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

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CHRISTIAN BRETHREN  
RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

# CONTENTS

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Prologue ... .. 3

Topic of the Issue—

## The Christian Home

Introduction ... ..	<i>D. H. Thompson</i> ... ..	5
Bible Study Groups in the Home	<i>J. M. Houston</i> ... ..	7
Home and the Preacher ... ..	<i>Mrs. Marion Timmins</i> ... ..	13
The Use of the Christian Home ... ..	<i>Mrs. C. W. M. Argent</i> ... ..	17

## Members' Section

Contribution:

Should a woman pray audibly  
in a Church Prayer Meeting— ... .. *B. C. Martin* ... .. 20

Correspondence: ... .. (*edited by J. Somerville-Meikle*) 25

The Bookshelf: ... .. *D. S. Alexander* ... .. 27

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*The Christian Brethren Research Fellowship*

# PROLOGUE

The first issue of the second year of the C.B.R.F. Journal has been delayed by the holiday season and by the demands of the new format. The rest has been good for us: in forcing us to re-examine our objectives. The membership of the Fellowship continues to grow, and is world-wide: for that we thank God, Who thus indicates for us a present usefulness. Plainly, there will be some who will conclude that our ideals and aims are not their own, and will not renew their membership. There are others who have found stimulation and encouragement from the Journal. That there should be such is a source of strength and encouragement.

A few local groups are already making progress in their studies, and others have projects in hand. This aspect of the Fellowship is a primary one, for it is in such groups and in individual studies that the title of a 'research' fellowship can be justified. Such groups need not consist only of members of C.B.R.F., but we hope that they will produce work suitable for the Journal. A group in Cambridge has already heard and discussed a series of most interesting papers on aspects of public worship. A group in Bournemouth is planning to commence work on some pertinent questions upon the testimony of assemblies, which were posed by Professor Fairbairn at the Annual Meeting. A group in South London is starting work on 'The Corporate Presentation of the Gospel by Assemblies'. Other groups are convening, and a number of individual members are starting personal study projects. Some of these we may later be able to embody in a series of Occasional Papers for wider publication.

In the meantime, the proposed sociological survey of assemblies has been postponed because of the removal of a key worker. It will be brought forward at a later date, when those who have expressed interest in it will be approached.

Our ambition is that men and women of God may be strengthened, and their minds opened to new thoughts and fresh insights into the present truth of God. There exists among Christian Brethren today a crisis of leadership, the outcome of which will decide whether they go

forward to new and enlarged usefulness within the Church of God, or wither into discarded uselessness. At such a time, obscurantism and the spirit of heresy hunting are not merely regrettable eccentricities: they can be a sin against the light. If we begin to understand just a little of the implications of the freedoms to which Brethren ideals point, there open up exciting vistas of what might be: of service and of opportunity beyond present imaginings. To embrace that vision requires both courage and faith. The courage is to risk being wrong: it is to be prepared to bring our most cherished beliefs and prepossessions into the searching light of truth, and there render them anew, as potent tools for use in a challenging world: it is to take those same renewed convictions out into the turmoil and contradiction of the world, with the assurance of victory in Christ: it is to welcome opposition as the whetstone of God, and to face misunderstanding and misrepresentation from those who believe they are doing God service, and those to whom a cheap sneer is the end of discussion.

For regression is always tragically present, as K. G. Hyland reminded us in our fourth issue. Even as this is written, a report reaches us of a much used and internationally known evangelist from South America, who on returning to his homeland has been repudiated by a group of assemblies for no other reason than that he has shared the fellowship of the Gospel with Christians of other denominations. When will men of courage arise to condemn such foolishness for the blatant sin that it is?

To embrace the vision requires faith as well: the faith that lies in setting out on a road that is strange and infested, or in launching out into the deep and letting down our nets. If we are to set out so, then it must be in a spirit of true compassion and of genuine concern for our brother. He who takes the path of courage, enters a path of danger. When he stumbles or seems foolish, then let us recognise him as greater than ourselves, for in his venturing he has dared where we dared not. The scornful and the timid will point the finger, and incite us to turn and rend him. If we do, we deny the Lord Who bought us.

A mole (not being blind) peered shortsightedly from a hole in his bank, at two skylarks which scuttled in the grass below. He peered with a pang of jealousy, and when one fell victim to a predator, the mole turned back with self-congratulation into the reassuring blindness of his tunnel. That was why he never heard the joyful song of the other bird which attained the open heaven. Worse; he had never looked up, and did not even know that that heaven existed.

# THE CHRISTIAN HOME

## Introduction

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

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

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

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

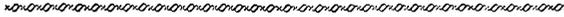
A unique feature of this edition of the Journal is that two of the articles have been written by ladies. Their approach is very refreshing and, after all, what is more natural than for a woman to be the one to speak of the things upon which, as Hannah Moore once wrote, 'the almost sacred joys of home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

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

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

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

DAVID H. THOMPSON



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

BONHOEFFER



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

A. HERBERT GRAY



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

WERNER AND LOTTE PELZ

# **B I B L E S T U D Y G R O U P S**

## ***in the Home***

by J. M. Houston

World events seem to indicate that Christianity is entering a period of great peril. Its relevance is being questioned more freely than ever before. If we Christians do not face up realistically to the immediate challenges of our age, we may well find ourselves shunted into an anachronistic situation. Increasingly, Christian testimony must demonstrate its qualities of life, and not merely its quantitative influences of public expression, widespread evangelism, Bible translations, denominational membership, church meetings, etc. Secularism has driven great rifts between knowledge and morals, enabling man to escape the need of committal to a line of action. And it is when Christians indulge in much talk and show lack of personal devotion to principles, that they too exhibit secularism. We may rightly suspect the emphasis of some on orthodoxy and right belief as matters to be held for their own sake, instead of expressing a living, dynamic faith relevant for all aspects of life. The importance of home-based Christianity is thus vital, far more so than the nominal attendance at places of public worship. For if we rely essentially on public worship for our faith, instead of making it the expression of our private devotion to God, it will sooner or later become barren and empty.

### **Perils Confronting Christian Fellowship**

The loving relationships men and women show each other in a local church are the normative way God uses through His Spirit to testify of His grace. 'See how those Christians love one another', is not just an estimable sentiment; it should be the mark of all Christian communities. We need therefore to beware of the worldly temptation to define Christian fellowship in terms of social acceptability. Snobbery and status-seeking are not merely harmless indulgences. They reflect self-centred anxiety and the modern tyranny of success. Not only do they disrupt Christian fellowship; they breed infectiously. Even more difficult sometimes to overcome is inverted snobbery, when resentment, envy, and inferiority complexes destroy genuine fellowship.

Another peril to Christian fellowship is the fostering of the local church as an in-group. That is to say a group that is so conservative in its attitude to outsiders, so established as a huddle, so preoccupied with its own club life, that the stranger is not genuinely welcomed for his own sake, and no effective outreach is made in the neighbourhood. The attachment of

such a group to confessional principles is usually due far more to traditional loyalty than to immediate, personal experience. Its theological position is in fact much more a rationalisation of unconscious motives of fear and self-preservation, than evidence of dynamic principles of faith. This is today, I believe, the greatest peril that faces many of our assemblies.

