

indeed it does between all true believers, then the peripheral matters of church order can await a patient resolution without absorbing the interest and energies that should be concentrated on the urgent task of evangelism.

Some words from John Wesley's sermon on 'The Catholic Spirit' may serve to summarize the continuing attitude of Methodism. 'Although, therefore, every follower of Christ is obliged, by the very nature of the Christian institution, to be a member of some particular congregation or other, some Church, as it is usually termed (which implies a particular manner of worshipping God; for "two cannot walk together unless they be agreed"); yet none can be obliged by any power on earth but that of his own conscience to prefer this or that congregation to another, this or that particular manner of worship. . . . I dare not, therefore presume to impose my mode of worship on any other. I believe it is truly primitive and apostolical: but my belief is no rule for another. I ask not, therefore, of him with whom I would unite in love, Are you of my church, of my congregation? Do you receive the same form of church government, and allow the same church officers with me? Do you join in the same form of prayer wherein I worship God? I inquire not, Do you receive the supper of the Lord in the same posture and manner that I do? nor whether, in the administration of baptism, you agree with me in admitting sureties for the baptized; in the manner of administering it; or the age of those to whom it should be administered. Nay, I ask not of you (as clear as I am in my own mind), whether you allow baptism and the Lord's supper at all. Let all these things stand by: we will talk of them, if need be, at a more convenient season; my only question at present is this, "Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?"'

THE CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE TO WORK

By H. F. R. CATHERWOOD, M.A.

In this further article based on discussions in the Graduates' Fellowship Industrial Group the author considers the Protestant attitude to work, how far it is justified by specific Christian teaching, and how far it is mixed with self-interest.

THE essential difference between the Protestant ethic and the preceding Catholic ethic is in its attitude to work. This, in turn, seems to hinge on the difference in their respective attitudes to the natural world around them. The Catholic tends to see the physical world as evil and to him the saint is one who has no part in it. The Catholic saint does not marry and he does not trade. To the Catholic, spirituality comes by physical withdrawal to holy ground — the monastery and the Church — and by external rites. To the Protestant, the evil is within. 'That which cometh out of the man, that defileth' (Mk. 7: 20). The natural resources of the world were created by God and were given to man for his use. 'Let us make man in our image . . . and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth' (Gn. 1: 26). 'And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over . . . every living thing' (Gn. 1: 28). After the fall of man, the conditions are changed, but the objective is the same. 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread' (Gn. 3: 19). The commission which was given to Adam was also given to Noah. 'Be fruitful, and

multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth . . . into your hand are they delivered' (Gn. 9: 1, 2). We find the same thoughts in the Psalms of David. 'When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him?' He then goes on to answer his own question by setting out God's purpose for man on earth. 'Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet' (Ps. 8: 3, 4, 6). Man is a spiritual being, but he has been put on earth to fulfil the purposes of God, and one of these primary and basic purposes is that he should control and administer the natural resources of the world. He demonstrates the nature and purpose of God to those who do not believe by obedience to this basic commandment.

WHY WORK ?

The Christian does not work, therefore, simply to make money or to pay the bills. He works, because it is part of the divine order that he should work. He does not work for himself, he works for God. Even the Christian slave had to remember this, 'Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men' (Col. 3: 22, 23). Clearly, whatever our work is, we must do it with enthusiasm, and not grudgingly or because we are driven to it. It appears to have come more naturally to the early Christians to evangelize than to work, and the exhortation to work is a constant refrain in Paul's Epistles. 'Study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing' (1 Thes. 4: 11, 12). Not only must the Christian work, he must work as if for God and he must work wholeheartedly. 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might' (Ec. 9: 10); and our Lord's parable of the talents praises those who made maximum use of their resources and condemns the man who made no use of his because they were small.

