

way that will harmonize with the salient conditions which the Lord Himself laid down. They think in terms of an organized corporate external reunion rather than of authentic unity based on common faith in and love for the Lord Jesus Christ. But in doctrine, fellowship and Christian enterprise, Evangelicals from all denominations have known oneness of heart in Christ which those who have experienced it can never deny: and such spontaneous fellowship is a more excellent way than any artificial form of organic reunion imposed from above.

What ought the attitude of Evangelicals to be? This needs much more thought than it has yet received. It will be a fatal mistake to play the role of an ostrich and to pretend that there is no problem. This would only expose us to isolation of a most serious character. Evangelicals ought to maintain themselves in a state of constant awareness concerning the whole Ecumenical Movement. This may in some respects best be achieved by a positive engagement in 'encounter' and 'dialogue' with Ecumenical leaders. Failure to keep a firm touch on the pulse of world movements could result in Evangelicals finding themselves by-passed, out of date, and ineffective. It is also the strong conviction of the present writer that Evangelicals ought to address themselves to a fresh and careful study of the teaching of Scripture on certain key doctrines. It is all too easy to be zealous for the traditions of our fathers, but not to share the real insight which led to the formation of those traditions. There is great need for a fresh and thorough study of the New Testament doctrine of the Church and the real nature of the unity which it enjoins. What do Evangelicals believe that the Scripture teaches on these subjects? We will argue from a position of serious weakness if our minds are not clear on this; we will act in something like strength if we are well taught in the Word of God.

THE CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE TO WEALTH

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

A further article based on the series of discussions in the Graduates Fellowship Industrial Group

THE Christian attitude to work which was discussed in the previous article¹ results, not unnaturally, in a substantial increase in wealth. It is noteworthy that the Bible does not condemn wealth in itself. It is not money, but 'the love of money', which is the root of all evil. The fruits of the earth are the gift of God and not to be despised. The bounty of nature is there to be used, and there is enough for all if only we have sufficient energy to lay claim to it. It may be that God uses poverty to bring men to a sense of spiritual reality, and it may be that some men, as the apostles, are called to a life of poverty; but poverty brings suffering and great distress, and this cannot be an end in itself.

The teaching of the Bible would appear to be that it is not the amount of a man's wealth which matters; what matters is the method by which he acquires it, how he uses it and his attitude of mind towards it. Paul tells Timothy, 'Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in

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good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate' (1 Tim. 6: 17, 18). Paul has a positive attitude to the good things which God has given us, because they are from God. He does not try to curb our worldliness by belittling God's provision for us. Instead he teaches that we must share our possessions and here, as elsewhere, in both Old and New Testaments, we are taught to rely not on material possessions, but upon God. Nor are we to set our mind on riches. As Paul tells Timothy, earlier in the same Epistle, 'Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil' (1 Tim. 6: 6-10). These temptations are common to rich and poor alike. If we are poor we must not become obsessed by the desire to become rich. If we are rich, we must sit lightly to our riches. James tells us that the rich man must 'rejoice . . . in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away' (Jas. 1: 10). He must take care that his temporary riches do not make him arrogant because he and his riches will both shortly perish.

WRONGFUL ACQUISITION OF WEALTH

Throughout the Bible, there are passages dealing with the wrongful acquisition of wealth. We have, of course, the specific and overriding commandment, 'Thou shalt not steal'. Jeremiah pronounces 'Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work' (Je. 22: 13). James condemns those who use their riches to oppress the poor (Jas. 2: 6) and those who keep back the wages of their labourers (Jas. 5: 4).

