engaged in political affairs it would have been in direct contravention of the unique call of God to Him. In any case, the Lord's teaching had to be teaching of enduring significance and if His teaching had been occupied with the particular circumstances of that time it would not have been consistent with the purpose of God. It is clearly contrary to God's will that His disciples should seek, by political means, still less by the sword, directly to advance the Gospel or to bring in His Kingdom, and both errors have been made by Christians in the past. But that there is a place for the Christian to play in politics and industrial organisations I have no doubt, and some of the evils which we Christians lament today are directly attributable to default by Christians in the past in this respect.

(c) International affairs and war.

I am not going to enter into the pacifist controversy in any detail, but it is a contemporary issue. The pacifist says "you cannot cure evil by evil. Our Lord's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount was to resist not evil, to turn the other cheek and to love your enemies and faced with the cross Jesus declined His disciples' offer to defend Him. Instead He chose to suffer and to reply to physical force, or threat of physical force by love and compassion", and that is a strong case. To this the Christian non-pacifist answers: "True, all war is evil, Christians must do all they can to prevent and abolish it. But there are other evils, tyranny and anarchy. If the question was only of the aggressor or me personally suffering, then fair enough I will, but it isn't so simple as that. If I do not fight then I am failing in my God-given duty to love and serve my fellows, including my family. Would the good Samaritan have stood by if the thieves had returned to finish their victim off?" These commands refer to individual relationships, the Christian non-pacifist says, and there is a different set of principles discernable in Holy Scripture for relations between nations and groups. Most believe that it is not wrong to be a domestic policeman who has, if necessary, to use violence and kill. Is it therefore wrong to belong to an international police force such as the United Nations Forces or having regard to the scriptural revelation that God was one nation to punish another to engage in what seems to right thinking people to be a just war? These are questions that we have got to think about and to seek to discern the mind of God from Holy Scripture. To what extent are these basic arguments changed by the arrival of nuclear weapons? That again is a matter for thought, and in this connection I would like to commend to you a pamphlet published by Christian Teamwork entitled "The Christian and Nuclear Warfare".

(d) The Biblical doctrine of sex.

One of the most important areas of life in which the will of God should be expressed by believers is in the sphere of the family and sex

relations. Probably this is a matter on which our Victorian forefathers did not have the truth quite in perspective for there was a clear suggestion in their thinking and writing that sex is of itself evil and only becomes justified when used for the procreation of children. In our thinking, therefore, we must proceed from basic principles and begin with the complete wholesomeness of that which God has created, and try to distinguish His handiwork from the distortions and marring which it has suffered at our hands through the Fall. If we ask why our Victorian forefathers held the views they did we shall discover that they firmly grasped one important fact which we must grasp and that is that sex, being one of the strongest instincts of mankind and being enormously fed by the imagination, is easily liable to get out of control and to lead to vice; and to some extent their attitude was a reaction against the licentiousness of the previous century and their warnings and their care were greatly to their credit. The primary purpose of marriage according to the biblical revelation and as the preamble to most marriage services tells us, is the procreation of children and that they might be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The commandment "Be fruitful and multiply" is a delegation by God in His grace of the work of the Creator Himself. He invites us to join with Him in a kind of partnership in the creation of new life and therefore, as all fathers will agree, the birth of a baby is a most wonderful and holy thing. The responsibility to exercise the procreative function is a responsibility laid fairly and squarely upon each of us whom God has called to the marriage state.

Family planning is a live issue and one that is not capable of a one-paragraph answer. I am going to be rather a coward here and commend you to the answer to a question on this subject which Dr. Hanton wrote in the July 1962 issue of "The Witness".

