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

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_cbrfj.php

CONTENTS

The Communication Problem	<i>Sosthenes</i>	1
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Topic of the Issue

COMMON GRACE

A Hole in our Thinking?	<i>C. G. Martin</i>	3
Is there a Biblical Doctrine of Common Grace?	<i>H. Barlow</i>	9
Common Grace in the Reformed Faith	.....	.....	.....	<i>D. R. Hanson</i>	15
A Philosophical Enquiry—a discussion	.....	.....	.....	<i>Paul Hirst, O. R. Johnston and A. E. Willingale</i>	32
Applications	.....	.....	.....	<i>C. G. Martin</i>	43

Members' Contributions

Review. The New Scofield Reference Bible	.....	.....	.....	<i>Ward Gasque</i>	47
Correspondence. Mr. Clines replies on Liturgy	.....	.....	.....		49
The N.T. Use of the O.T.	.....	.....	.....		53
From the Monitors. <i>Humanist</i>	.....	.....	.....	<i>C. G. Martin</i>	54

THE COMMUNICATION PROBLEM

Perhaps the second successive issue of the *Journal* to be devoted to a heavily technical subject is hardly the best issue in which to raise the matter of Christian communication. But the subject of Common Grace itself leads us to consider the part which the Christian has to play in that sphere which is the sphere of its operation—the ordinary life of mankind. And that in turn brings home to the thoughtful the extraordinary difficulty of communicating the Christian ideal to the masses of men and women conditioned by modern life.

One does not need to be a disciple of McLuhan to recognise that there are wide areas of contemporary society where the printed word is becoming of decreasing importance in communication. Instead, it is the radio and—more particularly—television which today make the most vital impact on men and women. It is an impact very different in its nature from that of the printed word: simply because the visual means of communication produce an entirely different effect upon the person receiving the communication. The implications for forms of belief that, like Christianity, have depended for several centuries upon the culture created by the printed word are plain enough.

Are there Christians who are forward-looking enough to see and act upon those implications? It might be well if there were evangelicals who were prepared to think a second time about the drama as well as the documentary—and, as well, as about the effect of these changes upon our forms of worship. “Liturgy” may not be as old hat as we had thought it!

SOSTHENES

“Nor can we prepare a way for the gospel by the procedure which Bonhoeffer describes as ‘priestly snuffing around in the sins of men to catch them out’. We are not in fact thinking about the ethical judgment which we men pass upon one another and to which we are on the whole so sensitive. We are thinking of the judgment that God has passed upon us and to which we are insensitive precisely because of the fact of sin”.

L. Newbigin

A Faith for this one World p. 76

“Perhaps only a minority of the children we teach will actually accept Christ as Saviour, but they can be taught how to live in God’s world”.

Brian Monks at T.P.F. Conference, April 1966

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

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C. RAYMOND JOHNSTON is lecturer at Newcastle University and a member of the Anglican House of Laity. A book of which he is joint author with Mr. Philip May, *Religion in Our Schools*, has recently been published by Hodder and Stoughton at 25/-, and has been well reviewed.

MR. CHARLES G. MARTIN and MR. ALAN WILLINGALE are well known to CBRF.

Mr. Martin also draws our attention to another relevant publication, *Introduction to Moral Education*, ed. Wilson, pub. Penguin, arising out of the first two years of the Farmington Trust Research Unit's investigation of moral education.

We draw members' attention to three matters of more general interest.

1. Those interested in the writings of early members of the Brethren movement will be interested in the republication of various works of Dr. S. P. Tregelles (list from the S.G.A.T., 9 Milnthorpe Road, Chiswick, London, W.4).
2. Dr. Hanson draws our attention to the Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship, a North American association for 'promoting radical biblical reformation in the world of learning'. It has its headquarters in Toronto, from where details can be obtained—141 Lyndhurst Avenue, Toronto 4, Ontario, Canada.
3. The attention of members is also directed sympathetically to the National Day of Prayer and Repentance, called by the Evangelical Alliance for Sunday, 26th May.

“One cannot simply live out his life in the domain of grace under the ‘spires’ of the institutional church, one must involve oneself in the affairs of other areas of life. This is a demand of man's situation as a creature. Various reactions are possible: one can ‘flee’ to the mission field in a futile effort to live consistently and avoid the world, one can seek to ‘justify’ his worldly pursuits by fabricating various theologies of economics, law, morality, etc. or perhaps, the most common, one simply attempts to reconcile himself to living the ‘divided-life’.

As is becoming more and more recognised, this right wing or ‘fundamentalistic solution’ fails to do justice to the Scriptural givens. ALL POWER ON HEAVEN AND EARTH has been given to the Risen Lord (Matt. 28: 18). It was the good pleasure of the Father that in Christ *all the fulness* should dwell, and through Him to *set all things* right again, whether these things be upon earth or in heaven. (Col. 1: 19)”.

J. H. Olthuis *Must the Church become Secular?*

International Reformed Bulletin, January, 1967

COMMON GRACE

A Hole in our Thinking ?

There has been a rapid change in popular attitudes to distinctively Christian belief—or perhaps it is truer to say that we have become increasingly aware of the extent to which the popular attitude differs from traditional Christian orthodoxy. Such a situation draws attention simultaneously to various lines of thought and discussion where evangelicals appear ill at ease. The present papers result from the convergence of several such lines which point to what may be described as a ‘hole in our thinking’. At the risk of seeming unduly individualistic, the growing awareness of such a ‘hole’ is described here in the first person. This is how one person at least came to face the question. Readers may find their own experience parallel to this. It will, I hope, provide several leads in to the matter under discussion which will make the papers that follow more meaningful.

Converging lines

1. One of the first lines in my own arrival at this ‘hole in thinking’ arose out of a growing awareness that much traditional evangelical preaching was irrelevant to the average Briton. He was urged to realise he could not work his way to heaven: he wasn’t even thinking of heaven as a goal. He was told life without Christ was dismal, but did not see he was much worse off than his nominally Christian acquaintances. He was urged to repent—but felt that by general standards his behaviour was good (better than addicts and swindlers and as good as most ‘Christians’). The mechanics of atonement were expounded to him: he felt no need of this celestial book-keeping.

2. What then was he like? Blinded by the god of this world; led captive by the devil at his will; if so, in what sense? Wider mixing with all sorts and conditions of men produced evidence of some in whom the ravages of sin were clear, but many whose behaviour *was* pretty good, who *did* seem to live balanced and comfortable lives, often with modesty and gentleness, but without Christian faith. One soon learned to dismiss the ignorant comparison of bad Christian with good pagan—‘he’s better than many of you Christians’—but still the ‘good pagan’ remained. Men of integrity in business; the cultured colleague; helpful neighbours; dedicated people in medicine, welfare, and politics.

3. Wider reading filled in a little of the picture of the ‘good pagan’. Often haughty to the point of *autarkeia*, but also with considerable intellectual honesty, he was loth to accept a faith he saw as the surrender of reason to emotion or to practice a piety which he interpreted as a grovelling insurance against hell-fire.

4. Along another line, it became increasingly obvious that traditional evangelicalism was not geared to the appreciation of many art forms—partly due to the taboos of the last century, or fear of Roman veneration of religious art. Yet the ‘good pagan’ often showed remarkable sensitivity to drama, music, painting, architecture and literature. Were these all to be dismissed as the works of Jubal or Tubal-cain?

5. The hymn said ‘The heathen in his blindness bows down to wood and stone’, but greater acquaintance with other cultures ancient and modern showed not only depravity and superstition but also good features—nobility of language, architecture and imagery, as well as many individuals of high courage and moral awareness.

6. Much had been written of great evangelical philanthropists of the last two centuries. Perhaps we lived too long on Shaftesbury and Wilberforce as examples of the power of Christ (without enquiring too closely into their political views or biblical interpretation!). Some growing acquaintance with the Welfare State and areas of social concern showed that while Christians often took a lead they were not by any means predominantly evangelicals, and in any case were matched by substantial, if not equal, numbers of non-Christians.

7. In the field of science my initial contact was the examination of a suspected clash with the Bible. In thinking this through, with much help from others, the conviction emerged that the bitterness of the last century was tragically unnecessary. Further reading and slight contact with the world of science brought to light the great contribution of non-Christian workers whose integrity and diligence and search for truth about the universe was beyond question. It was also evident that scientific and technological advance had strengthened enormously man’s capacity to control disease, ignorance and famine, and that it was in fact often used to these ends by Christian and non-Christian alike.

In all these fields of enquiry, of course, Christians of standing, ability and presence were prominent, but it could not be denied that many ‘good pagans’ existed with many features which could bear with praise. And so the ‘hole in thinking’ emerged. How could these ‘good pagans’ be fitted in to the evangelical view of God, man and the world? Undoubtedly they were ‘dead in trespasses and sins’, ‘unable to please God’, ‘condemned already’ etc., but why the appearance of goodness and the favourable comparison with much Christian living and concern? Above all, what had we to say to them that did justice both to their virtue and need?

Suggested answers

All this may show merely the superficiality of the writer’s earlier thinking, and reading,—a shallowness, he found, shared with many of his contemporaries. True, certain answers sprang easily to mind, but one disturbing feature of the whole process was the growing awareness that

these answers came to seem glib even to the user and were completely blunt against the 'good pagan'. Answers which sounded powerful among the faithful, seemed poor and question-begging in real life situations. For example:—

(a) The 'virtues' of the good pagan are not really good. They're all spoilt by pride—but some seemed genuine and humble. Must I postulate deeper and deeper levels of double-dealing and self-deception?