We are forbidden to increase our wealth by the oppression of those whose poverty makes them defenceless. The possession of wealth has traditionally given power to its possessors. In agricultural countries, this power is exercised by the concentration of the great estates in the hands of the wealthy families. Where there is no alternative employment, those who are without means have to work on the terms offered by the wealthy. In these conditions, it is clearly wrong to use our power to exact terms which do not give the employee the wages which are available as a result of his labour. It seems equally wrong to aggregate wealth with the purpose of improving one's economic bargaining position as an employer or to take steps which would weaken the independence of one's labour force. In industrial countries there is usually sufficient alternative employment to strengthen the power of the poor to resist oppression by the rich, but in an industrial community, the alternative of self-employment as a craftsman or a small-holding peasant is not normally available and where there is oppression it is liable to be much more severe. Any government purporting to act on Christian principles should, therefore, aim to protect the citizen against concentration of economic power and should take positive steps to ensure that the citizen has plenty of alternative sources of employment. Any employer acting on Christian principles should co-operate with such a policy. We might note in passing that a concentration of industrial power in the hands of the State does not, of itself, guarantee that the State will not use its monopoly position wrongfully.

The object of the Bible's prohibition of usury seems to be similar. In a country of small holdings a crop failure could be disastrous for the farmer who did not have some ready resources to tide him over. In these circumstances, those who held the resources could hold to ransom those who did

not and force them, by rates of interest in excess of the earning power of the property, either to mortgage their property or to sell it. The right thing to do in the circumstances was to help your neighbour over a bad patch and not to take advantage of him. This abuse is quite different from the present practice of charging interest at a rate which can be covered adequately by earnings. But the principle can still be applied today. No-one should exploit his neighbour's misfortune. The use of one's capital to do this is still wrong. Wealth is a trust to be used for our neighbour's good and not to his harm.

Perhaps the most odious method of making money is to trade on men's spiritual fears and desires. Money made in this way is denounced as 'filthy lucre' by both Paul (1 Tim. 3: 3; Tit. 1: 7) and Peter (1 Pet. 5: 2). The elder who rules well, and the teaching elder, must not only be paid but are worthy of 'double honour' (1 Tim. 5: 17). Nevertheless, bishops, deacons and elders must all serve without thought of financial gain. In the present penurious conditions of the Christian churches in this country this is perhaps not a very pressing temptation, but in other days and in other lands, preachers have been known to pitch their message to suit the frame of mind of their wealthier supporters. From this to the selling of indulgences is only a matter of degree.

RIGHT AND WRONG USE OF WEALTH

Most men in business are interested in their personal power in their own company. They want security, freedom of action and the least number of awkward questions. In the great public companies, with net assets worth tens and hundreds of millions of pounds, personal wealth is normally too small to be a factor in the balance of power within the company. At the other extreme, the private company is directly controlled by its owners. In between is a growing area where directors hold a minority interest and, by means of these personal holdings, control the company. In the case of a company with many small individual holdings outside the board, it is rare for more than 15% of the shareholders to reply to a proxy vote, so that unless something appears to be obviously wrong, a board holding of 20% is adequate for control. Even in a critical situation, a board holding of 35% is normally considered unassailable.

There is obviously something to be said for a director's having a stake in the business which he is directing and much good has come from the sense of trust which generations of the same family have had towards the business they have built up. There is little doubt that the worst abuses of capitalist theory have been avoided because the owner of a business could decide that, for the sake of his work-force, he would not exact the maximum profit from his business. Businesses which are family-controlled do not get taken over by those who do want the maximum return. While the threat of take-over remains and while companies are socially accountable only to a limited extent, the conscientious owner will feel obliged to hold on to his shares for the sake of his employees and the less conscientious owner will hold on for his own sake. But if there were some social and political accountability; if the owner could be assured that, when he gave up his guardianship, other competent hands would take it up, there is much to be said for the diminishing of unfettered personal control. Complete personal power over a small business of 100 people is unlikely to go to anyone's head, but personal power over an empire of 5,000 people is another matter. Recently the 88-year-old Chairman of a £100M company, with thousands of employees, was succeeded as Chairman by another member of the family aged 24. It may be that both were the best possible members of the whole enterprise to be Chairman, but one is entitled to wonder. Directors are in

charge of the country's means of production. In so far as they understand the expensive and complex instruments under their control and use their full potential, the country will prosper and will be able to help and defend less fortunate countries. In so far as they use their power to neglect the dull or difficult, but important, jobs in favour of jobs which may be fascinating, but are relatively unimportant; or have around them people who are congenial instead of people who are competent, they diminish the wealth otherwise available to the whole community.