Second, the biblical revelation does not limit the function of sex to the reproduction purpose. Equally deep rooted in Genesis is the reflection of a second factor, the need of man and woman for each other to complement and to fulfil each other and to provide a durable partnership against the loneliness and the rigour of life. God said "It is not good for man to be alone, I will make him an help meet for him" and this relationship of man and woman, husband and wife, is rooted in God's creative purpose equally with the procreative functions of sexuality. "For this reason shall a man leave his father and mother and be joined unto his wife and they two shall be one flesh."

The third reason for the institution of marriage, is that man's natural instincts implanted by God may find fulfilment in a lawful relationship but this is, I think, put too negatively and there is in fact a positive duty on the part of husbands and wives to express in regular sexual intercourse the love which they have the one for the other. It is not, of course, the only language of earthly love, but it is in its full and right use the most intimate and most revealing. It has the depth of communication signified by the use of the biblical word "knowledge", and

it should be the high point of obedience to the New Testament command "Husbands love your wives as Christ also loved the church." Much more teaching on this aspect of personal relationships ought, in my view, to be given to those intending to marry. It is not just a matter of physical mechanics there are personality and social implications, and the pastoral care of the flock involves advice on these issues.

Salt and light. You may say that I have suggested that in seeking to exercise the will of God in my living I am urging the Church to seek to permeate society. I am. But I am not urging the Church to allow society to permeate the Church and there is a difference here. I believe that our Lord meant what He said when He sent His disciples forth into the world and chose to make the gospel known through them, men in whom His Spirit dwelt and as He breathed on them He said to them: "As my father hath sent me, even so send I you." Isn't it a dangerous course? Isn't it fraught with rocks on either side? It is indeed. But we have the prayer of our blessed Lord: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."

(The substance of an address given at the
Oxford Conference 1962).

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Take care to be on most familiar terms with those whose souls are committed to your care. Stand in the stream and fish.

C.H. Spurgeon.

Why do all unbreakable (moral) rules always turn out to be about sex and not about war?

Alasdair McIntyre.

In addition to my parish visiting, I have dealt with a criminal who has ill repaid me. I have been to a United Nations meeting. I have tried to share a wider vision with a Trades Union official. Indeed, I have been involved. I thank God I am not as one of these pietists.

George F. MacLeod.

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MEMBERS' SECTION

Contribution :

A BRETHREN SOCIAL ACTION ORGANISATION?

by George N. Patterson

"If thou seest the oppression of the poor, the violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for he that is higher than the highest regardeth;.... Moreover the profit of the earth is for all...." (Eccles.5:8-9).

Under the heading - "This is the Family of Man", the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief, have recently provided in the national newspapers, an appalling modern reply to the scriptural question "Who is my neighbour?" Here is their list of some of those lying by the side of the world's roads:

"10 million leprosy cases in the world; 8 million receive no treatment of any kind. Over 300 million do not get enough to eat. Expectation of life for a Burmese woman is 31 years; 74 for a British woman. Trachoma affects 500 million people, or a sixth of the world's population, and is 'the greatest single cause of serious and progressive loss of sight'. 11 out of every 100 children die in India before they reach the age of 4. 50% of Mexico's rural population eat less than the minimum daily requirement of calories. There is one doctor per 40,000 people in Nigeria. 750,000 people live in shacks, boats or on the pavements of Hong Kong. An Indian eats 1.57 pounds of food a day; an Englishman 3.63. 8 grams of animal protein is provided by the average daily diet in the Far East; 66 grams in N. America; one-third of the world has less than 10 grams of protein a day to eat. There are still 1,350,000 refugees under the mandate of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. Congo needs 23,000 teachers, Ethiopia 11,000, Nigeria 14,000. 60% of Africa's children never go to school; only 4% receive secondary education. There are 90,000 deaths a year from T.B. in East Pakistan, and only 500 hospital beds for T.B. patients...."

The Oxford Committee for Famine Relief conclude this dreadful record with the words: "These are our fellowmen. We have to help. We know we can only tackle a small part of a vast international problem; but we also know that thousands now live who would have died without Oxfam help."