A third danger lies in the fragmentation of our lives. We need to emphasise far more than we do a coherent view of life. Whenever we fear what other people think of us, or are directed more by social acceptability than by personal integrity, then we tend to fragment our own personalities. The abuse of jargon in theological discourse, the undue attachment to public meetings as against private devotions, the endless discourses on theology for their own sake, the priority given to the platform as *the* Christian ministry, all tend to make our Christianity an artificial segment of daily life. In the so-called secular content of our life, we do not think Christianly. No wonder many Christians are quite inarticulate to communicate the experience of the in-dwelling Christ to their non-Christian colleagues and neighbours.

There is in consequence much personal sickness. Much mental pain and psychological suffering is today being quite untouched by our church life. Some of us are insensitive to such a need, for sensitivity to the needs of others is not universally developed. Personal problems are often deeply mysterious, and we feel baffled, if not frightened to intervene. They involve much love, much patience, much time. Yet unless we face up to the neuroses of modern life, we may well find their need makes our superficial concepts of Christian fellowship a shallow, irrelevant affair of mere appearances. Modern man often finds himself a mere unit in an impersonal crowd. We dwell in the midst of homogenized products, of faceless society, of masks that pass for persons. Yet we deny the very authenticity of our faith if we do not resist these principalities and powers of modern life. For where else do we find more profound meaning given to personal relations and to the morality of the personality than in Christianity? Nowhere else is there provided such a framework of common shared experience of love. Nowhere else is there such a power for coping with the daily problems of life.

### **The Therapy of Small Groups**

If then our churches are not meeting all the needs of modern life, we must be prepared to consider what else is needed. The tragic dilemma of the history of Christianity seems to be that its very success in attracting large numbers suffocates it. It is a well known feature of large churches that personal values tend to be destroyed, personal initiative, devotedness, service tend to be diminished. This however, will be less likely, if a church is honeycombed with small groups that act as intermediate units between the whole church and the family. The value of such intimate units has been recognised in many walks of life: in industry, in the armed forces, in the rehabilitation of prisoners, in University instruction, etc. In the great Methodist Revival of the eighteenth century, the class was such a group system that enabled the intimacy of personal relatedness and the

development of private devotions to be fostered. We could well study the effectiveness of the class on the spread of domestic Christianity in Wesley's day.

Group membership is valuable only in proportion as it is personal in quality. If it fosters respect and consideration for other people, if it enables us to begin to understand others, if loving relations are promoted, then it is worth having. In larger social circles, such as a whole church fellowship, we shall find it much more difficult to do this, and fellowship will tend to be increasingly superficial as the numbers grow. The small group of some 12-15 people however, enables all to participate in discussion, helps to remove 'Spectatorship', leads to frank and more realistic conversation, and promotes personal understanding. Thus in a lonely world, where people can feel alienated at so many levels, the group can be a loving fellowship of acceptance, understanding, and relatedness.

However, to function as a group, there must be a mutual objective that transcends all differences of social standing, of intellectual status, of personal temperament. A Bible study group gives this supremely, when the concern is to know the Lord sanctified in our personalities (1 Pet. 3, 15). It has been noted by historians that what preserved Jewry from being assimilated by Hellenisation and other cultures was not the priesthood for this aristocratic class often favoured such very trends. It was the Torah which served as the focal point around which the people could be rallied. The same is true with Christians today. If the faith once delivered to the saints were left to the hands of the theologians, our survival might be indeed precarious. As groups of simple believers however gather around the Word, to let it speak to their needs and lives, its power to transform human lives and to keep them will be found as efficacious as it has always been in the history of the Church.

Prior to the invention of printing and later the spread of literacy, the mass of Christians was dependent upon the few to read and to interpret the Scriptures. Even so, as Prof. Harnack has shown in his work, *Bible Reading in the Early Church*, this practice early began to have a marked effect upon pagan educational ideals. The self education of men like John Bunyan is also well known. However, in our educated age, the spread of literacy has reduced far more the need of monologue, and encourages the exercise of dialogue. Independence of mind makes man distrust much more the utterances of the pulpit, itself a creation of the Reformation. There is also an increasing prejudice, on the part of the non-religious, to the church as a valid institution. Many believe sincerely, that they can best express their honesty and integrity if they keep away from the church. Many have been stumbled by much apparent irrelevance of tradition, of superficiality of doctrine, and of personal inconsistencies among church-goers. The home thus has a neutral value to many prejudiced against church life. Within the home group all can feel free to participate in discussion, without feeling the restraint to keep silent, and having liberty to dissent or agree with the discussion. This freedom exercises greater realism and practical application of truth to the daily problems of life.

## Types of Bible Study Groups

Home Bible study groups can take various forms. Three may be mentioned. In our own local church, we have divided the mid-week ministry meeting into small groups, meeting in several homes. The purpose is biblical instruction for believers. Notes are prepared beforehand for each occasion. Particularly helpful has been the policy to take up the subject of Bible ministry, given the previous Sunday morning. This consists of systematic instruction given each Sunday for half an hour before the Breaking of Bread service. To be able to reconsider this ministry in open discussion has proved most useful. The close encounter within the group has enabled a more personal understanding and sympathy for other people and the break down of prejudices, so knitting the fellowship closer together. To prevent the groups from forming cliques against each other, all groups meet together every five or six weeks for an introduction or conclusion to the series of Bible studies. If one particular evening is not convenient for some to meet together, then this could be a reason for another group to be formed. The personal informality and friendliness of these groups have attracted others to join, especially lonely women attached to the Women's meeting who may not yet be committed Christians.

Another type of group discussion is a 'school for personal evangelism', where training is given in making contacts and witness to non-Christians. This could also be related to elementary instruction in pastoral counselling, dealing with personal problems such as frustration, inferiority complexes, loneliness, depression, anxiety, etc. The purpose of such groups is to 'teach to teach others also'. Out of such a group a whole series of cells could grow within an area for purposes of neighbourhood evangelism.

Neighbourhood Bible study groups for purposes of evangelism are thus a third type of group meeting. An organised rally of evangelism in a district may well be viewed with suspicion by the local residents. Why this sudden blitz on them with tracts, with loud-speakers, tent meetings, etc.? This whole enterprise may appear to them ephemeral, concerned only with their 'souls', and not with themselves as whole persons. This is where neighbourhood group Bible studies can be so effective. People feel they belong genuinely to the group, where their personal problems, interests, outlooks can be considered, and where they can make friendships and be accepted. To start such a group in your neighbourhood, do so naturally among neighbours, parents of your children's friends, or those you sense have needs, such as those who crave acceptability, lonely people, or concerned anxiously about life in some way known to you. Let other members of the group do recruiting, so that you do not control it with all your own contacts. Certainly do not let too many Christians join it, or else you may tend to frighten off non-Christians. Take time to prepare for each session, and pray much about it beforehand. Let it be seen by your neighbours that your Christian faith is not just a hobby for Sundays, but integrated within all the problems of daily life and all its social contacts.