It would be fair to deduce from this teaching that it is the duty of the Christian to use his abilities to the limit of his physical and mental capacity. He cannot relax as soon as he has got enough money or as soon as he has mastered his job. He has a duty to train himself and develop his abilities, both academically and experimentally, to the limit that his other responsibilities allow. When he has mastered one job, he should go on to another. He should not be content to administer, but should try to improve and innovate. He should not stop until it is quite clear that he has reached his ceiling.

The Christian who is not called to the ministry should ask: What is God's purpose in life for individual members of the Christian Church? Is it to imitate on a small scale and part-time the work of the minister, or is it something separate and different? Too many people today seem to believe that the laity are without functions, except those of 'personal evangelist' and part-time preacher. But if we have gifts as evangelists and teachers, why should we not use them full-time? The teaching of the Bible on the function of the laity would appear to be much more positive. The Church is here to glorify God in the view of an unbelieving world by living the kind of life which God intended man to live. It must do what God intended all men to do. It is clear from the passages quoted above that man was intended to control and put to use the untamed resources of the world. To this end he was given powers of intellect and organization. The Christian does not work to earn a living; he works because God in-

tended that he should use the gifts He had given him for the fulfilment of a divine purpose. He goes on working whether or not he needs to earn a living. His work is a divine vocation and not to be treated lightly, whether he is a surgeon or a carpenter. No labour is degrading,

‘A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,
Makes that and the action fine.’

Ultimately each one of us must decide for himself upon the limits beyond which he cannot stretch his physical and mental powers and on the time and energy he must leave over for his family, his spiritual devotions and other responsibilities. This is a matter in which extremes are easy and a correct balance difficult. God has laid down that one day in seven should be devoted to Him and we should go out of our way to see that no secular affairs spill over into that day. The family, too, has a call on our energy and attention as well as our time and no Christian has a right to allow his work to make his wife a widow or his children orphans.

It is not possible to achieve all these objectives at once without a fair degree of method and self-discipline. These are regarded today as rather old-fashioned virtues and the modern world seems more concerned with a reduction of stress than with an increase in standards of service. The more complex our work and the less other people can see for themselves what we are doing and why, the more important is it that we should set our own standards. ‘The professional must always determine himself what his work should be and what good work is. Neither what he should do, nor what standards should be applied, can be set for him’ (Peter Drucker, *The Practice of Management*). The Christian, especially, must organize his life and work, must set his own high standards and must examine the quality of his work continuously and critically against those standards.

THE NEED FOR INTELLECTUAL INTEGRITY

It is also important that he should be able to recognize the symptoms of intellectual laziness and lack of self-control so that he can correct them whenever they appear. A man who does his job in a lazy way, loses his grip on the situation and events take charge. Crises begin to arise and he gets into an anxious state of mind. In next to no time, he has used up his stock of emotional energy. Had he applied himself to his job in the first place, the situation would never have arisen. Poor personal relationships usually come from lack of self-control and are another great cause of dissipation of emotional energy. There are, of course, people who are particularly difficult, fussy and touchy and we all have to work with them from time to time. But the man who is determined to control his antipathies and who refuses to let people get under his skin, who rides all personal misunderstandings lightly and refuses to take umbrage, will find that he has a good deal more energy left for his job, than his more sensitive colleague. But nothing is a greater source of strength than a sense of competence, a feeling that you are on top of the situation and that you have the initiative. It is this which enables men not only to ride out the storm, but to have a sense of exhilaration in doing so. This sense of competence is not confined to the Christian, but a Christian who does not feel it and particularly a Christian who has allowed his job to ‘get on top of him’ should examine the quality of his work to see whether he has been setting his standards and keeping to them as he ought.