This article is not being written to solicit further help for Oxfam - excellent though that cause is, and fully worthy of your support, should you be prompted to do so - but to submit that the people in that list are not only Oxfam's fellowmen, but Brethren's neighbours! As you pass by, what are you doing to help them? Leaving it to Oxfam? or to Inter-Church Aid? or the Save the Children Fund? or the U.N.? Or perhaps you feel that this is not your responsibility as a spiritual Levite, a "royal priest", and that your responsibility is to minister

spiritual things only - and suppress any feelings of guilt with a two-to-ten shillings offering in the missionary box?

But even this last most common gesture is becoming more and more futile as the place and function of missionaries in the modern world comes under closer scrutiny. Fewer countries want the 19th century type missionary with his "paternalist Christianity" and "western imperialist customs". Hospitals, houses, churches and lands - whose warrants were so often obtained in a now discredited era - are being taken from the foreign missionary and transferred to the nationals of the newly emergent nations. And so now we are faced with a situation where a diminishing amount of money is being given to a decreasing number of missionaries for a smaller sphere of activity in fewer countries of the world. This 19th century missionary outlet is now not only out of date but in another few years will be non-existent.

Are we as Brethren, who played such a large and constructive part in the 19th century missionary movement, content to leave it at that in our own generation? If the resultant surplus money and energy were being devoted to an expansion of the Kingdom of God in our own country there might well be a good argument in favour of planned withdrawal from foreign commitments in 'unproductive' circumstances. But in the face of the appalling differences in the standards of living which we enjoy and that of others, - some of which have been listed - together with the "welfare state benefits" for all in this country, there can be no grounds for such Pharasaical complacency. There are our neighbours, God's children, who are dying, who are starving, who are disease-ridden, and we are responsible - no, commanded - to feed them, clothe them, treat them, provide for them - in short, shew Christ to them. And we have lonely, and hungry, and homeless, and sick, and unhappy people in our own country, too.

"The tragedy of Brethren" someone has said, "is that the Salvation Army ever should have been necessary. At the beginning of the Brethren movement in the 19th century, George Müller and Dr. Barnardo set an example that, tragically, was never followed." 20th century needs require 20th century methods to meet them. An increasing number of Christians are concerned about the growing gap between the meagre 20th century spiritual concern and the overwhelming 20th century needs at home and abroad. What part can Brethren play in the moral challenge and spiritual crisis facing our generation? Suggestions for a spiritual re-assessment have already appeared elsewhere, but here I want to restrict myself to our "social responsibility", or moral obligation, or scripturally-commanded obedience.

Why should not Brethren, with their many able and often wealthy business men, set up a "Social Action Organisation"? This, of course, would be quite separate from the present existing bodies dealing with missionary and evangelistic work - although there is no reason why they should not co-operate closely where their interests coincide, as they

must in several ways, e.g. in educational and medical work. There is certainly no scriptural reason why such an organisation should not be formed, for it would be the 20th century equivalent of the 1st-century gathering in Acts chapter 11, and elsewhere.

Brethren are already represented in Christian Businessmen's organisations, and other groups, in various cities in this country and the U.S. But instead of devoting their considerable business talents to simply supporting evangelistic crusades, or the 'Gideons', or other isolated 'good causes' - excellent though all of these are - let them think in terms of organising to tackle specific social projects. For instance, one project which is currently exciting the socially-conscious is the 'Factory for Peace', an experiment in industrial relations in Glasgow. With a capital fund of £10,000 raised in sums ranging from 5/- to £50 the organisers hope to make a considerable impact on industry at home, and if the project is successful, later in various ways in under-developed countries. A pilot project in one of the toughest prisons in the country has had a 2½-year trial period with exciting results; but it needs hundreds, if not thousands, of volunteers to help in implementing it. A world famous sociologist friend has shown me his charts with a list of 92 social projects: from peace-making between warring peoples through aid to under-developed countries, to prostitution in our own cities - all of them requiring volunteers.