Wealth is not always used to buy power. It can also be used for self-indulgence and ostentatious display. It is clearly wrong for the Christian to use it in this way. What is not always so clear is where the line is to be drawn. Increasing wealth brings increasing obligations and it is only too easy for those who do not have the obligations to criticize the establishment and expenditure of those who do. A recurring theme of the New Testament is that Christians, especially Christian leaders, should be 'given to hospitality'. This is a quite specific obligation to those Christians who have more than the average share of worldly goods. Life would be much the poorer if every Christian limited his establishment and table to cater for himself and his immediate family. Most Christians who have been students or strangers remember with gratitude some Christian household where they were made to feel at home, where they made friends with other Christians or even made their first encounter with Christianity. The Christian is not told to be without worldly goods, but he is told to share with those who are less fortunate such worldly goods as he has.

The Christian, however, ought to be different in the way he spends his money. Certainly there seems to be no case for Christian expenditure on extravagances which vary from generation to generation, but now go under the title of 'status symbol'. The essence of this type of expenditure seems to be that its price exceeds its intrinsic worth on account of utility or beauty, because it confers prestige on its owner. The Christian need not live between the gasworks and the linoleum factory if he can afford to live somewhere salubrious, but he almost certainly should not spend three times as much as he need on a house just because a temporary fashion has created an insatiable demand for mews and workmen's cottages in S.W.3. It is not necessary for the Christian woman to be dowdy, but it is not necessary either for her to order all her dresses from Paris. It is right that a Christian should want a good education for his children, but it is almost certainly wrong for him to spend money in trying to push his children up the social scale. While some Christian values remain in society, the Christian will not appear other than abstemious and unextravagant. It is only when society or some classes in society have thrown over Christian values that the Christian who has to live among them may be thought cranky. But it is worth bearing in mind that although Wilberforce and the Clapham Sect may have been thought odd by Regency Society, it was the Evangelicals and not Beau Brummel who had the most lasting influence on English social standards for the next half-century.

OUR ATTITUDE TO WEALTH

There is no logical reason why the Christian should not have a perfectly sober and sensible attitude to money, but the warnings in the Bible indicate that this is not as easy as it appears. Only one of the succeeding nine commandments is said to be a breach of the first and greatest commandment. In both Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3 we are told that covetousness is idolatry.

Our Lord has told us that the first and greatest commandment is to love the Lord our God with all our heart and mind and soul and strength. If

we make an idol of wealth, we put it in God's place and this is a breach of the first commandment. It is, therefore, a sin we should take particular precautions to avoid. There are two dangerous features to this sin; one is that it is respectable, the other that hardly anyone is ever aware of committing it. A Roman Catholic priest once said that he had heard confessions to every known sin except the sin of covetousness.

In view of its seriousness and subtlety it might seem that the wealthy Christian was justified in taking quite specific measures to avoid temptation by putting beyond the reach of his personal enjoyment such capital and income as was not required to provide an income for himself and his family should he become incapacitated. Some Christians have, in fact, done this. In one case it was done by outright gifts of part of the capital to various causes and the transfer of another part to a charitable trust set up for the purpose by the donor. In cases where the whole capital has been given away without any provision for the family, relatives who were often not Christians have been left to 'pick up the checks' for family disasters and even for education of children. This is not a case for going to dramatic extremes, but for quietly drawing a line at a certain point, for putting the temptations of wealth firmly and irrevocably aside.