(b) Not really 'good' but inspired by utilitarian motives, fear of consequences, desire to stand well with contemporaries. Again if this was so, it was astonishingly well-concealed, and the last phrase in particular posed the question where the 'good' standards they wished to be judged by arose.

(c) 'God is sovereign'; the Curies who did not believe made their contribution to medicine as surely as Lister who did believe, but this is only a modern version of God using Cyrus and the Assyrians. Maybe, but was the Curies' devotion to their experiment 'good'?

(d) 'Cain's world'—all is vitiated by sinful context. Granted that whatever is not of faith is sin (for Christians as well!) viewed as before God, may we not acknowledge our feelings that some of the work of 'good pagans' is good and beautiful? Must there always be some criticism—like the prickly schoolmaster who always finds some reason to avoid giving full marks—'Could do better!'

(e) 'Living on Christian capital'—this seems very true. Many (but possibly not all) good pagans gained their ideals from Christian heritage and western Society leans heavily on Christian presuppositions. But: (i) so what?—what if the good pagan says he can now 'drop the pilot' and 'go it alone'? (ii) is the fruit he picks from the inherited tree *good*? Must we say nothing is 100 per cent?

How good are 'good pagans'?

There appeared a reluctance to accept the good works of unbelievers as 'good'. This was prompted no doubt by a fear that they would trust in their good works rather than God. Comparable actions by believers were hailed as 'good', though one might often have to dig very deep to find any devotion to God as their spring. The whole attitude towards the good pagan was thus coloured both as to evangelism and association. The most pressing need was repentance, but of what should they repent? At every point, it seemed, they were open to conviction. Their fancied goodness must be stripped away—not merely as being unable to work the righteousness of God, but as needing renunciation as evil in itself. Association in any work with such people was also suspect (except in a way of business that did not amount to partnership). Any contact one might otherwise have with them ought to have direct evangelism in view. Hence any association in social enterprise (such as local government) or entertainment was to be deplored as neglecting primary concerns and giving them

false hope in common pursuit of activity that should spring truly only from love to God.

How good is the world?

Parallel to this reluctance or embarrassment to accept any feature of the 'good pagan' as good, there seemed a reluctance to rejoice in the world or to be concerned in its exploitation for the service of man. 'This world is a wilderness wide' where nothing can be found to sustain the pilgrim. He survives on the heavenly manna until he enters the promised land. The good pagan enjoyed the world—and this seemed perhaps even an added reason why the faithful shouldn't!

Ill at ease

All these strands were involved. Much of the traditional was good, well expressed and piously lived. It would be churlish not to acknowledge immense debt. But the conclusion seemed inevitable that evangelicals have been well at home in some areas of thought and experience but ill at ease in others. Ill at ease particularly in those areas from which custom, or social habit, has largely insulated them for a century. The insulation is now disappearing and we find ourselves well armed against foes that no longer abound, and naked to new enemies. We are experts in atonement doctrine, typology and 'church truth' but ill-equipped to advise young believers on industrial relations, involvement in society or the ethical problems of modern medicine. Ill-equipped, too, to make the gospel meaningful to those who see our expertise as a commendable but rather odd hobby.

One solution is, of course, mapped by the rigidity of exclusivism. With enormous social strain for some people involved we *can* maintain the insulation, mortify all contrary thought, and find some exegetical expedient for every scripture that suggests we venture out into the outside world.

The following papers suggest we might with profit examine the doctrines of God's wider relation with mankind as expressed in the doctrines of Creation and Common Grace.

Common grace

As Mr. Barlow's paper remarks, Common Grace is not a biblical term. It is rather, as Dr. Hanson says, a 'useful dogmatic construct for the integration of our understanding of Scripture'. It figures in the Reformers' apologetic where it stands for that continuing activity of God by which he gives to all men, just and unjust alike. Such a doctrine would go far to fill the 'hole in thinking'. It would enable us to accept unreservedly the contribution of the non-Christian scientist as God-given; perhaps even to accept his kindness to us as God's goodness through him. It would give

us, along with a renewed doctrine of creation, fresh enjoyment of the world and some common ground for association and action. They, too, receive something from God even if they do not acknowledge it as such.

The difficulties are obvious:

(a) Is there to be a discontinuity between 'common' and 'special' (saving) grace? Or can one be viewed as superimposed upon the other? The understanding of the world through touch is valuable and often true. The added richness of sight is not discontinuous but confirms some knowledge and adds immeasurably more.

(b) How is such a concept related to the biblical teaching of the Fall? Has sin not warped man's mind and will and cut him off from God? Even if God should choose to use such men, in what way can they lay any claim to altruistic action? Also, is the creation not involved in the Fall (Rom. 8)? In what sense, then can it be welcomed as good?

Three lines of approach

The present papers approach the matter in three ways:

1. Mr. Barlow presents the biblical material. This faces us with the use of 'good' and 'goodness'. Job may plead his righteous deeds before his fellows but not before God. Although the Psalmist gives the God's eye-view 'There is none that does good', yet man may 'do what the law requires'. Mr. Barlow concludes that 'we need not fear to recognise such goodness in non-Christians, or to ally ourselves with them in good works'.

2. The Reformers held no light view of sin—indeed much of Calvin's writing about Common Grace comes in Book II, ch. 2 'Man now deprived of freedom of will, and miserably enslaved'!—yet they found the motif of Common Grace useful in their understanding of scripture. Dr. Hanson's paper not only summarises their thought but shows how this was developed and applied in the Dutch version under Kuyper. In this outworking in an historical setting both the weaknesses and strengths may be seen writ large.

If, for example, 'The Reformation under Calvin must be granted the honour of having ended the long attempt to wed an Aristotelean conception of human nature to the Biblical ground-motif of creation, fall, and redemption in Jesus Christ in the communion of the Holy Spirit' then we may well find the ideas useful in our own day in the struggle to see God's work as *one*, and avoid any fresh dichotomy between nature and grace. In both biblical and historical sections the name of Karl Barth will be already in the mind of some readers. Dr. Hanson politely declines encounter and without extending both articles impossibly, adequate comment could not be given. A complete veto cannot be usefully considered when the object in view is to *understand* the argument vetoed. Barth's alternative system requires study and appraisal separately from the present enquiry into common grace. It may then be possible to make judgment or reconciliation between them.

3. If, following Calvin, we regard the 'light of intelligence' as a divine grace, we may then move on to the third paper. This attempts an investigation of the place of the light of intelligence in the attainment of scientific and moral knowledge. Has God ensured that even those who deny the Giver, may still use the gift of intelligence to arrive at 'what the law requires'? If so, how does the renewal of the mind at conversion affect the Christian participation in moral discussion?

To the papers, then. An unfamiliar country it may be, but one in which we may find fresh cause to magnify God for his mercy, fresh ways in which to follow His works, and some help to make our own thinking more complete.

A conclusion will attempt to apply points under discussion to several current problems—not in any sense completely but rather to stimulate local study.

C. G. MARTIN

“The origin of the doctrine of common grace was occasioned by the fact that there is in the world, alongside of the course of the Christian life with all its blessings, a natural course of life, which is not redemptive and yet exhibits many traces of the true, the good, and the beautiful. . . . What explanations can be given of the special gifts and talents with which the natural man is endowed, and of the development of science and art by those who are entirely devoid of the new life that is in Christ Jesus? How can we explain the religious aspirations of men everywhere, even of those who did not come in touch with the Christian religion? How can the unregenerate still speak the truth, do good to others, and lead outwardly virtuous lives? These are some of the questions to which the doctrine of common grace seeks to supply the answer”.

Louis Berkhof *Systematic Theology*

(Banner of Truth) p. 432

Is There a Biblical Doctrine of Common Grace?

Hugh Barlow

'Common Grace' is a term used to describe a general goodness of God *to* all men and a common goodness inspired by God *in* men, apart from his special grace in Christ. Several questions arise from this formulation of the doctrine. Is 'grace' the right word to describe it? Does the Bible acknowledge God's goodness to all men, or a goodness in men apart from the grace of God in Christ? If so, is that goodness acceptable to God apart from justifying grace?

On the question of the grace of God to all men, this paper maintains that God's grace is particular, but God's goodness is general. On the question of non-Christian goodness, it is maintained that there is a common goodness in men, which is the surviving image of their Creator; but that all their good works are perverted to self-centred (or ? man-centred, —C.G.M.) aims, and do not amount to a goodness which is acceptable in God's judgment. Nevertheless, the writer believes it is important that Christians should acknowledge this goodness in other men.

God's Grace is Particular and not Common

The description 'common grace' is scarcely appropriate to what it is intended to describe. In both Testaments, God's grace is justifying grace, which according to the New Testament, is revealed in Christ. It is received on repentance and faith. It is individual and elective.

God's grace is in Christ (Rom. 5: 15), inseparable from his redemption and revelation (John 1: 14, 17; Acts 15: 11; Rom. 1: 5; 3: 24; 5: 2, 15, 17, 21; 1 Cor. 1: 4; Eph. 1: 7; 2: 7; 1 Tim. 1: 4; 2 Pet. 3: 18). Peter emphasises to his readers that 'the grace of God in Christ' to which they have been called (1 Pet. 5: 10) is 'the true grace of God' (v. 12). God's grace is inseparable from the response of faith (Acts 18: 27; Rom. 4: 16; Eph. 2: 8) to the word of the gospel (Acts 4: 33; 11: 23; 14: 3; 20: 24, 32; Col. 1: 6; 2 Tim. 1: 9).