Nor is it that there is no interest among "non-Christians". This is a further challenge and rebuke to complacent Christians, and particularly, Brethren. A tentative proposal for a "Social Action Corps" for this country has already had a promise of several thousand recruitment - without any advertising. This, it is suggested, would involve unpaid, or minimum-paid, men and women working in racially-sensitive areas: cleaning and repairing slums; visiting and working in hospitals and prisons; 'landscape gardening' in housing schemes; helping the lonely - of which there are tens of thousands of all ages; bewildered - such as released prisoners trying to get work to 'go straight', or unmarried mothers in trouble, and so on. The Voluntary Service Overseas scheme, begun only a few years ago, has 1,200 already serving on a meagre budget - and an estimated reservoir of some 25,000 recruits. The American equivalent: 'Peace Corps', which has substantial government support, of course, has 4,800 personnel and an overwhelming demand for thousands more from foreign countries. So successful has it been that the American Government is seriously considering setting up a parallel organisation for service in the U.S. The Quakers, through their Friends Service International, have an outstandingly influential organisation, with diverse activities in almost every country, based on the support of Quaker businessmen. The Save the Children Fund, War on Want, and several other organisations all help to alleviate the suffering in this and other countries.

One former Brethren businessman in America, who later became a Baptist, has given a spectacular lead by setting up a non-profit Foundation with a principal fund of its own, to "serve the welfare of mankind" on an

international scale, from the profits of his business organisation. The Le Tourneau Foundation will contract, say, with the governments of Peru or Liberia to clear one million acres of jungle, build roads, introduce ancillary industries, supply the necessary machinery - then fly out Christian technicians for a recognised period in its own planes. The declared purpose of the Le Tourneau Foundation is "to teach, promulgate and disseminate the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world, and also unite in Christian fellowship the large numbers of consecrated Christians in the various evangelical churches..."

The headquarters of a Brethren Social Action organisation of similar aims could be set up in, say, London for England, or Glasgow or Edinburgh for Scotland, and could spread to the capitals of other countries when these were included in its interest. Branches could be formed in the cities and towns of the countries concerned, depending on the representative business strength of the local organisations. These in turn would draw their recruitment from Brethren churches in their areas, and then direct whatever local activities were selected as the most urgent requirement of the social programme, referring to the central executive for any financial help or expertise necessary. From amongst these workers - taught, of course, in the distinctive Brethren truths in their local churches - would emerge a new spearhead of dynamic Christians with a 'complete' gospel relevant to the needs of their generation - and with a limitless audience ready to listen to them. None of this need in any way violate Brethren's deeply-held spiritual principles, while providing a new, exciting, rewarding and scriptural field of 20th century evangelism.

Why should not Brethren, with their tremendous potential of a combination of able and wealthy businessmen and dynamic and visionary youth, get together in such a nation-wide organisation to direct their energies into this greatest challenge of the century? This may be the break-through for which we have been praying for years.

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Correspondence on matters raised in the Journal should be sent, preferably on the headed paper provided, to the Correspondence Editor, 229 Village Way, Beckenham, Kent, to arrive within four weeks of the publication of the Journal).

The Somatic and the Cerebral - Protest No.1. Mr. Roland Rogers, 44 The Grates, Cowley, Oxford, writes:

I am wondering if it was deliberate editorial intention to place Wycliffe's great comment on "yat tunge yat was moost knowun to ye puple" opposite "Referee's Introduction" in the August issue. It seemed even more ironical to me that "Referee's" subject concerned the man in the street.

The reason for my comment forms a plea that, as far as possible, your excellent Journal should present its matter in simple language to suit the "average man". This does not mean the slightest departure from a scholarly, intelligently thought-out approach set down in writing of good style, but I am convinced that phrases such as "denuded cipher", "chameleon evangel", "kerygmatic continuity" and "the somatic and the cerebral" could have been otherwise expressed with little or no loss of style or effectiveness.