Most of us, however, are not wealthy or ever likely to be and our temptations may not be so easily overcome. Poverty does not exempt a man from the sin of covetousness. It was not to the rich that Paul wrote, 'Be content with such things as ye have' (Heb. 13: 5). The problems of covetousness exist for every Christian. We must agree that there is nothing wrong in material possessions. A comfortable home, a garden, holidays, machines which take the drudgery out of housework, enjoyment of music — all these are good in themselves and are not to be despised. The man who works to give his family these material benefits and to provide for the future does nothing wrong. A man 'must provide for those of his own household' and 'the parents lay up for the children'. But we must do so by honest work and not by preferring our claims over those of others, or by exploiting a shortage of our particular skill. The Christian businessman should maximize profits only where profits are a true economic regulator and he should not maximize profits where to do so would be to exploit his special power over the worker or the customer. A better objective would be the maximization of economic performance to give the best value to the customer, the shareholder and the worker. Only if the customer and worker have the sanctions required to support their own interests will maximization of profits and maximization of economic performance amount to the same thing.

Where a Christian is considering alternative jobs, he clearly should not allow the material reward to be the primary consideration. In some cases he will find that a higher salary is offered to offset the lower standing of the firm making the offer or the uninteresting or insecure nature of the job. On the other hand, between firms of equal standing, salary is a measure of the worth of the job and a Christian who sees a higher salary being offered for a job for which he is qualified is not being covetous if he puts in for it. He is right, all else being equal, to go where his services are of most value.

The Christian's over-riding rule is that he should sit lightly to worldly wealth. If he disciplines himself to do this; if he avoids setting his heart on any material possession; if he can contemplate the loss of possessions with equanimity and regard their possession as a matter of indifference; then he will be less likely to fall prey to the sin of covetousness. He should increasingly realise the truths that 'moth and rust corrupt and thieves break through and steal', that he came naked into the world and must depart naked out of it. Above all he should grasp the contrast between this world and the world to come. The saints who in this world were 'tortured . . .

stoned . . . sawn asunder . . . slain with the sword . . . destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy)' and who 'wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth' will in the world to come receive their final reward. The man of the world does not believe in this 'pie in the sky', no more does the humanist. The Christian should be no less anxious than the humanist to relieve poverty and misery in this world and in doing so he will follow his Master's example. But if he does not believe that God will finally perfect His creation and if he believes that 'the dead rise not', then, Paul tells him, 'is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen . . . your faith is also vain'. If he believes these truths, the Christian will sit lightly to this world and its passing benefits. His possessions here will be incidental and he will be more open-handed with them. He will find no insuperable obstacle to giving the Church its tithe or more than its tithe. He will not press his claims on scarce resources to the damage of his neighbour and he will not be guilty of the sin of covetousness, which is idolatry.

SCIENCE AND THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER

By J. I. BAUSOR, B.A.¹

The substance of a paper presented to the R.S.C.F. Conference in 1961 under the title 'How do we talk about science without giving a non-Christian impression?' The paper was originally prepared by a group of science teachers but has been modified in the light of subsequent discussion.

THE Christian teacher of science is probably most aware of the problems created by talking about science. But all of us face them in some ways as we talk to our own children or as scientific subjects come up in ordinary discussion. The difficulties may be summarized as follows:

1. By describing or finding scientific 'causes' for events and their regularities we can give the impression that the scientific description is complete and inclusive.

2. By showing that science has something to say about all fields of experience we can give the impression that science is a universal method, giving all the answers.

3. We cannot constantly recognize, or make explicit, the assumptions of the method of science.

4. We can rarely make reference to the relation between science and faith, and therefore we easily give a non-Christian impression by default.

In order to try to meet this situation there are certain aspects of science which can and should be stressed.

SCIENTIFIC METHOD

There is a place for teaching about the method of science. Few people seem to realize that science makes great assumptions — assumptions which cannot themselves be proved from science. Few seem also to realize the fact that scientific method is far from logically foolproof or cast-iron in its nature.

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