In the Old Testament, the grace or favour of God is 'found' and 'shown' in personal relationships with God (cf 1 Cor. 15: 10; 1 Tim. 1: 14 in NT) and it is elective (Ex. 33: 19). In the New Testament, it is 'given to each' personally (Rom. 12: 6; Eph. 4: 7).

Common goodness has been ascribed to the grace of God because it is not found equally in all men, just as we sometimes ascribe the material gifts to the grace of God because they are not equally distributed among all men, and those who receive abundance are not, in general, any more deserving than those who go in want. But we cannot justly speak of anyone's being deserving or undeserving of the gift of goodness.

A scriptural foundation for this use of the term is sometimes found in the phrase 'the grace of life' in 1 Peter 3: 7; the continuance of human life is by the grace of God to undeserving Adam and his heirs. But what is continued is God's original goodness in creation.

God's general goodness

Even if 'common grace' is not the right term for it, there is clear scriptural evidence of God's general Fatherhood, love, and goodness. God's general Fatherhood is commonly based on Mal. 2: 10, but that verse actually refers to his fatherly relation to the covenant people which he had created. However, according to Paul, God is the Father (*pater*) from whom every fatherhood (*patria*) derives (Eph. 3: 14f), 'the Father, from whom are all things' (1 Cor. 8: 6) 'the Father of all, above all, and in all and through all' (Eph. 4: 6). This last verse has particular reference to 'all' the members of the Body (4: 4), but, in the light of 3: 14f., it may be extended to include God's Fatherhood of all things. This is no more than to say that all things and all men (1 Cor. 8: 6) have their being from him.

God's general love and goodness, to both the evil and the good, the just and the unjust, is linked with his Fatherhood, and made the basis for Jesus's exhortation to his disciples to love their enemies, to be sons of their heavenly Father in this way, and so to be perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect (Matt. 5: 44-48).

The Goodness of the Created Order

God's universal goodness is the goodness with which he creates and sustains the universe and all things within it (Psa. 33: 4-9). God is good in creating, and what He creates is good (Gen. 1: 31), and remains good in spite of abuse (1 Tim. 4: 3f.). The will to worship, to rule, to achieve, and to love is God-given. If men do not worship God, they worship idols of their own fabrication (Rom. 1: 25); but, since Cain and Abel (Gen. 4), men have worshipped. God gave man the mandate to rule, and the urge to achieve the purpose for which he was created (Gen. 1: 26, 28; cf. Psa. 8: 6), and that purpose is fulfilled in Christ (Phil. 3: 7-14; Eph. 4: 13). The ground of conjugal love is given in Gen. 2: 23f.

But this will to worship, to rule, to achieve and to love is perverted to idolatry (Rom. 1: 25), to tyranny, to pride and self-sufficiency, and to lust or affections contrary to God's ordinance (Rom. 1: 26f.). That tyranny is a perversion of what is basically good, viz. God's ordinance of government (Rom. 13: 1), is evident from the teaching of submission to unjust punishment (1 Peter 2: 18), because of the honour which is due to governors (2: 13-17). In consequence of the perversion of the will to achieve, man's work, which God ordained (Gen. 2: 5) and still ordains (1 Thess. 4: 11; 2 Thess. 3: 6-12), became burdensome toil (Gen. 3: 17): and in consequence of the perversion of the will to love, woman's labour in childbirth, which can still be sanctified labour dedicated to God (1 Tim. 2: 15) became pain (Gen. 3: 16).

These ordinances of God (worship, government, work, marriage) are given for the preservation of mankind as a whole. The preservation of mankind through work and marriage requires no demonstration. Temporal justice and order are preserved through government. Lastly, but fundamentally, religion is the motivating force of people's obedience: among the Hebrew people, the sanction of the levitical regulations for civil justice and social morality was the repeated 'I am the Lord your God' with the implication 'You shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy'. (Lev. 19: 2). The pagan religions sanctioned a morality of a lesser order which, even at its lowest, still excluded the worst form of immorality (1 Cor. 5: 1). 'All the people walk each in the name of its god' (Mic. 4: 5). This refers to the 'ways' which they are taught, or to the 'paths' in which they walk (cf. v. 2) i.e. the patterns of conduct prescribed by their religion. It is still men's '-isms' or idolatries which, though they may no longer possess the outward forms of religions, direct or restrain their conduct.

The created order, in spite of the ways in which men have perverted it, preserves a measure of justice and goodness among men.

Common Goodness as the surviving Image of God in Men

The Bible recognises conjugal love, common kindness, and parental care as an image of the divine love and goodness and fatherhood (cf. Eph. 3: 14f.). The husband-wife relationship is likened to that between Christ and his Church (Eph. 5: 21-23) and human fathers are somewhat in the likeness of the heavenly Father (Luke 11: 13). Sonship has the idea of likeness to the father (Matt. 5: 45; Gen. 5: 3; Gal. 3: 7).

Man was made in the image of God (Gen. 1: 26). That image is fading, defaced but not destroyed in the fall; but, in those who are in Christ (Gal. 3: 26), it is being renewed (Rom. 8: 29; Eph. 5: 23f.). He is 'the express image' (*charaktēr*, Heb. 1: 3) which is being 'impressed' on the Christians. The '*charaktēr*' is the raised surface of the stamp which reproduces the image on the coin or seal.

With or without the law of Moses, men do, to a considerable extent, what the law requires, and show evidence of a natural knowledge of what God requires (Rom. 2: 13-15). There is a general goodness of parents to children, and of husbands to wives, and a sense of common humanity which may move a Samaritan with compassion for a Jew.

The Rational Basis of Common Grace

Some would find a basis for such a universal morality in the human rationality. Men do have, in varying measure, a 'wisdom of the world', learned by observation and drawing on the knowledge of others (Ecc. 2: 14; 1: 16; 1 Kings 3: 12), but limited in perspective to this temporal life (Ecc. 1: 13). They recognise their mutual dependence and develop a morality of the 'common good' (Matt. 5: 46f.; 1 Tim. 5: 8). The 'common good' may be conceived widely or narrowly, idealistically or personalistically; it is by no means always as blatantly or consciously self-interested

as that of the unjust steward who is commended in Luke 16: 8 for his interpretation of 'sowing his bread on many waters' (Ecc. 11: 1f.)! Here and in the Golden Rule of Luke 6: 31 is a truly worldly and rational basis for goodness! It should, of course, be added, that one can follow Jesus's Golden Rule from other motives than self-interest; but it remains true that what Jesus was giving was a rule for outward conduct: the rule could be observed from a variety of motives, but the only reliable source of good deeds is a good heart. (Luke 6: 43-45).

Before we evaluate this common goodness, we must ask how the Bible evaluates goodness.

Goodness is judged by the aim and motive rather than by any intrinsic value in the action

It is possible to distinguish someone who is 'righteous' i.e. who acts correctly in accordance with some prescribed code of actions, from someone who is 'good' i.e. good to others. Paul makes this distinction in Rom. 5: 7, where *dikaïos* represents the Hebrew *yashar* (upright), and *agathos* is nearer to *chrēstos* (kind). We say that God is good because He is good or kind to us men (Psa. 107; Eph. 2: 7). Goodness in this sense is directed to the interests of others, and determined by the object it serves rather than the actions in which it is expressed. Thus human goodness serves the glory of God in serving the best interests of one's neighbour (Matt. 5: 16).

This two-fold aim of human goodness preserves us, on the one hand, from a 'godliness' which disregards men's human needs, and, on the other hand, from a humanitarianism which ignores God's will for men. Good is what is acceptable to God (Rom. 12: 2) and done in love for our neighbour (13: 10), done in honour of the Lord (Jesus) and in praise to God (14: 6), for our neighbour's good (15: 1ff.). What we do for our brother in need is what we do for Jesus (Matt. 25: 34-45), and our works of love for our brother are the measure and expression of our love for God (1 John 3: 17-18; 4: 20-5: 3).

To serve Christ (Rom. 14: 18) means 'to pursue what makes for peace and mutual upbuilding' (v. 19), and this is acceptable to God (v. 18) rather than the doing of particular actions such as the observance of food regulation (14: 14-17): in itself, it is neither right nor wrong either to indulge or to abstain, to observe the day or to esteem all days alike (Rom. 14: 20f.; 5f.), but the observance or non-observance, may be the expression of our love or our disregard for our neighbour.

Goodness is manifested in good works (Matt. 7: 15-20; 12: 33-37), but it does not consist in them. Perfect righteousness and goodness consists in love for all men (Matt. 5: 20; 43-48), in self-renunciation and following Jesus, rather than in specific good deeds or even keeping the whole of God's commandments (Matt. 19: 16-21); in the humble service of God and others rather than the mere forsaking of things (19: 27-30).

God's judgment is according to the aim and motive of men's actions rather than the actions themselves. This is not to say that there is no intrinsic value in keeping the moral law and doing works of mercy; Jesus approves the keeping of the law, and commends the legal righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt. 5: 17-20); but their works of mercy were better done in secret (Matt. 6: 1-4).

Neither does it mean that men are judged merely according to their intentions, whether or not they put them into effect. 'Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it' (Luke 11: 28). Before the judgment-seat of Christ we shall receive the good or evil towards which our actions done in the body tend (2 Cor. 5: 10). Though a record of men's actions is kept against the day of judgment, the verdict is found in the book of life (Rev. 20: 12f.). Men are rewarded, not according to the debit or credit balance in the record of their works, but according to the direction and aim of their works (Rom. 2: 5-8): those who seek life by patience in well-doing will be saved from the wrath which all men deserve by their evil works (Rom. 3: 9-18).