Although it is indeed good exercise for us to have an Oxford Dictionary handy for occasional reference, the necessity for continually looking therein does spoil an otherwise excellent enjoyment.

(A somewhat unrepentant Alan Willingale offers this guidance: "'Kerygmatic' is an adjectival formation from a Greek noun used in the N.T. in the semi-technical sense for 'proclamation' or 'the creed-like formula in which the saving facts of Christ's coming were stereotyped'. C.H.Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and its Development, has shown that this résumé may be inductively obtained from an analysis of the N.T. documents. The question posed in my Introduction is whether the carton in which the Gospel was originally delivered is disposable and replaceable." - Ed.)

The Somatic and the Cerebral - Protest No.2. Mr. H.L. Ellison, Moorlands Bible College, writes:

I should like to forestall kind critics by mentioning that it was Grimshaw of Haworth and not Fletcher of Madeley who used strong-arm methods to get his parishioners into church. The spiritual condition of Haworth in the time of the Brontës suggests that the methods were effective only so long as Grimshaw was there.

I wish to protest with the utmost vigour against the suggestion in Mr. Willingale's fourth paragraph in the last issue. Irrespective of whether my sociological picture was correct or not, and irrespective of the degree in which we have stratified our population in the great cities according to wealth and education, the moment a local church accepts this stratification as valid, it has sealed its fate.

However much a local church may adapt its evangelism to those it seeks to evangelise; however much it may arrange group activities for its varied membership; in its worship and fellowship it must always seek to transcend educational, social and financial barriers. This is not finding the lowest common denominator, and it demands sacrifice from all its members, not merely the richer and more educated. The moment we acquiesce in these man-made distinctions we cease to be a local church, the body of Christ locally, and become a religious fellowship.

The ideal is doubtless difficult to attain, but there is ample evidence from our own land and from the Mission Field that it is possible. To defer it to the New Jerusalem is to deny the power of the Holy Spirit in our midst.

Interdenominational Work and the Local Church. Prof. J.W. Fairbairn, 12 Private Road, Enfield, Middx., writes:

The letter of Mr. Keith Elliott and Mr. G.A. Lucas prompt me to write on a subject which I am sure ought to have high priority in the activities of CBRF. I refer to the question of what contribution the Brethren movement can make to the welfare of the Church in the 20th Century.

Mr. Elliott's letter reminds me of one very important contribution, namely "the view of Christian Union held by the early Brethren, which led to such movements as the Evangelical Alliance". (J.E. Orr, *The Second Evangelical Awakening*, p.127). This view is based on the realisation that in a geographical area, such as a town, there exists a local Church. Our duty is to recognise this and act upon it, not to try and form the local Church. The Church of God in Bedford (say) in 1963 consists of all those in Bedford Town who are "sanctified in Christ Jesus and called saints".

The Church of God at Corinth, of course, would not have presented such a divided appearance as its counterpart in Bedford in 1963, but nevertheless, there were deep divisions at Corinth, and maybe some did meet separately on occasions. But there was never any suggestion that when the "whole Church be come together" this would exclude any of the believers. Such a gathering would now be called interdenominational, and I agree with your correspondent that this is nearer the N.T. ideal than any local "assembly".

It is right, of course, for us to meet on what we believe to be the Scriptural pattern. In fact, this is one sure way of helping our local church - "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments". But we need not do so in an exclusive manner as though any other of our local brethren had not an equal right as we to join in.

What is more, ought we not to be exercised positively to get the local church to "come together in one place" more often? Not only for a Billy Graham relay, but for ministry and fellowship meetings. This would be a true ecumenical movement.

Our Missionary Enterprise. Mr. C.D. Scott, 83 Highbury Rd., Birmingham 14, writes:

Dr. Houston says: "Our missionary enterprise overseas tends to become the substitute for ineffective evangelism at home. In the glamour to evangelise the 2% that have no scriptures, we have forgotten the lost frontier of the city in which more than half the world's population will live in our generation". (CBRFJ i,20).