## Conducting the Bible Study Groups

Much skill and humility are required on the part of the leaders of such groups, especially if used for neighbourhood evangelism. Never give the impression such groups are for experts. Assume much ignorance and avoid the lecture. Do not let the group think you are pontificating all truth. Let them feel they are getting it for themselves. Wherever possible let all who are willing take turns each week in leading the discussion. They will learn most who seek to teach. Avoid the inductive approach, which is the starting point of rigid orthodoxy. This is the skilled approach of the cultists such as Jehovah's Witnesses. At best this leaves the student armed with a denominational theology, rather than with a personal experience of the Bible. Rather use the deductive method, by raising questions that come naturally to mind from the passage. This approach assumes that what the Bible itself says is of far more importance to us than what we think it should be saying. If you convey the impression of having an open mind, then you are much more likely to get frank, open discussion from the rest of the group. It is easy to kill the truth; much more difficult to keep it alive (2 Cor. 3, 6). Try to apply your technical knowledge of the Scriptures therefore to life situations.

In handling discussion the group leader should try to be as inconspicuous as possible and not to monopolise the discussion. Stimulate discourse and enquiry by turning your significant observations, interpretations and applications into questions addressed to the group generally. But beware of the barrage of technical questions that leave your victim humiliated in ignorance. The discussion is not an exhibition ready staged for the excellence of the leader's knowledge. Make sure that no member is allowed to become offensive to the group; if so talk to him or her privately, and if necessary do so firmly. Distinguish between the poverty pauses when help is needed, from those occasions of fruitful silence when the challenge of the Word is being felt.

Do not attempt too crudely to distinguish between groups aimed at evangelism from those whose primary purpose is Bible study for Christians. Sometimes the latter may be more effective for non-Christians if they feel they are not being got at in discussion. Try not to be patronising to the non-Christians, either by hospitality or by information imparted. It is often a good thing to permit non-Christians in the group to feel it as expected of them, as much as anyone else, to share hospitality in rotation as the group meets from house to house. Sometimes the most exciting contacts are made in this way, as such a hostess can introduce her friends on this occasion. Do not choke the non-Christians in argument; if need be, let them say all they want, so that you know how they feel and react. In the early stages of such a group it is vital the leader should be a good listener. Do not be tempted to pack a drawing-room with a crowd and thereby think it a success. If need be, commence other groups with people who would not naturally fit together. The small group is essential if you want all to benefit deeply and personally. If the group lack much knowledge of the Bible, it is best to work systematically through a book

like Mark's or John's Gospel. Always have extra copies of a new translation to hand, and if need be take as long as the embarrassed searcher, who is opening the Bible for perhaps the first time in years. Usually the leader for a particular session should not be the host or hostess. Then it is realised the home is being lent for that evening. Then non-leaders will feel freer to offer their homes also. For purposes of evangelism make it quite clear that the neighbourhood group is inter-denominational. It is best that prominent local Christian leaders should not be directly active in promoting personally and publicly such groups.

### **Advantages of Group Discussions**

Such groups meet people where they are, in their own homes. They create an atmosphere of informality that promotes friendships and alleviates the problem of loneliness. People can ask questions that they would feel too simple or stupid to ask in larger gatherings or from their minister, if they go to church. And you may well find that people who never go to church come along. As people study the Bible they begin to see that it really speaks to them in ways a sermon may never have done. The knowledge of the Christian is deepened realistically, for he is undistracted by any sermon structure or mere curiosity about the preacher. It is often a much clearer presentation of the relations of Scripture to life. Friendships are forged that make the participants feel they have never quite experienced such genuine fellowship before. Conditions are much more favourable for the elimination of prejudices that can remain harboured within the larger group of the church for years.

Some however may feel that there is one major disadvantage of group meetings in homes. What about the future of church meetings, if so much home activity is allowed to grow? Some of us have developed a strange superstition that the presence of the Lord is in some way especially with us when we come together 'as an assembly'. Why should not the promise of 'where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst' apply to the smaller group? Those local churches however that have developed group Bible study have found that instead of draining away the strength of the local church, rather they have promoted its well-being. For such a cellular structure of internal groups, within a church and a neighbourhood, integrates true fellowship, eliminates mere spectatorship, and enables the leaders to know far more effectively what others feel and what their problems really are. They can therefore arrange the public ministry of the church accordingly. As personal witness and therefore evangelism are so encouraged, the worship of the church will be improved. There will be more interest in the corporate prayer-life, for there will be more requests known and answered. The church will tend to become more outward-looking and less introverted. Perhaps the failure of so many of our Gospel services to-day is an indication that new means are needed, less dependent on one man, the speaker, and much more on the church as a whole. Group meetings point to the great need to-day to integrate far more our home-life with our church-life. When we do this we may find non-Christians far readier to listen to us.

# HOME and the PREACHER

by Mrs. Marion Timmins

You might be tempted to say to yourself as you read this article, 'This has obviously been written by a woman; no man would express himself in such a way'. This is actually what I have been asked to do—write from the woman's point of view about the Preacher and Home Responsibilities. It is not easy to conduct our relationships in the home according to principles set out in the New Testament when a very different atmosphere prevails between the sexes to-day. The term 'Scripture Principles' becomes important, and although detailed application of these principles are individual matters, it is important for every home to have a policy, well thought out, Bible-based, yet in keeping with contemporary life and thought. A 'Victorian' husband and father is as much out of place as is a wife who 'wears the trousers'. Married couples without children can get by without a proper policy, but no couple with teen-age children can do so. We need to know what the Bible teaches, what are the principles contained in what it says, and how they should be applied in our homes.

Women are not always articulate, and many can feel resentment and a sense of being ill-used without being able to explain why. Not all men have the patience or the sensitivity to understand their wives' needs and outlook. Christian service should never be undertaken at the cost of an unhappy Christian home. I would like therefore to suggest some safeguards, as well as some considerations for husbands and wives to think over together before the Lord.

Scripture teaches clearly that in the Church spiritual gifts are to be recognised and encouraged. 'Think your way to a sober estimate based on the measure of faith that God has dealt to each of you . . . The gifts we possess differ as they are allotted to us by God's grace and must be exercised accordingly . . .' (Rom. 12, 3 and 6. N.E.B.) It is essential that in the home, no less than in the church, spiritual gifts should be recognised. This sounds obvious, but I can never recall hearing it expressed in so many words. Wives are sometimes proud of their husbands' ability as speakers; or feel resentful because someone else's husband is a better speaker. Sometimes a wife gets out of sympathy with her husband's point of view; or even feels hard done by, because she is confined so much to the home while he is out preaching. If husband and wife together, as fellow-members of a local church, recognise that one or other (or maybe both) have special gifts allotted to them by God and that these gifts are to be exercised in the fear of the Lord, then they are likely to avoid the difficulties experienced by those who ignore such basic New Testament principles.