Neither legal righteousness nor common goodness satisfies God's requirements

There are a number of passages, where Job and the Psalmists plead their integrity, and also in Romans 2, which appear to speak of a righteousness acceptable to God apart from his grace. However, one chapter of Paul's letter (to Romans) may not be so interpreted as to contradict the next. Paul in Romans 2 is not allowing a possibility of salvation outside Christ: his point is that God's judgment for Jew and for Greek is all on the same impartial basis (Rom. 2: 9-11). If any are, perhaps, saved without knowledge of the revealed law (Rom. 2: 15f.) none are saved apart from the grace of God in Christ (3: 21-24). The promise of righteousness by faith was prior to the law (4: 13), and God passed over the sins of those who were justified before Christ because of their hope in his righteousness, revealed in Christ (3: 21-25).

From the divine standpoint of judgment, by the criterion of the final aim of men's actions, the Bible can only condemn all human righteousness. The Jewish righteousness of works specifies certain actions as good e.g. almsgiving, irrespective of their motive or effect. For example Corban results in the dishonouring of parents when the motive is self-righteousness rather than honouring God (Matt. 15: 3-5). It is still true that the righteousness of law, whether the code is that of Moses, or that of the community, or of the individual, tends to subordinate individual human needs to rigid rules or principles. The righteousness of a true child of God must exceed such legal righteousness (Matt. 5: 20-45). On the other hand, the natural sense of justice (Rom. 2: 14-15), which might today include the new morality's version of the 'law of love' tends to serve the self-interest of others rather than the will of God for men. Thus, the common goodness of the Gentiles equally falls short of the goal of the glory of God (3: 23).

Good works done to others do not amount to Righteousness before God

Men may 'do what the law requires' (Rom. 2: 14) and yet 'there is none who is righteous (*dikaïos*)' and 'none who does good' (*chrēstotēs* = kindness) (3: 9-19), for 'no human being will be justified in God's sight by the works of the law' (3: 20). Men may perform actions which, in respect of other people, are kind and unselfish, yet, in relation to God, all men are totally depraved (Psa. 53: 3f.; 58: 3; Isa. 48: 8).

Apart from Christ, men are totally self-centred in aim and direction. Their idealistic or humanistic motives are the idolisation of their own ideals and especially of their ideals of man; and to these ideals they subordinate the interests even of those to whom they are most kind. The person is subordinated to the ideal of 'the good of mankind' or even of 'the development of personality'. Their genuine righteousness and compassion serve their idolisation of man as the giver of benefits to his fellows, or as his own redeemer from past iniquities, and from their consequences. This last, is also the motive of the Jew, especially the Pharisee, who seeks to expiate the sins of his fathers. It should, in fairness, be added, that there have always been Jews who have been motivated by gratitude for God's grace rather than by self-righteousness.

The integrity which the Psalmist pleads is in relation to his fellow-men (cf. Job 31). Job's friend is right in asking 'How can man be righteous before God? (25: 4, cf. Psa. 143: 2; 130: 3). But it does not help Job (26: 2), who concedes that he may have erred within himself (19: 4), but who still wants to know how God can fail to recompense his righteous dealings with his fellow-men (30: 20). He needs to be shown the unrighteousness of his best works. We make it unnecessarily hard for a man to recognise this, if, like Job's friends, we refuse to acknowledge in any way whatever the goodness he already recognises or exhibits.

Conclusion

We need not fear to recognise such goodness in non-Christians, or to ally ourselves with them in good works. Non-Christian goodness may be perverted with self-interest, but there is much non-Christian self-interest in *our* best works: and this common goodness has its origin in the divine image which we share with all men. Let us not call other men's good works evil or demonic because we cannot find a place for their good works in our theology (cf. Matt. 12: 24-32), or simply because they are not of us (Mk. 9: 38). Let us not despise or disparage such goodness, but acknowledge it, as Paul does in Romans 2, before we turn (Romans 3) to affirm our (not only 'their') total depravity apart from the righteousness of God by faith. In Luther's terms, we must distinguish nature as created from nature turned in on itself; and not fall into the error of treating the created order and created humanity as evil, and hostile in itself to the new humanity in Christ.

Common Grace in the Reformed Faith: A Historical Study

David R. Hanson

Introduction—Common Grace a problem for us

It is not obvious that there are heat-producing tensions in this locus of theology. No English Christian at any rate will sleep the less soundly for hearing that it forms the subject for fresh discussion. But in fact Common Grace is the anchorage of all kinds of practical and cultural issues on the one hand, and on the other hand of theological and philosophical topics that are capable of rousing quite acrimonious controversy.

Academic theologians here have tended to overlook the question: not even the clash between Barth and Brunner in the 1930's (in which Barth contended against Common Grace) produced many repercussions in the British Isles. Today however, there exists a noticeable attraction to the subject at a shallow level. Too often the term's use, far from reflecting a serious grasp of the background to the theme of Common Grace, betrays a total ignorance of the problems at its heart. We owe to the term a real care in handling, such as is not apparent in phrases like 'the realm of Common Grace', and 'our gifts under Common Grace'.

In the last hundred years the pace in discussion over Common Grace has been set in Holland, not surprisingly—for the idea is specifically a Reformed or Calvinistic one. It centres on the relationship of Christians to the 'world in general' and since that has been subjected to dramatic change, we should not be surprised too much, if we find that the Common Grace motif has likewise changed. This background and history deserves our attention, for most of the previous development circumvented the English theological scene and the distinctions which have come to operate in those discussions need to be appreciated if we are to escape the repetition of the less profitable aspects of the story.

That a real problem exists is demonstrated simply by the fact that evangelical writers can be found who completely disallow a doctrine of Common Grace, though others avow that Common Grace does exist and that it evinces a redemptive love of God to all. It is clear that the Reformed teaching about Common Grace which evolved in order to strengthen the confession of a total fall into sin has still to tread warily if it is not to challenge the supremely Reformed doctrine of God's invincible redemptive grace. What is grace? What have we in common with unbelievers? These questions can never be absent in the argument. More specifically still, is it not the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ which brings a sword into human affairs and abolishes common-ness?

Grace?

Primarily we are dealing with God's grace. This is not only goodness or favour or love, but these exhibited where no claims upon them can be

made. It is forfeited love: it relates always to the lostness of man in sin. It is at the heart of the New Testament message and for that reason at the heart of the Reformation. The disappearance of the grace of God from Roman Catholic thinking made the break with Rome inevitable, and the reaction of Rome to the Reformation merely hardened its misunderstanding of grace.¹

Without grace the misery of man is unthinkable. The man who confesses the grace of God always knows something of that misery and cannot be surprised by Scripture which speaks of it as darkness, servility, ignorance and death. He remembers all the same the façade which it showed off—wisdom, wealth, self-determination, mastery of nature and so on. What does surprise him is this—that the world, lying as it does in the evil one, shows any trait which may be regarded as a virtue; and this too—that no end of benefits fall to the lot of those who remain defiers of the Cross. He is not disturbed by the discomfort which accrues to the godly man: he expects no less if he regards himself as a pilgrim. Luther's great hymn displays the true feelings of the Christian harried by the 'Ancient prince of Hell', but who will make a hymn out of the prosperity of the righteous? It is done, of course, in Psalm 73, but when we read of that prosperity it gives us little foundation for a theory of Common Grace. The singer indeed sees only the gulf between the redeemed and the lost when he perceives truly; and then, he tells us, the wearisome task of understanding their prosperity vanished in contemplating their destruction.

How shall we justify our interest in Common Grace?

The good received by men comes from the hand of God—there can be no doubt. We are taught it clearly in Scripture. But what of the good shown by men? Can there be any good in men who lie under God's wrath and in the power of Satan? Must we pass over all the catalogue of virtue in the pagan world, using Augustine's contemptuous 'glittering sins' to describe it? Is it despicable hypocrisy, as he teaches, that produces zeal for civic righteousness in unregenerate men? 'Calvin, in spite of his conviction of the majesty and spiritual character of the moral law, is more generous in his recognition of what is true and good, wherever it be found, than any other Reformer'.² His answer to Augustine at this point was unique—he discovered the doctrine of Common Grace;³ and it is with him we must begin.

It is useful first briefly to establish the status of his doctrine. He confesses no source for it beside Scripture, but it cannot be said that Scripture teaches a doctrine of Common Grace. It cannot be an article of faith and it makes a grotesque showing when it is used as pivotal statement in our (or Calvin's) theology. But it remains there as a useful dogmatic construct for the integration of our understanding of Scripture. It suffers repeatedly from heavy handed enthusiasm and we need to warn ourselves of the danger that Common Grace emerges as a barrier or boundary to the confession of Christ's lordship over His own people.

Common Grace in Calvin

For this section of my essay I am greatly indebted to a most careful doctoral study by H. Kuiper, dated 1928, and defended in the Free University of Amsterdam. In 'Calvin on Common Grace' he presents every passage in the 'Institutes' and the Commentaries which he deems to relate to the subject, and he subjects them to examination. Some 170 pages of Calvin are presented and since a proof 'that God bestows grace not only upon the elect but also upon all creatures' is superfluous in the light of the material from Calvin, a classification of the data is offered. Calvin makes no single reference which gives something like a comprehensive treatment of the whole subject. In addition there is a rich variety of terminology which is not technical and leads to apparent contradictions. Most surprising of all, perhaps Kuiper fails to find one instance of Calvin's use of the term *gratia communis*, and on only four occasions does he qualify that noun by the adjective *communis*. In two of these, Saving Grace is spoken of all the same! With *gratia specialis* we have to be just as careful, for it can refer to the birth of offspring, the endowment of some men with exceptional gifts and the adoption of Abraham's seed into the covenant. Later Reformed theology uses quite hard distinctions of terminology here, unlike Calvin.