This is hardly fair. In 'Translation Magazine' (Summer 1963) the Wycliffe Bible Translators give the figure of Bibleless peoples as 5%. They say "Only 5% - but 150,000,000 souls!"

We ought to realise that if the need in this country is great, then

it is multiplied a hundredfold abroad. To take some figures: in Turkey there is 1 Christian worker to 278,000 people (some parish this!); in Cambodia, 1 Christian worker to 77,500 and 1 Christian to 6,700, whilst in Somalia there is only 1 Christian to 400,000 people. This would mean that there would be only 21 Christians in the whole of London!

No, the truth is that our missionary endeavour is pitifully inadequate in view of the tremendous need. We ought to realise that the decline in spiritual power here has been producing a decrease in missionary effort. What is needed is a thousandfold increase in young folk filled with the Holy Spirit and the love of Christ going out to evangelise the unreached peoples of the world.

In our desire to be more effective at home, let us not minimise the tremendous needs abroad.

(Ward Gasque, 715 Gayley Ave., Apt 2, Los Angeles 24, Calif., USA, is contemplating doing a thesis on Brethren Missionary Endeavour. He asks: "What are the comments of CBRF members on this? Is there a need? What has already been done along this line? Is it too big a subject?" I will forward any comments sent to me - Ed.)

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THE BOOK SHELF

Some General Books on the Bible

Many members will agree with the sentiment expressed by Mr. Stacey Woods in the course of his address at the Oxford YMBT Conference: that to reach modern man we need to do more than come to an understanding of his way of thinking, as the books listed in the last issue sought to do. We also need a fresh, living appreciation of Scripture. Perhaps there is significance in the fact that in the first two issues of a Journal presumably devoted to research there has been little or no specific study of Scripture.

But seldom have there been so many aids to study available. The following are just a few on general biblical subjects to have appeared recently. As far as the Old Testament is concerned, there has appeared an introductory history of the period by F.F.Bruce, Israel and the Nations (Paternoster, 1963. 16s.); a substantial proportion of the book is given to the inter-testamental period, as this is less generally known or accessible. Also published by Paternoster in this country is a new book by an American scholar, J.A.Thomson, on The Bible and Archaeology (1963. 30s.)

Prof.E.J.Young, writing in 'Christianity Today', found few enough books on the Old Testament to which he could give more than grudging approval, but one he did single out as 'perhaps the most significant and profound work on the prophets to appear in our generation' was J.Lindblom's Prophecy in Ancient Israel (Blackwell, 1962. 45s.) Incidentally, J.B.Phillips has turned his hand to translation of part of the Old Testament in Four Prophets: Amos, Hosea, Isaiah 1-39, Micah (Geoffrey Bles, 1963. 15s.)

On a popular and introductory level, there have been two additions to the Bible Guides series, Mr.H.L.Ellison, reviewing them together in 'The Life of Faith' said of 'B.W.Anderson's The Beginning of History that he never 'copes with how the histories of Genesis can really be the revelation of God, if we can have no assurance of their truth as history', and so would 'hesitate to put it into the hands of those for whom it has been particularly written'; but he could be much more positive about S.Gunn's Singers of Israel (both Lutterworth, 1963. 5s.); 'however ignorant the Christian reader may be of the psalms, he would find it hard not to be carried away by the author's enthusiasm.'

On a more technical level, a very considerable contribution to New Testament scholarship is being made by D.Guthrie, tutor at the London Bible College, with his (eventually) three volumes of New Testament Introduction (Tyndale Press, 1961/2. The first two volumes to appear are The Pauline Epistles and Hebrews to Revelation. 18s.6d. each). They are likely to be widely useful for their fairness both to Scripture and to the views of others, in questions of authorship, date, etc.