The sloppy thinker will waste hours of his own and other people’s time and energy in fruitless fussing. He is full of second-hand ideas and will

run everything, 'the way we used to run it'. His own ideas are usually half-baked, he will keep his staff chasing after countless red-herrings and will refuse to see the points he does not want to see. The man who has trained and disciplined his mind, and who is able and willing to use it constructively, will think a problem through, will have the versatility required to examine and assess new evidence, and his self-assurance in critical decisions and under pressure of persons and events will be based, not on ignorance or prejudice, but on knowledge. Those who are accustomed to interviewing a great variety of people will know that such men stand out, but they are distinguished not so much by the natural power of their intellect as by their integrity. It is not something we are all born with but something which most of us can acquire. Many people begin to achieve a tough mental discipline through university or professional examinations in an exact science, but this alone is not enough and it is necessary to keep the mind at full stretch for several years more before the habit becomes ingrained.

To those who have not faced the problems, stresses and strains of industrial life, these last paragraphs may seem somewhat discursive and academic; but those who have to make critical decisions affecting the material well-being of their fellows will know the mis-directions of human effort which can be caused by sloppy thinking. The commonest failing in industrial management today is not that men will not work the hours or the overtime, but that they will not put their minds to work. This is something which a boss may suspect, but which he may find difficult, or impossible, to bring home. It is something which may take a long time to catch up with us and may indeed never catch up at all — except with our successors!

It is this quality of intellectual integrity which the Christian, above all men, should possess. Our creed is that we are not here to serve ourselves, but to serve others and we should, therefore, be much more conscious than others of our standards of service. The standards we set ourselves should be higher and tougher than others set for us. We should look more closely and critically at our performance than they do. We should put ourselves into the shoes of our boss, our colleagues and our staff and workmen. What do we look like seen through their eyes? Industry has its fair share of men who are bogus. What they think when they look at themselves in the mirror is their own business. But there is a large grey area in which men are capable of deceiving themselves as to their true worth and performance and at the very least the Christian should examine himself to see that he is setting himself high standards and keeping to them. Too often the Christian is no better than the next man.

THE ENGLISH ATTITUDE TO WORK

While high standards and an honest mind are essential, we should not belittle the value of sheer hard work. Long hours alone are not enough, but the Christian is called to use his talents to the full, to work with all his might, to run the race of life as if there were only one prize and he must obtain it. A race is not run, it is true, in a flat-out spurt, but it does require determination and endurance, the ability to keep going when others have stopped, and the reserves for the spurt when occasion demands it. All this sounds melodramatic, of course, to the man of the world, a little unnecessary and liable to spoil a man's health and his enjoyment of the natural pleasures of life. But those whose lives and happiness are dependent on the results of our work do not see it in that way. If we are in management, the men in the works and their families depend on us to find the markets to keep them in employment, and to maintain the level of technical

expertness and efficiency which will keep their firm competitive. They do not grudge the manager his necessary relaxation, but they know the difference between a management which is working and one which is cruising. The Christian should be the man who is known in the jargon as 'the self-starter'. He does not require pushing, he hardly needs supervision. He goes straight for the tough problem and breaks it. When a critical decision has to be made, he is the man who will have done his homework. He may not, of course, be an attractive character in society. We can exaggerate the antipathy of the educated Englishman to the ideal of hard work, but it is not for nothing that the upper classes have been called the leisured classes and, however dedicated the majority of them may have been to duty and public service, this image of the gentleman as a man of leisure, has gained sufficient respectability to be an ideal to many people who ought to know better. We do not have to agree with everything in American society to feel that their attitude to the 'playboy' is a little more realistic than our attitude to the 'sportsman'.

Today there seems to be a feeling that we are reaching saturation point in personal wealth and that soon we ought to invest not in goods, but in leisure. Whatever others may decide for themselves, this attitude would seem to be wrong for a Christian. The excessively long hours of the past were onerous and made it difficult for a man to carry out his responsibilities to his family and his church. But working hours are not normally unreasonable and there can be no case for sitting back when there is so much want in the world. Even in this country, the care of the aged, medicine and education are almost bottomless pits and it will be a long time before their needs are satisfied. Abroad, hundreds of millions are living at subsistence level and many of these primary-producing countries are dependent on a high and rising level of activity in the industrial nations for any increase in their own low standard of living. 'Trade, not aid' is their need. In a country like Northern Rhodesia a slight drop in the price of copper due to falling demand can wipe out a whole year's revenue in aid funds. However, our duty to work arises from clear and explicit instructions in the Bible and not indirectly through our duty to our neighbour. Many of those who first followed the Protestant ethic had long since satisfied their own small personal needs. In an age when poverty was regarded as an ineradicable evil; they went on working regardless, because the Bible told them that this was right. It is just as well for us that they did.