The Kuiper classification is useful to follow. It distinguishes three categories in Calvin's Common Grace. They are:

1. Universal Common Grace which touches creatures as creatures,
2. General Common Grace which pertains to men as men,
3. Covenant Grace which extends to all who live in the covenant sphere.

Also, on the basis of distinctions made by Calvin, Kuiper finds in each category a 'special grace' which is furnished to only some, and not all the members of the category.

Examples of Calvin's comments may be given here to illustrate his concept of Common Grace.

1. *Universal Common Grace.* (Inst. I: 5. 6)

' . . . if the cause is sought, by which he was led once to create all these things, and is now moved to preserve them, we shall find that it is his goodness alone. But this being the sole cause, it ought still to be more than sufficient to draw us to his love, inasmuch as there is no creature, as the prophet declares, upon whom God's mercy (*eius misericordia*) has not been poured out'. Calvin refers this statement to Ps. 145: 9, 'The Lord is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made'. On Nahum 1: 5, Calvin comments that 'the earth could not stand a single moment unless supported by the goodness and grace (*gratia et bonitate*) of God'.

Thus all creatures participate in the blessing of preservation, but Kuiper finds one passage which speaks of a special blessing given within the creation for creatures as creatures. Under Ps. 104: 16-18 Calvin explains the ‘trees of the Lord’ as those of great height and surpassing beauty, ‘for God’s blessing is more conspicuous in them’.

2. *General Common Grace*

Calvin never grows tired of telling us that God shows paternal clemency to men in general, that he loves the human race and is concerned for its welfare. Thus all men must consider it a matter of grace that God has made them men and not animals. (Inst. III: 22.1) This life is a testimony of grace (Gen. 38: 7) ‘the longer anyone lives in the world and daily experiences God’s paternal care, it is certain that he is the more bountifully dealt with by the Lord’. Therefore what supports life is a gift of grace, and Calvin quotes Mt. 5: 44, 45 in frequent returns to this theme. ‘Love your enemies . . . so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven: for he makes his sun rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust’.

Just as these *natural blessings* are fruits of Common Grace to men, so is the *forbearance* which God shows in delaying his judgment—‘in order that he may give all time to repent’ (Commentary on II Pet. 3: 9).

The *light of intelligence* is also to be regarded as a divine grace and its power is discussed extensively in the Institutes at II: 2.12-15 though it is prefaced by an emphatic treatment of the corruption and weakening of reason. ‘That common opinion that they have taken from Augustine pleases me: that the natural gifts were corrupted in man through sin, but that his supernatural gifts were stripped from him’. ‘Something of understanding and judgment remains, yet we shall not call a mind whole and sound that is both weak and plunged in deep darkness’. Nevertheless ‘when we so condemn human understanding for its perpetual blindness as to leave it no perception of any object whatever, we not only go against God’s Word, but also run counter to the experience of common sense’.

Calvin finds ‘one kind of understanding of earthly things; another of heavenly. The first class includes government, household management, all mechanical skills and the liberal arts.⁴ In the second are the knowledge of God and of his will, and the rule by which we conform our lives to it’. (II: 2.13)

‘While men dispute about individual sections of the law, they agree on the general conception of equity.—The fact remains that some seed of *political order* has been implanted in all men’. (II: 2.13) ‘Hardly anyone is found who does not manifest talent in some art’ (2: 17). If we regard the Spirit of God as the sole foundation of truth, we shall not despise it wherever it shall appear. Shall we deny that the truth shone in the ancient jurists? ‘Shall we say they are insane who developed medicine? Shall we consider (mathematics) the ravings of madmen?’ (II: 2.14) If the Spirit

dwells only in believers, this refers 'to the Spirit of Sanctification. Nevertheless, he fills, moves and quickens all things by the power of the same Spirit. If the Lord has willed that we be helped in physics, dialectic, mathematics and other like disciplines by the work of the ungodly—let us own this assistance'. (II: 2.16)

Much more confined is man's understanding of heavenly things. 'Certainly I do not deny that one can read competent and apt statements about God here and there in the philosophers.—The Lord gave them a slight taste of His divinity—sometimes impelled them to make utterances by the confession of which they would themselves be corrected. But their seeing did not direct them to the truth, much less enable them to attain it'. (II: 2.18) Still here is the '*sensus divinitatis*' and a (defective) knowledge of the rule of life.

Undoubtedly Calvin recognises a *general revelation* of God in His works, and that this is a token of goodness. Thus, under Acts 17: 26, he says 'God comes to meet us and makes himself visible by such manifest signs that we can have no excuse for our ignorance'.

He discovers an *internal restraint of sin* in Common Grace. (Inst. II: 3.3 referred to Ps. 14: 3 and Rom. 3: 12). 'It ought to occur to us that amid this corruption of nature there is some place for God's grace: not such as to cleanse but to restrain it inwardly. For if the Lord gave loose rein to the mind of each man to run riot in his lusts, there would doubtless be no one who would not show in himself every evil thing for which Paul condemns all nature'.

Calvin remains convinced of the depths of depravity and the judgments of God. God examines motives and not deeds only. In a justice that reaches man's heart, all done without faith is sin.

An *external restraint of sin* operates also. Calvin's well-known expositions of the authority of magistrates (Inst. IV: 20) indicate their value. 'Civil government enables men to breath, eat, drink and be warmed, but also in enforcing law, curbs the insolence and licentiousness of the wicked and provides for general peace and safety'. In speaking of the right use of judicial proceedings Calvin states that the assistance of the magistrate is a sacred gift of God.

In view of the nature of these several patterns of General Common Grace, it would be surprising if Kuiper in his thesis were not able to identify many special gifts devolving upon the noble, the skilled, the learned, the man of the moment and of course upon certain definite groups of men. They need not be detailed.

3. *Covenant Common Grace*

In Calvin's deliverance on the Common Grace of God, Kuiper finds last the category of Covenant Common Grace. It is identified by Calvin himself as the grace of the covenant or the grace of adoption, the common grace of election and promiscuous grace. This last mentioned term, used

in Inst. II: 21.7, indicates an election, or common adoption in which some subjects were 'sons of Abraham according to the flesh'. He believed, too, that a certain covenant grace is granted to all who in the New Testament dispensation live in the covenant sphere, to all the believers and their children, to all who in any sense may be accounted members of the New Testament Church. Calvin intimates that adoption into the covenant holds a kind of middle place between the rejection of the human race and the election of a small number into salvation (II: 21.7). These men may be called God's own possession, the inheritance of the Lord. Kuiper notes that Calvin appears to make the covenant extend 'as widely as the external preaching of the Word'. (Comm. on Gen. 25: 23). Certainly Calvin regards the preaching of the Word as a sign of God's favour to any people—and its deprivation an extreme curse.

Special graces abound within this genre of Common Grace. All of these gifts bear a temporal character, says Kuiper. Among the ones cited by Calvin, those affecting Judas are of interest: his apostolic office (Inst. III: 22.7) and excellent gifts meet for that office, and the indulgence shown by Christ in concealing his name at the Last Supper (which gave an opportunity for him to come to repentance).

The *source of Common Grace* for Calvin is quite simply the fact that God is the 'fountain of all good'. He does good because He is good. Yet Christ is certainly related to the good which all men receive (Inst. I: 2.1). 'In this ruin of mankind no one now experiences God either as Father or as Author of salvation or favourable in any way, until Christ the Mediator comes forward to reconcile Him to us'. In the comment on Daniel 2: 40-43, Calvin writes that 'all the kingdoms of this world are founded on the power and beneficence of Christ'. On Eph. 1: 22 he says 'with this condition Christ was made Head of the Church—that He should have the administration of all things'. With regard to the material or temporal endowments of believers Calvin has no doubts that they spring from the Cross of Christ—'In Adam we were deprived of the inheritance of the whole world'. (Inst. III: 25.9) but 'The more man's dominion over the world is apparent, the more ought we to be affected with the sense of God's grace—as often as we eat food or enjoy other comforts—for Christ is the lawful Heir of heaven and earth, by whom the faithful recover what they lost in Adam'. (Comm. on Ps. 8: 8-10). Indeed, this argument is carried so far as to say that the godless have only illegitimate possession of their benefits. On I Tim. 4: 'properly speaking, God has assigned the whole world and all that is in the world, to His children exclusively—they are called the heirs. Therefore unbelievers steal and rob, as it were, the property of another'.

How is the wrath of God averted from sinners so that they may enjoy favours from Him despite their rejection of Christ? This is no small problem for the student of Common Grace. The idea that blessings, won for the elect by their Redeemer, spill over upon others, is advanced. That Christ's protection of the interests of his Church necessitates restraint and cultivation of the ungodly is also found in Calvin. Lastly emerges the thought that Christ in his work as the Eternal Word, through whom the

world is created and upheld (as the 'Mediator of Creation', Abraham Kuyper will say) furnishes all men and things with good gifts. Calvin asserts that this 'substratum' qualifies Christ most fittingly for his work as Redeemer, so that Common Grace here precedes, rather than follows, atonement.