When it has been recognised by both that the husband's gift lies in ministering the Word of God in the local church and in a wider sphere as he may find opportunity, there should be mutual agreement as to the extent of his commitments. Many husbands are careful about this, but it does not seem to enter the heads of many others that their wives may actually have an opinion on the matter. A good wife will undoubtedly have an opinion! If she treats her husband's gift from the Lord seriously, she will be as keen as he is that he fulfils it adequately, but she will bear in mind other practical considerations which are referred to in later paragraphs. If a husband ignores his wife's point of view he loses a great deal. He loses the close feeling of shared service which the right attitude fosters. He can become such a law unto himself that he is less well-qualified to fulfil his ministry, and his character can be so affected that he may actually cause problems in the local church. His full diary can make him bumptious and self-opinionated. He can be preaching elsewhere so often that he opts out of the day to day discipline and problems of the local church. Worst of all from the family angle, his wife can well become a nagger. Complaining, nagging, frustrated women are often made that way by neglectful, insensitive husbands who think they are doing God service by ignoring their home responsibilities.

If the first need is to recognise gift in the home circle, and to be sure there is agreement between husband and wife as to the scope and extent of its use, along with this must also go the husband's concern for the spiritual well-being of his family. In a bye-gone age the husband was thought of as the family priest, responsible to God for all under his roof. Today the spirit of independence is so rife that husbands seem willing to abdicate their spiritual responsibilities; even family prayers are by no means a feature of all christian homes. It hardly honours the Lord for a man to be found here and there in christian service whilst his wife remains at home spiritually lethargic, and even in extreme cases quite ignorant in christian matters. This may sound like overstating the case, but many neglected wives will come to mind as these words are read and pondered: I have known of husbands who get up early to study the Word for themselves, who are systematic and diligent, yet take it for granted that their wives only read the Scripture Union portion. In the early years of married life the effects of this may not be too noticeable, but as the years go by they become apparent. The husband and wife find that they are unable to maintain much spiritual conversation. They no longer speak the same language. In fact this becomes one of the most fruitful sources of trouble in a church—women members who have nothing better to think of than gossip and scandal. Very few men trace the cause back to its frequent origin—a husband careless about his wife's spiritual condition. 'To sum up, be one in thought and feeling . . .' (1 Peter 3, 8; N.E.B.)

Closely connected with the husband's responsibility to his wife is his responsibility to his children. When the children are young and his wife is one with him in his desire to serve the Lord, the preacher may be away from home a great deal with little damage to his parental relationship. As

times goes on, however, a father's presence is needed more and more. There may have to be further adjustment here—a recognition that a programme which was suitable a few years ago will not do now. Of course a wise mother is a bridge between a busy father and his growing children, explaining, advising, excusing, helping each to see the other's point of view. A possible danger here is for a mother to become possessive, so taken up with the children and glad to have their confidence, that she slowly (and perhaps unintentionally) alienates their affection from their father. A preacher, respected for his ministry in the locality, would be a sad man indeed if he lost the respect of his own family. Some have found the answer in common family interests and hobbies. I knew a family who all booked Thursday evenings once a month as a day when they did things together. They enjoyed cricket, rounders, or less strenuous outdoor pursuits in the summer, including trips into the country with a picnic basket. And the father was a tired commuter too. In the winter there was Lexicon, Kan-u-go and other games suitable for the age groups represented.

Frequent adjustments have to be made bearing in mind the responsibilities of the preacher's secular calling which may increase as he gets older; the lessening of his physical powers; the growing or grown-up family which may well mean that in turn his children and then his wife need him more. God's calling is not a once and for all immutable thing. What was His will for us in our twenties may not be the way when we are in our forties or fifties. The ardent young evangelist of twenty years ago might have drifted outside the Lord's will for him if his diary today has become full of nothing but Gospel meeting bookings.

The title of this article is not meant to lead us to the assumption that all preaching is the exclusive province of the men. I suggested in an earlier paragraph that husband and wife should together recognise spiritual gift, whether it be in one or other or in both. When the woman has an unmistakable ministry given to her from the Lord there may well be further problems in the home. If both are gifted, and conflict should arise, are not scriptural principles as to the relations between husband and wife maintained by the wife giving place to her husband? This is not likely to happen very often. Usually in her sphere among women and girls a wife is busy when her husband is at business and the children at school. In the case of Sunday afternoon classes, a husband may find himself regularly drying the lunch dishes, or even doing all the washing-up to set his wife free for the service to which she has been called. He may come home to a cold evening meal because she has been unable to get back from an afternoon meeting in time to cook. One husband known to me is even prepared occasionally to use public transport so that his wife can use the family car in the course of her christian service! The need is for the husband to recognise his wife's gifts and calling and not look on her work as a "hobby" and therefore something vastly different from his own christian service. This again can be an unconscious, and therefore unrecognised lack in a husband's outlook.

For the woman, however gifted, husband, family and home must always come first. 'Each must order his life according to the gift the Lord has granted him and his condition when God called him'. (1 Cor. 7, 17. N.E.B.) Paul is quite explicit that those who become wives and mothers cannot serve the Lord with the same freedom and singleness of mind that was theirs as single women. Even with her husband's warmest support she must see to it that her priorities remain unimpaired. It is a scandal to the testimony of any local church if a woman is mistaken enough to neglect her rightful place in the home for a wider sphere of service. Most women find no tension so long as they can count on the support of their husbands.

Incidentally, and apart from spiritual considerations, a home can be enriched when the wife and mother is exercised to fulfil a ministry before the Lord. The mental discipline involved, the wider circle of contacts, the chance to express herself outside the home, all help to develop her personality, so that she can become a more interesting and intelligent companion for her husband, and for her children a mother who is 'with it'.

The finest example of a husband and wife partnership in Scripture is that between Aquila and Priscilla. The six references to them are well worth studying. Sometimes the wife's name is mentioned first, sometimes the husband's, but never is one mentioned without the other. There must have been perfect understanding between them. Understanding of the Lord's Will for them, and of what that Will meant in the daily life which they shared in the home as well as in the church.

Paul still says to all Preachers, 'Do not be conceited or think too highly of yourself, but think your way to a sober estimate based on the measure of faith that God has dealt to each of you . . . With unflagging energy, in ardour of spirit, serve the Lord'. (Romans 12, 3 and 11. N.E.B.)

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Executives try to be dutiful husbands and parents, and they are well aware that their absorption in work means less time with their family even when they are physically with them. They often mention some long-term project they plan to do with their boy, like building a boat with him in the garage. But, they add ruefully, they probably never will. 'I sort of look forward to the day my kids are grown up', one sales manager said, 'Then I won't have such a guilty conscience about neglecting them'.