It is likely that many members will depend on a Bible dictionary for essential background information. Here there is no lack of choice, for recently there has been quite a spate of them: to mention but three of the conservative ones, there is the Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary (Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1963. 70s.) which represents mainly American scholarship, and is lavishly illustrated with photographs throughout; The New Bible Dictionary (IVF, 1962. 45s.) with its satisfying blend of scholarship, loyalty to Scripture and visual aids; and Morrish's New and Concise Bible Dictionary (Hammond Trust Bible Depot, 1963, 50s.), which is chiefly of historical interest for studying the views of dispensationalists in general and of early (exclusive) Brethren in particular (the new edition has not been revised in any way).

Other more specific biblical studies and commentaries on particular books are outside the scope of this preliminary article. It is to these that we will really want to turn for serious study of Scripture. But it is hoped that some of these widely differing books will at least serve to whet the appetite.

. D.S. Alexander.

NOT FROM THE BOOK SHELF

"David dancing before the Ark, being a brief Apology for Whitsun Ales, Stage-plays, Bear-Baiting, Morris-dancing, and all other Sports and Delectations which the sour-fac'd Melancholy of these times holdeth abominable" - by T.Y., London, 1638.

"A Reproof for taking the Ark of God into Battle, wherein Misochorus remonstrates with T.Y., who after the manner of Hophni and Phineas maketh men to abhor the offering of the Lord."

"The Hand of Uzzah stretch'd out to defend the Ark of God, in which a Warning is offer'd to Misochorus and all other the postilent sectaries by

whose means the Ark of God is kept out from its true Place and detain'd for this time at the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite" - by T.Y., London, 1640.

"The Ark of God carry'd by unserviceable oxen, that turn to the right and the left, and not upon the Narrow Way to Bethshemesh, lowing as they go; which lamentable lowings were lately publish'd by one that calleth himself T.Y."

"The Linen Ephod, wherein, namely in our Justification as Christian people, we do well to dance, yea and will dance, all canting and ranting of all melancholy Fanaticks notwithstanding" - by T.Y., London, 1642.

(This would seem to be a useful Bibliography in connection with the topic of this issue, but alas they only existed in the lively imagination of the late Ronald Knox. - Ed.)

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FROM THE MONITORS

"Encounter"

A review of "Honest to God" by Alasdair MacIntyre, described in the Times Lit. Supp. as 'the most percipient of the philosophical and linguistic confusions latent in the Bishop's mind', and a reply by the Bishop re-appear as chap.8 in "The Honest to God Debate" (SCM Paperback, 6/-).

In the October issue, Prof.D.M.MacKinnon seeks to rebut MacIntyre's charge of the powerlessness of the Christian ethic, and points out that the heart of Christianity is to be found in Christ, and that he has laid, in his work and person, the foundation for a specifically Christian ethic. But there is the problem of the precariousness of the historical image of the Lord: do the contingent propositions that we assert concerning him enjoy the sort of certainty we can properly ask in respect of these truths?

Will Herberg (November) distinguishes between speculative and existential atheism (MacIntyre had described Dr.Robinson as an atheist). He quotes Luther, Dostoevsky and John Dewey to show that all men have a god, even if it be an idol, and that on the existential level there are no atheists, only idolators. Our society may be post-Christian, but it is not post-religious.

"Time"

A letter in the July 13 issue on School Prayers in the USA ran: Sir: The Board of Regents' prayer was sectarian. It stated or implied four dogmas that form the basis for a well-defined doctrine: first, that a "God" exists; secondly, that there is only one such "God"; that this "God" was the creator of the universe; and lastly, that "God" hears such prayers and can intercede in human affairs to answer them. Here is an unambiguously stated credo for a sect that, no matter how large and inclusive it be, is still only a sect whose doctrine is not acceptable to all.

(Our thanks to Antony Dean and John England - Ed.)

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