THE INFLUENCE OF TRADITIONAL ATTITUDES

It is worth pausing for a moment to look at the various traditional attitudes towards work and business which have become woven into our society, because we are influenced by them in more ways than we might suspect, so that Christians coming from different backgrounds are too often more influenced by those backgrounds than by their common faith. The original 'Protestant ethic' is perhaps seen in its purest form in the Scottish attitude to work and education. The Scot seems to apply himself to work and self-development with more wholehearted zeal than the Englishman and, though it might be difficult to prove, they seem to be more successful in business and the professions, for their numbers, than the English. Until recently a much higher proportion of Scots went to university. The Scottish educational system can be traced to the Reformation and to John Knox in particular. In England, the Reformation was less thorough and the tradition of the country was not broken as cleanly as in Scotland. In England there remained, side by side with the attitudes which arose from the Reformation, attitudes which remained medieval and aristocratic in their lineage. It would clearly be foolish to try to fit all the pattern of

English life into two tight straitjackets or to father every attitude today on one of these two traditions. Both had much that was good and much that was bad. But although the older line of thought contained a high sense of personal duty and much else that was good, it contained little or nothing of the duty to work. A gentleman might be called upon to lead, but he was not called upon to work. It was not the aristocracy of England which was responsible for the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions. This attitude has been modified outwardly under pressure of public opinion, backed by political power which was previously lacking. But it still reflects in many unexpected places. A country which sends so few of its best educated young men into industry and trade when it depends on these for its very existence, must have compelling reasons. The country whose social leaders invented the long weekend may be thought to be less than whole-hearted in its attitude to work. These things should put us on our guard and should perhaps cause some of us to examine critically and from first principles, the traditions in which we have been educated and the influences which have affected those traditions.

The great influence on the working class was Methodism, and hard work and education were as much part of the tradition of Methodism as they were of the Scots Presbyterians. Professor Postan thought that their application to their work was one of the main forces of the Industrial Revolution and one of the factors, therefore, which enabled this country to pull itself up by its bootstraps. However, the force of Methodism has waned and has been replaced by the traditions of organized labour. Not all of these can be traced to Christian sources. Many of them stem from a feeling of genuine grievance at the sufferings of the working class. They saw these as arising from a system which appeared to regard labour as a commodity rather than a calling. Indeed the Church's apparent connivance in this system of society, which seemed detrimental to the interests of the individual, may be one of the reasons why the masses are outside the Church today. The British tradition which appears to reflect the Protestant ethic most strongly, is the code of the professional man. In our law, our medicine, our civil service, our armed forces, we have a tradition of professional competence, public duty, disinterested service and financial integrity, which it is difficult to better anywhere else in the world. Sometimes this professional code is incorporated in the rules of the professional institutions but more often it is a tradition which is handed down from generation to generation. This tradition engenders the mutual confidence which is necessary to enable men to trust others with their interests. It is a cement which binds society together, but because it works so well we hardly notice it. It is only when we go to countries which have no such traditions — and unfortunately there are only too many of them — that we realize the damage to the fabric of society which results from the lack of such standards. It may seem too much to claim such a close correlation between the Christian faith and standards of professional conduct, but it is in the Christian and Protestant countries that these standards are most commonly found and every Christian who is a professional man will agree that his faith and his professional standards go hand in hand.

It is the duty of each generation to re-examine its attitudes by Christian standards and it is to be hoped that we, in our generation, may rediscover the sense of purpose which a Christian should have in his earthly vocation and the sense of harmony which we should have with the world which God created for our use.