WILLIAM WHYTE, *The Organisation Man*

I will therefore that the younger women . . . guide the house. (Gk. *oikodespotein*: look it up!)

ST. PAUL. *The First Letter to Timothy*

# The use of the Christian Home

by Mrs. C. W. M. Argent

A home is ideally a place where two people live together making a common life, each finding in the common experience fulfilment and happiness—a place from which they can go with the strength to meet the day, and to which they return to find peace and renewal together. A Christian home is this, plus the added depth which comes from the knowledge that the Lord is there, to Whom both partners owe a first loyalty—before even their loyalty to one another.

The Christian marriage is subject to all the hazards of any other marriage. A Christian wife does not get any less tired in caring for small children, nor does her housekeeping money stretch any further. In fact the very reality of their dedication may bring to a Christian couple strains which others do not have to cope with, for instance, where a husband feels he should do a good deal of work outside the home, leaving the wife with the main burden of domestic detail, and the loss of her husband's company quite often. But the Christian couple know where to turn for help in the small and practical details of their life together, as well as in the big issues.

Most Christian couples want their home to be a centre of witness, and there are many diverse ways in which this can be a reality.

Most couples who have any interest in youth work will know how necessary it is to have an open door, for their house to be known as one where any of 'the group' of younger ones can come and feel welcomed and accepted for what they are in themselves, without feeling that they are regarded only as potential converts. Many of the young people in our youth groups today have no Christian influence in their background, and have never been in the atmosphere of a Christian home. The difference is first felt and observed, and afterwards understood. Many young people want and need a place where they can come and talk, air their ideas, stretch themselves mentally, and not be preached at. A great deal can be done by means of this kind of hospitality. It is marvellous to watch a group over the years, of seemingly unpromising material, to note the gradual change in manner of speech, general appearance and manners, the gradual understanding of Christian values, to see the boy/girl friendships developing, to see reception into Church membership, to be invited to their weddings and to see the beginnings of new Christian homes.

Newly-married couples can do quite as much along this line as those who are more mature. Young people will often turn with their problems to someone just a *few* years older than themselves, who they feel will not

be too old or too 'square' to understand how they feel. Youthful callers will enjoy sitting at a happy meal table, but they will appreciate much more the fact of being welcome in the home of those who value their company, and in whom they find the friendship which may not be available to them in their own homes.

Children of Christian parents sometimes prefer to consult grown-ups outside the family. It may be that the need is simply to have the moral implications of parents' belief and teaching explained in fresh terms. For such young people, the right mental atmosphere for self-expression may be a small group gathered in a Christian home to discuss informally and freely the basic beliefs of the Christian faith, and their application to the moral or amoral world of school, college, office or factory.

But apart from group work—so worth while, but costly in terms of patience, time and wear-and-tear on one's home—probably more is done as *individuals* feel that here is a door on which they can knock and be welcomed just to talk. It is not easy or convenient to be always available, but we must never convey the impression of hustle or impatience. However late at night a person knocks on your door, the very lateness of the hour means that the problem to be talked over seems to him urgent and important, however it looks to you. The caller may have come straight to you from the shattering experience of having his girl-friend turn him down. It may be the caller may be a Christian girl whose non-Christian boy-friend has made demands she cannot meet, or she has met them and has come with the disastrous consequences to seek help from the person to whom she feels she can turn.

We should not limit the use of our home to our recognised Christian activities, but always be looking for the 'odd' opportunity. A young 'Mum' attending a baby clinic usually becomes friendly with others in the same group. An invitation to a friendly cup of tea can be not only the beginning of lasting friendship but of insight into a different way of life, as conversation reveals Christian standards at work in the ordinary affairs of daily life.

There are foreign and coloured students at our colleges and in our hospitals who are very lonely, and would appreciate a home where they could come during off-duty time, not necessarily to be evangelised or hustled off to meetings, or hymn-singing sessions, but to enjoy rest and relaxation, to write letters, to read in quietness, or just to talk. When one considers the temptations there are for young people very far from their homes, we should be willing to open our doors to them as often as possible. We once had a disastrous experience along this line. We had invited a group of coloured nurses to our home, and three arrived—charming girls. Another guest staying in our home at the time, whom we thought we could trust to deal gently with them, evidently thought we weren't likely to 'wave the flag' vigorously enough, and started on them within a few minutes of their arrival, enquiring what would happen if they were 'suddenly hurled into eternity!!' Needless to say, we never saw those girls again.

In the cold light of the next morning, they probably thought they had been unfairly got at—which they had. The sad thing was that not only did we lose contact with that particular group, but could not make any approach to other girls in that institution, for surely the word would be passed round.

Most of us can from time to time offer a few days' rest and convalescence to someone who has been ill. Just supposing someone comes into our home on these terms, is given kindness and care, but nothing is said beyond grace at meals—no public prayer or reading, or hymn-singing. No-one should be able to be in our home for a week without recognising that here is something different, and being ready to question. This is a much better basis for spiritual conversation than the feeling that guests are being got at, and can't do much about it because they *are guests*.

There are many elder brethren who think and say a great deal about the Christian's separation from the world, but there are others of us who believe that a Christian should have a social conscience, and be very much involved in questions and causes which concern the well-being of his neighbours, in the widest sense. These interests often involve meetings of committees, etc., which can be invited to the home. There are many non-Christians who think of committed Christians as something a bit peculiar, and this is a good way of showing that Christians, and even P.B's, are just ordinary people—plus.

All our interests, business, social, home, Church, should be equally dedicated, and the uses to which our homes are put can be effective in showing just what this means. But a Christian couple can only show as much as is *there*. You can't show outside more warmth and friendliness, and love, and spirituality than exists between the people living in the home, and every Christian couple should be conscious of the need for the daily tending of their relationship, so that they learn with and from each other, and together deepen and nourish the friendship between them, that they may have more to give.

We took it as a compliment when an Anglican friend said: 'I'm glad I've met you. I have always thought the Brethren must be very peculiar people, but *you're really quite normal!*'

## MEMBERS' SECTION

Contributions and Correspondence on matters raised in the Journal should reach the Correspondence Editor, 229 Village Way, Beckenham, Kent, within four weeks of the Journal being received.

### C O N T R I B U T I O N

Should a woman pray audibly in a  
Church Prayer Meeting?

What saith the Scripture?

*from B. C. MARTIN*

To help us arrive at a correct and unbiased answer, we must set this question against the whole Bible background. We men must at all costs avoid rushing, at the slightest provocation, to supposedly cast-iron proof-texts which we think we've heard someone else quote as being unequivocal prohibitions—as if we positively enjoyed keeping women in, what we consider to be, their place.

As a matter of fact there is no explicit and specific prohibition in Scripture in relation to women praying audibly in church prayer meetings; of which more anon.