The Purpose of Common Grace

Kuiper distinguishes in Calvin's mind these ends of Common Grace:
the welfare of mankind and creation
the advancement of Christ's church
the allurement of men to repentance
the exhibition of God's attributes
the discharge of all excuse from the wicked, and (in one case—
Gen. 20: 6) the mitigation of future judgment.

That Calvin appears to contradict himself should not surprise us in view of his copious output. However two points at issue have recurred to trouble all later writers on the subject. Calvin, in commenting on Jer. 33: 8, says that 'properly speaking,⁵ what God bestows on the ungodly, cannot be deemed a testimony of favour'. Clearly, however, Calvin does not deny that God is good to unrepentant men; he questions whether 'grace' is not a misleading description of the clemency which accompanies men as long as they live. Again, he teaches on the one hand that God loves the whole human race, wills the conversion of all and wishes all to be saved, but on the other, that He has devoted some men to eternal destruction. Kuiper acknowledges in this a real and not a seeming contradiction. Calvin systematically denies that God has a double will: we must not think it. But to our apprehension it is manifold. The contradiction is for Calvin a paradox of Scripture. Douma (*De Algemeene Genade*, 1967) distinguishes three suggested answers in Calvin—

1. There is a unity beyond our grasp (Kuiper's point).
2. 'In a certain sense' God shows wrath to the elect and grace to the reprobate.
3. God hates the sinners, but he loves them insofar as they are his handiwork, his creatures.

The extent of our attention to Calvin is well justified. If he discovered Common Grace (which Bavinck claims) certainly 'all the later theologians who have written on it, have borrowed largely from him'. In reaction against the Calvinist confession of grace, the Remonstrants (Arminians) claimed that Common Grace is sufficient to enable men to repent and believe. The Synod of Dordrecht (1618-1619) reaffirmed the necessity for effectual, prevenient (saving) grace for these marks of regenerate life.

In America, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Hodge and A. A. Hodge, his son, all maintain Calvin's teaching save for the omission by the latter pair of any reference to natural benefits in Common Grace. The elder Hodge is distinguished as the first theologian to have devoted a lengthy, connected discussion to the subject.

In Europe, the Dutchman Bavinck returns to the theme of Common Grace in the Calvinian idiom when it was all but forgotten. With his contemporary and friend, Abraham Kuyper, Common Grace assumes a new and unprecedented importance.

In Britain, Cunningham raised in an interesting way, the relationship of Christ to Common Grace—'Many blessings flow to mankind at large from the death of Christ, collaterally and incidentally in consequence of the relation in which men, viewed collectively, stand to each other'. The same problems renew their activity in this century.

Before we address ourselves to the chief lines of Kuyper's teaching on Common Grace, which introduce somewhat new thoughts, I intend to devote some time to the comparison of the Reformed apprehension of Common Grace with the world-view of Roman theology and to answer in the affirmative the question—Does it really advance us beyond the scholastic scheme of nature and grace?

Common Grace and Nature

Bavinck claims Calvin as the first to overcome the false nature/grace dichotomy of Roman Catholic thought. Luther failed, though he correctly drew up the force of grace against sin rather than nature, but the good in natural man found a place through his sharp heavenly/earthly demarcation rather than through grace. Zwingli understands sin more as pollution than guilt, and therefore understands grace as sanctifying more than pardoning; so God's saving activity diffuses to some extent among even pagan philosophers. How does Rome herself deal with 'nature knowledge', 'goodness', 'law'?

Certainly the medieval church developed careful answers to these problems but their origins lay back in Patristic times. One account of the development (H. van Til) stresses the Constantinian hey-day. Worldliness, rolling into the church, drove many towards monastic and ascetic ideals which were conceded a proper place in the Church. Society, now Christian, lay on two levels. The 'world' was merely the secular part remaining outside the ecclesiastical institution and not in any way antithetic to the church. Man's life in the world was neatly covered by a sacramental umbrella. Hebden Taylor speaks of three attitudes of the Fathers to classical culture and the Empire. Tertullian's 'What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?'—a rhetorical rejection of rhetoric; Justin Martyr's proselytising accommodation and finding implicit in the philosophers what is explicit in Christ; Basil's and Augustine's practical eclecticism—a spoiling of the Egyptians carried out under Christian customs control. Two scholastic motifs are anticipated in the Fathers: (1) Cultural pursuits are only ancillary to theology (Can one serve God in these fields?). This view derives from Aristotle's supremacy of metaphysical theology. (2) The body of the cultural product, somewhat blue-pencilled, is accepted with no demand for its reformation.

For Augustine however, 'a natural theology in the Aristotelian sense was radically excluded'⁶ yet Rome defends a natural knowledge of God by the natural light of reason. Berkouwer expounds this⁷ 'Its background is an anthropology which *lifts* the so-called rational soul *out* of the sin-depraved life of man, and by way of this non-corrupt reason considers man capable of true knowledge of God. It is true that Rome admits that sin has wounded human nature by the loss of special supernatural gifts, but the physical ability of reason was neither destroyed nor disturbed, so that reason can still reach God. Reason is rooted in the *soul* which is the *form* of the body. Therefore there is always a certain dependence on *matter*. Knowledge is dependent on the operation of the senses'. 'The transcendent value of causality makes natural knowledge of God possible'. Thus come in the classic theistic proofs. Because of the analogy of being,⁸ man, in his natural knowledge, is gripped by the world of created reality. Berkouwer asks if there is a real acknowledgment of a revelation of God in created reality. 'One is always amazed how little place this revelation idea gets in the exposition of natural theology'.

Calvin shows us another road, especially where the understanding of the *locus classicus* on 'natural theology' (Rom. 1: 20ff.) is concerned. There is a *sensus divinitatis*, and God is revealed in his works in such a way that man cannot miss that revelation. The representations God gives of Himself are clear enough, but in the idolatry of the heathen we see that 'their conceptions of Him are formed not according to the representations—but by the inventions of their own presumptuous imaginations'. (Inst. I: 4.1) Calvin speaks with Paul of blindness, vanity, sleep (which conceals from man a thousand things around him), and the Reformed Canons of Dort repeat his estimate of human ability. There remains after the fall a remnant of natural light 'whereby he retains some knowledge of God, of natural things and of the difference between good and evil and shows some regard for virtue'. But 'he is incapable of using it aright even in things natural and civil. Nay further, this light, such as it is, man in various ways renders wholly polluted and hinders in unrighteousness'. (Canons III and IV.1) General revelation does not imply natural theology, for it is read only rightly through the spectacles of redemptive grace.

Berkouwer discusses not only natural theology but also natural morality and natural law against the background of his subject—General Revelation. Particularly from examination of Rom. 2 (especially vv. 14, 15) natural morality has been defended. 'Doing the works of the law' is no problem for Rome. 'Natural law is founded in the reasonable nature of man, which simply cannot but strive for the good'.⁹ It is a copy of God's eternal law and explains why, irrespective of the Divine Revelation, there are norms which concern all. In other writers, natural law is discussed without a theistic foundation, but its validity is proclaimed. A striking example of this is the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights' drafted by the U.N. in 1948. Hugo Grotius, the Arminian Jurist, speaks of natural law as so 'unchangeable that even God could not change it, even if he so desired'. In the Scholastic idea, the theistic basis is of no material

significance because the natural law is deduced from nature by the natural light of reason. It is 'the participation in the Eternal law by rational creatures' (Aquinas—*Summa Theol.*). It is not placed above man as a norm but in him as a reflection of the immanent logos.

In Calvin, natural law does play a part. Prof. J. Bohatec investigated it, together with the tension between this appreciation and the pessimism of original sin.¹⁰ But Calvin's starting point is never in anthropology, with some relative corruption. It is God's activity in history, the preservation and government of the world, the power of his law, which impresses. A 'certain civil virtue may originate, not from a central and religious inclination of the heart towards God, but from seeing the goodness and usefulness of God's orderings'¹¹. Certainly it is not man's goodness, but that of God's law and ordinance which Calvin observes. It is not deprivation of God's gifts which accounts for corruption either, for precisely *with* the gifts man shows it. Any natural righteousness depends on the common grace by which man can still notice something of God's law.

The Reformation under Calvin must be granted the honour of having ended the long attempt to wed an Aristotelian conception of human nature to the Biblical ground-motif of creation, fall, and redemption in Jesus Christ in the communion of the Holy Spirit.

Abraham Kuyper and Common Grace

If and when *The Christian Mind of Abraham Kuyper*¹² becomes the subject of serious consideration in England, it could produce a major upheaval of our own conceptions of Christianity and life. There will be some who question the desirability of this! That Kuyper demands much more attention, is clear from a few biographical details:

Son (b. 1837) of a clergyman; enthusiastic for critical liberalism in theological school; converted and re-directed in the historic (confessional) Reformed faith in his first parish; campaigner for Christian education; founder of the Free University of Amsterdam; member of Parliament; editor of two newspapers; church reformer; Prime Minister of the Netherlands. He is a figure of almost incomparable stature in modern times, unique in the Church and originator of much that remains vital in Dutch culture. He died in 1920.

More than most Christian statesmen, Kuyper realised the necessity of active engagement along the whole front of the cultural battlefield. The nineteenth century was, more clearly than anything else to him, a struggle for the soul of his nation, and in the conflict he had no tolerance for the spiritual withdrawal which Anabaptism and Pietism had engendered in the Christian mind. Kuyper in his day was acutely aware that the Christian mind was all but gone—and to its rebuilding his life was devoted. The believing people of the Netherlands had to be activated or their cultural milieu would fall into the hands of Antichristian powers. There was no thought in Kuyper that Christians might not be called to christianise their world.