For the moment let us reflect that the subjection of woman to man dates, not from the coming of Christ into the world, but from Creation. In other words it is inherent in nature, by God's ordinance. Hence Paul in seeking to correct abuses in the infant church, appeals not to Christ but to Genesis in such words as 'Adam was first formed, then Eve' (1 Tim. 2.13); 'The man is not of the woman but the woman of the man; neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man' (1 Cor. 11.8/9); 'Is it comely . . . doth not even nature itself teach you . . .?' (1 Cor. 11.13/14). The subjection of woman to man then is not a characteristically Christian concept in the sense that something new is being introduced, or a new emphasis is being laid on something which had been forgotten. On the contrary, Christ emancipated women from a vassalage that man in his departure from God brought about, and that went far beyond God's ordinance for the regulation of human life. The complementary nature of the relationship had been forgotten. Hence we have Paul saying 'Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman neither the woman without the man in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman: but all things of God' (1 Cor. 11.11/12).

Not that Christianity sets aside God's original order—that is the whole point of the references to the question in 1 Corinthians 11 and 14 and 1 Timothy 2,—and Galatians 3.28 cannot be made to contradict it. 'There is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus', as the context shows, means that all the spiritual blessing made possible to mankind by the atoning death of Jesus Christ is available alike both to man and woman. It does not abrogate God's original decree that man is 'head of the woman', and has been invested with an authority which must not be usurped. Indeed that relationship is explicitly set forth in Christian marriage: 'Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the church' (Eph. 5.22/23). This beautiful relationship based on love and reverence and as so wonderfully exemplified in the relationship between Christ and the church is a picture of the relationship which should exist generally between brethren and sisters in the church.

But in the infant Church the matter was misunderstood. Some women were misinterpreting their newly-won emancipation as putting them on equal footing with men in the public matters of the local church. This perhaps is not surprising when we remember, as we always should remember, that both men and women were endowed with the gifts of the Spirit. Peter reminds us that when 'They were all filled with the Holy Ghost' on the day of Pentecost, this was a fulfilment of Joel's prophecy: 'Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy . . . and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit and they shall prophesy' (Acts 2. 17/18).

The injunctions in 1 Cor. 11 and 14 and 1 Tim. 2 surely are for the express purpose of correcting the erroneous idea that this inducement cancelled God's original ordinance, and of restoring the scriptural status quo as regards the basic man-woman relationship.

One of the spiritual gifts in the infant Church—though not so prominent since the completion of the Canon of Scripture—was the gift of 'prophesy'—the uttering of some immediate revelation from God. This was bestowed on women as well as men. The four virgin daughters of Philip are an example of this (Acts 21. 8/9). But at Corinth there were women who prophesied unveiled which in that community would signify not only an attempt at equality with man, but a certain brazenness. This is rebuked by the Apostle Paul. (1 Cor. 11.5) but he does not rebuke the prophesying. Incidentally it might be pertinent to remark here that a modern hat has not the same significance as an Eastern veil; and that it is doubtful whether modern moderate hair styles have any connection with the 'shorn' head of 1 Cor. 11. Exactly the same state of affairs applies to women praying,—in public of course, as it is bracketed with prophesying in this way—'Every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered'. The significant removing of the veil was rebuked, but *not the praying*; for the simple reason that the audible prayer of women cannot by any stretch of imagination be said to be a usurpation of man's authority nor a breach of that subjection incumbent upon women.

Similarly in 1 Timothy 2 which opens with the subject of prayer—'I exhort therefore that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made . . .'—men and women are referred to separately. As if to correct well known failings, men, when they lead in prayer are exhorted to do it 'without wrath and doubtings' (v. 8). 'In like manner', women must not dress ostentatiously and are forbidden 'to teach' or 'to usurp authority over the man' (v. 12). Is it not extremely significant that in this most extended of all passages dealing with public prayer, women are not forbidden to pray but to teach? Surely if it were the Lord's mind that women should not pray audibly, we should find in this context both of prayer and the deportment of women, an express prohibition—but we do not find this. If it is pressed that women are enjoined 'to be in silence' surely this must be related to the context. It cannot be maintained that 'silence' either here or in 1 Cor. 14.34 is intended to mean absolute silence of an arbitrary kind, which of course would preclude also singing. The context in both cases is 'teaching', 'speaking' involving a usurpation of man's authority, and the silence is in relation to these i.e. *not* teaching, *not* speaking. If it further be urged that praying is speaking, we must make careful reference to the 'speaking' alluded to in 1 Cor. 14. It certainly cannot mean prayer, which is not in the context at all, but rather has reference to the matters mentioned in vv. 26-33 and perhaps also (as we may infer from vv. 34-35) the habit that some women developed of interrupting by asking questions. It is significant that both 1 Tim. 2 and 1 Cor. 14 stress that women should 'learn' in silence: 'Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection' (1 Tim. 2.11) and 'If they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church' (1 Cor. 14.35). This speaking must not be applied to prayer which is absent from the context, and is governed by different principles, inasmuch as no insubordination is involved, as is in teaching. It is man's prerogative, as ordained by God, to make pronouncements in the church. Women are thereby precluded from holding any office in the church which involves government, and from teaching in church assemblies.

But PRAYER? Is this not an entirely different matter? What has PRAYER to do with these possible exercises of women which usurp man's authority? Nothing whatever!

Many local churches have lost much through an indiscriminate grouping together of functions that are fundamentally different. To get prayer put in the 'silence', we should have to prove that audible prayer on the part of women was a usurpation of man's authority. But can we? Why should we *want* to?

We have referred to Christian marriage with the mutual duties entailed as set forth in the New Testament as being a particular example of the general relationship which should exist between Christian men and women. In the part of man towards the woman—honour, consideration. On the part of woman towards the man—subjection, obedience, reverence.

This relationship is beautifully set forth in 1 Peter 3, 1-7 where these reciprocal duties are envisaged as being rendered in the recognition and atmosphere of 'being heirs together of the grace of life' (v. 7) i.e. as in Christ where there is 'neither male nor female': and to the end 'that your prayers be not hindered'. The man and the woman praying audibly together evidently is not something conceived as being a breach of the woman's subjection; but rather as something unspeakably precious bound up as it is with that lovely concept 'heirs together of the grace of life'.

And so in the church, men and women are 'heirs together of the grace of life'. As we have seen certain public functions belong to man only as being 'head'. But this must not obscure the fact that all believers (men and women) have the Spirit, all are priests, all have a ministry to discharge, all must pray. Men and women in Christ have the same spiritual potentialities, the same access to the Father, the same spirit-given urge to voice their requests.

A child speaking to his or her Father is an utterly simple and natural process. It is inherent in, and vital to the Christian life, whether viewed individually or corporately. Praying is to the spiritual life what breathing is to the natural. In a matter as elemental as this, surely you cannot make a distinction between men and women or introduce irrelevant questions such as the subjection of women to man! The Scripture does not as we should expect, for God does not make arbitrary rules which have no meaning. 'That your prayers be not hindered'—that is God's desire. Prayer is far too vital a spiritual exercise to be hedged about with arbitrary restrictions.

Church prayer meetings should not be conducted in a stilted, legal atmosphere when a spontaneous outpouring of the heart is inhibited. Rather should they be occasions when believers come together, driven there by a sense of common need, and intending simply and humbly to make their requests known to God. Audibly—or they might as well pray at home. Audibly, because that is God's will and His way of uniting believers together in firmer bonds of love and mutual understanding. Believers who pray together audibly have a wonderful sense of the presence of the Lord and develop a common integrity of motive, conviction of purpose and assurance of the Lord's blessing, which are the harbingers of revival.

Prayer is the overflow of the heart to the lips. It may take less than a minute—or it may take many minutes—for the lips to express the desire of the heart at any particular moment. Does God *prohibit* such an expression of the lips in the case of a woman, who has an equal standing before Him in Christ, with the man? One might reverently enquire 'Why should He?' For none of His principles as revealed in Scripture are violated by sisters praying thus. By so doing they are certainly not usurping authority over men, nor showing a lack of subjection. They are not thereby even exercising a spiritual gift—they are just praying, the privilege

and duty of every believer as led by the Spirit. And honesty compels us to say that the audible prayers of sisters in a Prayer Meeting are usually such as all wish to say a hearty 'Amen' to (more sometimes than in the case of brethren's prayers) and moreover they are just as provocative of a spirit of prayer. And this is important for the value of a Prayer Meeting (as distinct from private prayer) surely lies in this, that the *audible* praying of christians engenders a spirit of prayer. If we are so foolish as to act in such a way as to interfere with the free flow of Spirit—indicated prayer, then we must expect an arid church life. Quench not the Spirit!

It must not be overlooked that when occasions of united prayer are recorded in the New Testament, the presence of women is always mentioned.

After the Lord's Ascension, we read, that the disciples 'continued with one accord in prayer and supplication *with the women*' (Acts 1.14).

Lydia, a woman of the Jewish religion (in which restrictions as to women were more rigid) who resorted to the river side 'where prayer was wont to be made' (Acts 16.13) was converted through Paul. Was she immediately forbidden to pray as in times past? We do not read so.

Mary's house was one in which the church met, and when Peter was imprisoned and in danger of his life, it was the place where 'many were gathered together *praying*' (Acts 12. 12) The 'many' were the church, and therefore of both sexes (including Mary, Rhoda and probably many other women). Furthermore they did not merely attend a Prayer Meeting, they were *praying*—that is engaging in audible prayer, for that is what prayer means in a prayer meeting. You can pray silently at home.

It is significant (in that case) that the answer was immediate.

# CORRESPONDENCE

## The Biblical (?) Doctrine of Man

H. LOWMAN, 92A New Haw Road, Addlestone, Surrey, writes:

I feel Mr. Dibbons is considerably adrift in his paper 'The Biblical Doctrine of Man' (CBRFJ v., 4-13). He suggests we abandon the traditional doctrine of the soul altogether. He speaks of 1 Thess. 5.23 as an isolated text: however, this is by no means so!

What does he make, for instance, of Matt. 10.28: 'Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell?'

Or Peter's reference to the body as being the tabernacle of the soul (2 Peter 1.13): 'I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up . . . ?'

Or of Paul in 2 Cor. 5.1-8 ('We that are in this tabernacle . . . Whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord' etc.)?

Are not body and soul regarded in all these references as separate entities, though much of their inter-relationship and inter-operation is for us shrouded in mystery? The doctrine taught here is certainly not a carry-over from Greek philosophy!

CHRISTOPHER SCOTT, 83 Highbury Road, Birmingham 14, writes:

If Mr. Dibbons thinks with the evidence he has produced that he has proved his contention, then he must be informed that the evidence is not sufficient to do this.

He neatly sidesteps 1 Thess. 5.23, a verse which must be taken into account in any discussion of the subject, but this is not the only one. What about Eccles. 12.7, 'The spirit shall return to God who gave it', to say nothing about Luke 23.46 and Rev. 6.9-11?

More important still, what about all the references to Sheol and Hades, 76 in all, I believe? In many cases these *cannot* refer to the grave, and *never* is the meaning 'grave' necessary.

Thus it is only by ignoring a vast mass of evidence that Mr. Dibbons has been able to put forward his interpretation. Finally it needs to be added that if the Greek philosophers had a certain view of the nature of man, that does not mean that it must be wrong!

(*Note:* It should be remarked that Mr. Dibbon's emphasis is not nearly as novel as some correspondents have inferred. The challenge to tripartite and bipartite views of man is a commonplace of recent thinking. See, in an evangelical context, Berkouwer's *Man, the Image of God*. F.R.C.)

## **Uction**

BRIAN DAVIES, 32 Lower Redland Road, Bristol 6, writes:

Referring to the 'unction' of the Holy Spirit, Mr. Laycock writes (CBRFJ iv., 33): Each Christian . . . must research into this vital 'life force' and find out first if they have it or not".

As I read 1 John 2.20, the 'unction' refers to no more than the gift of the Holy Spirit made to all believers (1 Cor. 3.16, Gal. 3.2). John is warning against antichrists who do not possess the Spirit. Those to whom he writes, however, as true believers, do possess the Spirit, and they all have the Spirit-imparted knowledge of the truth (see RSV rendering). There is no indication that John is writing to a select group within the Christian church (the same can be said for v. 27).

## **Discipleship and Evangelism**

DAVID BLUNDELL, 9 Ewell Court Avenue, Ewell, Surrey, writes:

'The church's job is not to proselytise or gain converts, but to make disciples' (C. G. Martin, CBRFJ v., 16). May I suggest one application of this.

It is characteristic of our local churches to hold a weekly 'Gospel' service. Great pains are made to invite a speaker from a long distance whose one attribute is to hold his audience in blissful slumber. Perhaps I should not be so bitter, but it must be realised that this method of evangelism is so inefficient as to render it almost useless. It is a 19th century cob-web, and as Joseph Sizoo says, 'The Church that is married to the spirit of the age will find itself a widow in the next generation'.

I believe the trouble is the belief that If I go to 'the gospel' and snore through it I shall have completed my Christian service for the week. May I as a comparative youngster say that in the light of my own scanty Christian service that I have found that my service begins at 9 o'clock (or earlier) on Monday morning.

I must confess there have been times at work when I have 'stolen' time from my employer by being late or simply by not working as hard as I should have. What sort of witness is this? It is at work or at school or college that we spend most of our time. (I do not include the firm's Christian Union as this too can be an escapist's refuge to the detriment of his witness.) Thus it is the individual Christian who has the responsibility of leading lives to Christ.

The local church will be teaching discipleship and practising it when it realises the essence of the command to love one's neighbour.

# The Bookshelf

## SOME BOOKS ON CHRISTIAN SERVICE AND THE HOME

Such a comprehensive title needs immediate qualification. All that can be done within a short article such as this is to list a few representative titles for several of the different aspects of Christian service. Even then some major subjects under this heading must await special treatment: for instance, evangelism, missions, social action, and the Christian service in which nearly all of us are engaged, the Christian in his daily work.