The idea of antithesis appeared much earlier than Kuyper of course. Even with Augustine, we are told there increases a reserve towards Greek culture and science as his understanding of the radical character of the Christian faith grows. In the Calvinist stream of the Reformation this disenchantment returns, though Luther was able to declaim that 'Christ came—not to change anything outwardly—but that men be changed in their hearts!' At Geneva another understanding of the penetration of the Gospel prevailed—an awareness that every last particle of life, public or private; inward or outward; natural or spiritual, must be brought into subjection to God in Christ. One could not otherwise speak of Calvin's influence upon Arts, Commerce, Education, Politics—which an endless stream of research reveals. All authority is God's; the magistrate and the employer, the father and teacher must recognise it. The motto *Coram Deo* (before God's face) declares the call to do everything as the Lord delights to have it done. It is not the mind of Calvin to imagine that 'full-time Christian service' is anything but the duty of us all. The magistrate serves just as well as the presbyter but within a different sphere of norms. 'In our entire life we have dealings with God' he said—and showed by an impressive record of recommendations regarding social organisation: no fires without chimneys; no balconies without railings; drains; latrines; cheaper heating; controlled letting of rooms; dentistry and cloth manufacture.

Kuyper's slogan stands squarely under Calvin's inspiration: 'In the whole territory of human life, not an inch can be found, but Christ claims of it 'Mine!''. By this he understands no ecclesiastical hegemony. For Kuyper, culture must remain 'secular', by which he meant free from churchly or priestly domination. He could have agreed feelingly with the grievance expressed in the famous words 'New presbyter is but old priest writ large'. He will allow the elder his jurisdiction over Christians as they are called to live in the world in the status of members of the organised church, but the Christian has two other callings within society: to live in it as a member of the Body of Christ (over against the world and for the King) and to join with unbelievers in seeking the welfare of the whole society.

To Kuyper's credit he investigates in a creative, scholarly way the importance of Common Grace—which, far from disappearing under the strength of the antithesis between light and darkness, receives emphasis. His three-volume, 1700-page study on *De Gemeene Gratie* published first as a series of articles in one of his newspapers, *Heraut*, followed other series on Particular (saving) Grace and on Covenantal Grace, and presented us with his world view.

Common Grace restrains sin, and produces civil virtue, it channels the natural gifts of God's beneficence. Common Grace maintains in the sinner a *semen religionis*. If he speaks of natural theology, it is not the Roman kind—another way of knowing God truly, prior to the experience of his grace; it is the inevitable reaction of man to God's revelation—and this reaction is false. 'We are pagans by nature, and were rescued by the

same grace that can be their share also'. False religion shows a law of paganism, not of evolution. It is bound by norms and exhibits regularity in its apostasy—but Common Grace is there. Both Kuyper and Bavincx see in the founding of religions 'favourable influences on the life of peoples'.

Common Grace goes much further however.

The foundation of culture, and the promise of cultural triumph is for Kuyper Common Grace. (Calvin, we remember, saw it as intended that men might know God, but everywhere opposed, defiled and scorned.) Most characteristic of all in Kuyper's concept is the independent goal he sets for Common Grace, namely, 'to cause all the potential hidden in our race to manifest itself to the glory and praise of God's name'. The potential hidden in the material universe under our dominion shares in this denouement. A negative line of action is concerned to restrain sin, postpone the judgment of God, and preserve the creation. Kuyper seems to speculate at this point regarding the power of sin to threaten creation with non-being. 'If the Fall is found in the Decree (of predestination) then at once, not only particular grace but also common grace, *must* be incorporated as a mighty driving force in that same Decree. For if the Fall had not been followed by common grace as well, it would forever have withdrawn the continuation of the world from God's self-glorification'. Ultimately, says one writer of Kuyper's Common Grace, 'It is God's inexorably hostile disposition towards Satan'. Is that grace? In fact Kuyper almost invariably speaks of this grace as God's act, rather than his disposition towards men.

The second, positive line of action follows because God will not allow Satan to frustrate the unfolding of his created order. It discloses the panorama of cultural history, with man as instrument and co-worker. This history is the 'collective exhibition of the image of God in the human race' which produces at one and another point a 'fulness of time'—for the incarnation, for Pentecost. The grace which saves unto everlasting life uses Common Grace as a base for its operation. Adam's dominion of nature is restored by Common Grace for these ends. For Kuyper the fruits of culture have eternal significance since 'the glory and honour of the nations' are carried into the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21.26) and in some sense other than a crude literalism, the poor shall inherit an earth rich with the booty of cultural history. So it is that Special and Common Grace are intertwined, yet they aim at distinct goals and have separate foundations—the one is a supernatural realm of glory, the other is creaturehood. Christ rules over both but in distinct offices, as Mediator of Redemption and as Mediator of Creation. This dichotomous moment in Kuyper occasioned much debate. Does it restore a spiritualistic split in human life? Does it pave the way for a secular gospel that recognises and values the 'purely-human' as distinct from the 'Christian'? Does it not re-introduce the Thomist nature/grace schema, disguised by the idea of Christ as Mediator of Creation?

These questions are to some extent quieted by the Kuyperian doctrine of Special Grace, which can hardly be understood in a pietist, other-worldly sense. *Pro Rege—the Kingship of Christ*, another three-volume set, presents the conception of a Christian culture, as the service of gratitude owed by the redeemed to Christ. Here lies the warfare in which the believer engages in the world. Hence Kuyper's high valuation of the Christian University and the Calvinistic Anti-Revolutionary party. He elaborates a philosophy of life in which the power of redemption is demonstrated to impinge upon every facet of this world. His lectures at Princeton in 1898 on 'Calvinism' illustrate the fruit born of the Reformation in science, art, politics, as well as religion and there he specifically attacks the dualism between the concepts of creation and salvation. 'The object of the work of redemption extends itself to the redemption of the *world*, and to the organic reunion of all things in heaven and earth under Christ as their original head'. In the lectures he speaks of Common Grace and, interpreting it as a realm of life, suggests that scientific interest in this 'realm' though different in kind from theology is not a lower thing, but is liberated through the dogma of Common Grace. Nonetheless he puts forward the conviction that every science in a degree starts from faith and that therefore it is not faith and science, 'but two scientific systems, or elaborations, which are opposed to each other, each having its own faith'. Common Grace serves here, as elsewhere, to make the spiritual antithesis a possibility.

Since Kuyper—what?

In complete opposition to Kuyper's appreciation of culture, Common Grace and the struggle by Christ's subjects on behalf of their King, Karl Barth has made a radical attempt to show that there can be no revelation outside of Christ, no Common Grace, no Christian culture. His theology is far outside my understanding, and I only suggest that readers might care to consult Berkouwer for a critique of Barth which he has himself recommended.

Within the camp of confessional Reformed faith, 1924 saw a Synodical deliverance in the Christian Reformed Church in the United States on the subject of Common Grace. It enumerates 'Three Points of Common Grace', which I give here:

- A. concerning the first point, touching the favourable attitude of God to mankind in general and not only toward the elect, Synod declares that according to Scripture and Confession, it is certain that, in addition to the saving grace of God displayed to the elect unto eternal life, there is also a certain favour or grace (*een zekere gunst of genade*) of God which He shows to his creatures in general.
- B. Concerning the second point, touching the restraint of sin in the life of the individual and of society, Synod declares that according to Scripture and Confession there is such a restraint of sin.

- C. Concerning the third point, touching the performance of so-called civic righteousness by the unregenerate, Synod declares that according to Scripture and Confession the unregenerate, although unable to do any saving good (Canons of Dort, III and IV, art. 4) can perform such civic good.

The accent in the first point should be noted: it refers to God's disposition.

In Holland, Kuyper and Calvin alike were criticised on the points of Common Grace and General Revelation by Klaas Schilder, a brilliant theologian of this century who, despite a strongly Biblical motif can be criticised for falling into speculation quite as much as Kuyper. Schilder begins his attack by espousing the equal ultimacy of God's election and reprobation, and therefrom deducing that God can have no attitude of favour to men who are 'vessels of wrath'. He finds a dual meaning in history, into which the Gospel comes in order to be a savour of death, just as much, and in the same manner as to be a savour of life. Love and wrath are from eternity, while he speaks of a general love of God directed towards men as his handiwork. 'He always loves his handiwork, also in Satan, also in Antichrist'. Culture depends on providence in this scheme: the restraint of sin (and indeed, the restraint of grace) is implicit in *time* itself, and in the present course of time we can only speak of Common Grace if we couple with it a common curse. Eating, drinking, and begetting may not be said to show grace—for either blessing or curse attaches to them. In culture we do not experience something *permitted* to man after the fall but we see a response, be it inadequate, to God's *command* for Adam.

Whence then does the 'good' in the unbeliever come? Schilder points to four factors—the law is profitable, after all; remnants of original gifts are found; God preserves the world in the structure of law; and, he maintains, time, the cessation of which will end all restraint of wrath (and of grace). Berkouwer¹³ points out that among the remnant gifts, Schilder adds to reason and will 'a sense of responsibility', and describes this acquisition as 'completely incomprehensible'. The suggestion has been made that Schilder's peculiar approach to the subject is explicable as a reaction in prophetic style to the optimism regarding culture, bred in part by Kuyper, and as a warning to weak and flaccid Christianity of the wrath of God.