Another aspect of the title must also be treated rather inadequately, but in this case because there are so few books available. Apart from American works, there seem to be very few books on the Christian home. The magazine *Homes and Parents* (Scripture Union) and magazine articles such as those by C. G. Martin in *The Witness* have done something to fill the gap, as have the Church Pastoral-Aid Society with the booklet *Building a Christian Home* by Helen R. Lee (Falcon Booklet 1s. 6d.) and a paperback by the same author *The Growing Years* (Falcon Book, 4s. 6d.). Otherwise there is a booklet by W. F. Batt on *Christian Witness in the Home* (IVF. 9d.), but little else, so far as I know, on the Christian witness of the home. If any member knows of good books in this field, please let the Secretary know, and it could be mentioned in a future issue.

Turning to Christian service in specific activities, there are far more practical and helpful books available. Publishers of material for Sunday schools usually also have a book or books for teachers, such as Jean James' *Primary Teaching in Sunday Schools* (Scripture Union, 3s. 6d.), and in the same series, *To Teach Others Also: A Handbook for Children's Speakers* by R. Hudson Pope (4s. 6d.) and *Bible Class Teaching and Leadership* by Sheila N. Wood and J. Reginald Hill (6s.). The Scripture Union also publishes a booklet *Know how to lead Bible Study and Discussion Groups* by J. Hills Cotterill and M. Hews (2s.). On this subject there is a booklet on *Learning to Lead Group Bible Study* in the Christian Service series of Falcon Booklets (9d. - 1s. each), which also give brief treatment to such subjects as personal evangelism.

As far as the ministry of preaching and teaching is concerned—what for many is *the* ministry—there is again a wealth of 'how to do it' material available, such as *Teach Yourself Preaching* by J. S. Stewart (EUP Teach Yourself Books, 6s.), which is one of the better books of this type as well as having a title typical of the general approach. A smaller book on a topic which could transform much preaching is *Expounding God's Word* by A. M. Stibbs (IVF, 4s.). On the more theoretical side, there is Dr. Coggan's *Ministry of the Word* (Lutterworth, 7s. 6d.), J. R. W. Stott's *The Preacher's Portrait* (Tyndale Press, 5s.) (a series of studies of New

Testament words describing the preacher), *Preaching and Teaching the New Testament* by A. M. Hunter (SCM Press, 21s.), the older but provocative *Positive Preaching and the Modern World* by P. T. Forsyth (Independent Press, 12s. 6d.) and much else besides.

On the pastoral side, there are numerous small books (of varying merit) on personal evangelism, but very little on a full pastoral ministry. There is no modern equivalent of the Puritan classic *The Reformed Pastor* by Richard Baxter (available in shortened version from the SCM Press at 6s.). There has been quite a spate of books recently on psychiatry (and psychology) and pastoral work, though little from an evangelical point of view—if any member is a specialist in this field, again it would be helpful if he could send the Secretary an assessment of the current literature for possible future publication in this Journal. Meanwhile the most useful handbook to the non-specialist is likely to be D. Stafford Clark's *Psychiatry Today* (Pelican Books, 5s.). Books more specifically on personal evangelism tend to suffer from the fact that they are written by people who are good at it: which is not always useful for people who are not. However, there are a number to choose from, including older works such as C. G. Trumbull's *Taking Men Alive* (Lutterworth, 6s. 6d.), P. O. Ruoff's *Personal Work* (IVF, 3s. 6d.) and, more recently, W. F. Batt's *Fishing for Men* (IVF, 2s.) and *Personal Witness* by Leith Samuel (Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 4s. 6d.). One omnibus volume that, though very dated of course, includes much on personal as well as corporate evangelism and a great deal else besides about all sorts of Christian work, is R. A. Torrey's *How to Work for Christ* (Pickering and Inglis, 32s. 6d.).

Except for this last mentioned book, those listed so far are on specific ministries. But many will want to start a stage further back and ask, 'What is a ministry?' 'Is there such a thing as the ministry?' Here again is a whole area of debate, and this article can do no more than list some of the books that have taken part in it in recent years. Most authoritative from the 'high church' point of view is the symposium edited in 1947 by K. E. Kirk, *The Apostolic Ministry* (Hodder and Stoughton, 42s.). Other degrees of churchmanship are represented by the following (in no particular order!): T. F. Torrance, *Royal Priesthood* (Oliver and Boyd, 9s.), T. W. Manson, *Ministry and Priesthood; Christ's and Ours* (Epworth, 6s. 6d.), A. T. Hanson, *The Pioneer Ministry* (SCM Press, 21s.), W. Telfer, *The Office of a Bishop*, (Darton, Longman and Todd, 35s.), A. Ehrhardt, *The Apostolic Ministry* (Oliver and Boyd, 8s. 6d.), Daniel Jenkins, *The Protestant Ministry* (Faber, 12s. 6d.), *The Congregational Ministry in the Modern World*, ed. H. Cunliffe-Jones (Independent Press, 8s. 6d.), L. G. Champion, J. O. Barrett and W. M. S. West, *The Doctrine of the Ministry* (Baptist Union, 3s.). The only recent confessedly evangelical books are G. W. Bromiley's *Christian Ministry* (Eerdmans, \$3) and, more accessibly in this country, Leon Morris' *Ministers of God* (IVF, 4s.). The latter is a detached and dispassionate survey of the New Testament evidence on church government and ministry, with a chapter on the various modern systems. Some might like to consult it to see just what evangelical Anglicans

do think, and compare it with the relevant chapters in that work of unimpeachable Brethren orthodoxy, *The Church: A Symposium of Principles and Practice* (ed. J. B. Watson, Pickering and Inglis. 10s. 6d.). Another recent evangelical book, but on the minister rather than the ministry, is Basil C. Gough's *The Man behind the Ministry* (Falcon Books, 3s. 6d.): 'The aim of this book is to show the minister as a man of God, . . . the effectiveness of the minister's life and work depends upon the quality of his own Christian life'.

Interestingly enough, it is in books on laity rather than in books on ministry that current thinking seems to be most evident. The latter tend to be taken up with apostolic succession and the like just now, with reunion in the air, but the former, books on laity, show a true concern for real Christian service, for the church to be getting on with the job. Three books of very different sizes are typical of what is going on: *The Layman in Christian History* (ed. S. C. Neill and Hans-Ruedi Weber, SCM Press, 40s.), *A Theology of the Laity* by H. Kraemer (Lutterworth, 15s.) and *God's Frozen People* by M. Gibbs and T. R. Morton (Fontana, 3s. 6d.).

There is one other subject of current debate that has not been mentioned so far, that of the ministry of woman. No doubt general books on the ministry discuss it, but there seems to be remarkably little specifically on the question. No doubt too some CBRF member is preparing his *magnum opus* on this very subject, but meanwhile, we shall have to rest content with Professor Bruce's booklet *The Ministry of Women*—but even that is out of print, so far as I can discover.

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