The recurring problem in Common Grace, since Kuyper, is inevitably its relation to Christ and His Kingdom. It is not without reason that so many criticisms have been levelled at Kuyper for the polarity which his expressions establish between Common and Special Grace. Equally to be avoided, in view of the confession of the *Grace* of God in Christ, is the resurgence of any semblance of *Hubris* in the cultural endeavours of Christians. The most influential development of Kuyper's thinking on Common Grace, the Christian world-view and the antithesis in culture, by any account would appear to be the growth of the philosophical movement led by Prof. Hermann Dooyeweerd of the Free University of

Amsterdam. To him has fallen the task of constructing a philosophical method which can be called truly Christian, and in so doing, to identify some of the powerful philosophical motifs which have denatured the Christian world-view. Among them, the scholastic nature/grace dualism figures large. The humanist dualism of nature/freedom is also subjected to a radical criticism by Dooyeweerd. Common Grace inevitably plays a part in his expositions, and particularly as it is active in forming a picture of a two-realm world, does it come under his axe. An essay entitled 'The Secularisation of Science' written by Dooyeweerd in 1953, contains the following passage on Common Grace: 'Any theological speculation that attempts to introduce a dialectical tension between the creation and the re-creation in Christ Jesus, between the Word as Creator and the Word as Saviour, is anti-biblical! Neither is there a dualism between common grace and special grace, as if the realm of common grace were separate from the realm of Christ. There is no grace apart from Jesus Christ, the new Root of humanity. The entire domain of common grace is the domain of Jesus Christ. Common grace is nothing more than grace toward mankind taken as a whole, the humanity which is not yet liberated from its old, apostate root, but which is contemplated by God in its new Root, Jesus Christ. It belongs also to the domain of Christ, where the conflict appears between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness. Common grace cannot be interpreted as being the realm of nature, in the Roman Catholic sense, as the autonomous preamble of the realm of grace. On the contrary, it is the sphere of the irreconcilable antithesis between the city of God and worldly city of the devil'. And at the end of his essay he deprecates the protracted discussion about whether science and philosophy also pertain to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, or whether they belong instead to a domain of natural reason. This discussion need not go on, because 'there is no natural reason that is independent of the religious driving force which controls the heart of human existence'.

Dooyeweerd's pupil, Dr. Jan Dengerink, in his contributory essay to 'Philosophy and Christianity' dedicated to Prof. Dooyeweerd in 1965, describes the controlling and dominating perspective in his teacher's philosophy. Few philosophers receive such tributes: 'Redemption according to Dooyeweerd, does not introduce a wholly new order in human society. Redemption for him is rather re-creation, understood in this sense that the meaning-totality of the cosmos lies embedded in Jesus Christ according to His Human nature. This does not imply that Dooyeweerd rejects every radical and irreconcilable opposition in this world. To the contrary, his thought is based to a large extent on the recognition of such an opposition. However, this is then *not* an opposition between certain aspects of reality, between the realm of ideas and brute social reality, between law and force, between freedom and nature; but it *is* the antithesis of the radical No! of God against the rebellion of mankind fallen into sin, or grace in Christ against the destruction of the Kingdom of Satan, of creation's destiny against the apostasy of nature. But even this radical opposition is not of a permanent nature because it has been

conquered in Christ. There is re-creation and perfect redemption. Even sin remains subject to God's absolute Creator's will'.

If Common Grace teaches us anything, it is just this: that even sin remains subject to God's absolute Creator's will.

(Readers of Dr. Francis A. Schaeffer's recent widely publicised works will readily see how the ideas he puts forward interact with those discussed in this paper—Ed.).

NOTES

1. For a discussion of the supreme importance of the confessions of the grace of God in the Reformation, see G. C. Berkouwer, *The Conflict with Rome*.
2. H. Bavinck in an essay *Calvin and Common Grace*.
3. Bavinck, *De Algemeene Genade*.
4. He fails to mention—says the footnote in the S.C.M. edition of the Institutes—'The fine arts which however are admired by him'.
5. *proprie loquendo* is used on more than one occasion by Calvin, to indicate that his idea of Common Grace is only a construct, which has always to be corrected by more firmly established Scripture teaching.
6. Dooyeweerd *The Secularisation of Science* International Reformed Bulletin, July 1966.
7. Berkouwer, *General Revelation*, p. 67.
8. 'Being and existence are in God, just as well as in the creature'—H. Robbers, S.J.
9. Berkouwer, *General Revelation*, p. 201.
10. *Calvin und das Recht*, 1934.
11. Berkouwer *General Revelation*, p. 200.
12. This is the title of a paper in 'Papers of the 1967 Puritan and Reformed Studies Conference' to be published shortly by The Evangelical Magazine, Providence House, 3 Speke Road, S.W.11.
13. *General Revelation*, p. 182.

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 44 Arden Road, London, N.3.)

A PHILOSOPHICAL ENQUIRY

The third paper is the substance of a discussion between Professor Paul Hirst, Mr. O. R. Johnston and Mr. A. E. Willingale, edited by Mr. C. G. Martin. The discussion was based upon a number of previously circulated questions setting out some points in which the doctrine of Common Grace might relate to other concepts. The paper that follows is obviously a selection and abbreviation of the discussion and does not necessarily represent the position of all (or in every point, any) of the participants. It does, however, represent one definite three-hour attempt to relate a Christian view of the world to contemporary thought.

Common Grace and the Autonomy of Knowledge

One of the tasks of the philosopher is to show the logical structure of areas of knowledge and their inter-relation. He attempts to make a coherent map, resolving apparent confusions between different types of knowledge—or at least to show how these confusions arise. Central to such clarification is the idea that certain areas of thought and knowledge are ‘autonomous’, or logically independent of knowledge in other areas. Agreement within such areas is possible then even for people who differ widely on other matters, and this is not because they ‘sink their differences’ or ‘compromise’ but because of the logical limitations demanded by engaging in such an autonomous activity. Just as a Christian and an atheist may play chess, and agree entirely about the threats implicit in a given position and the best ways of meeting them, so they can engage in the autonomous pursuits of knowledge. They may play chess for widely different reasons, and with widely different tempers, but on the correctness or otherwise of the moves they can and must agree. The game of chess is an autonomous field of activity. Is not the pursuit of science, for instance, independent of religious beliefs in just the same way?

To be human involves being able to engage at least to some degree in various fields of thought and enquiry. The Christian would claim that by virtue of his knowledge of Jesus Christ, the Truth, he can see some relationship between all areas of knowledge and find them fit together in a meaningful whole. He would suspect that unbelievers either do not venture into certain areas of thought, or else endure deep tensions between areas—in either case being potentially less able to gain the fullest meaning from experience. But the present discussion suggests that even if people refuse the centrality of Christ, and the area of knowledge related to Him, God has so ordered affairs that there are large areas where truth is still available. In these areas knowledge is acquired autonomously, independently of religious beliefs and the place of such knowledge in a Christian world-view. The fact that men may refuse to act on it, or may suppress it, does not destroy its general availability or compulsiveness. Such a situation operates to the well-being of mankind, and may be seen as a continuous activity of God, giving to just and unjust alike. To such common giving of autonomous understanding, the label ‘Common Grace’ would not be inappropriate.

General Agreement and Reasonableness

This discussion does not start from any supposed definition of Common Grace, but from the simple observation that in practice Christians and others do work successfully with the same tools within the same frameworks. In intellectual matters we find ready agreement in reasoning as a method of arriving at conclusions, and an astonishing measure of agreement in the conclusions.

About the reasoning enterprise as a whole, Christians may well say that, with every other human endowment, it is part of God's giving; the 'agreement' to seek reasons for acting, the ability to perform the reasoning, are God's grace, even where not perceived as such by those who use them; just as life is God's gift even to those who refuse to see it as such (e.g. Dan. 5: 23). Unbelievers may see the reasoning as the fortuitous fruit of evolutionary process, or may simply accept it and regard questions about its origin as useless. The fact remains that all do in fact practice, recognise and use these abilities according to the same logical laws.

Traditionally this has been seen by theologians in 'restraint terms'. It has been argued that mankind, not wishing to retain God in their knowledge, might wreck the world hopelessly, had God not arranged this area of common agreement, the common rational enterprise, as a bulwark against anarchy and disorder. One could speculate about this—for example, whether 'culture' and 'reasonableness' could be part of unfallen man—part of the original nature in which he was to glorify God.¹ But this is speculation, and, be the function of reason restraint or no, it is certain that the 'dominion' which man exercises over creation rests *now* in his capacity to observe and organise his observations into patterns which enable him to predict and control.

Two Possible Areas of Autonomous Knowledge

As mentioned above, some areas of observation and reasoning appear to be logically autonomous, i.e. the concepts and true statements of the area are related in accordance with certain rules, so that in principle everything in this area is knowable within a given system, and nothing outside the field can affect the truth or relations between statements within it. Two such areas will now be considered—that of scientific enquiry and morality.

Scientific Enquiry

The area of science is characterised by the fundamental principle 'Go and look', and the expectation that what is observed is regular. The resulting descriptions of observed regularities are the 'laws of science', often spoken of in terms of 'cause' and 'effect'. No 'law' is to be denied in the field of scientific enquiry except by some observation within the field which conflicts with it. This is the study of 'what happens', and no happening can be shielded from investigation. It is logically possible to

imagine a complete scientific account of the whole of experience, and no considerations of value or morality could affect such an account. It is a field autonomous with respect to morals and religion. By the same token such questions as 'How did it all begin?' or 'Is there any point in it all?' are questions which cannot be raised in this field—they are not scientific questions.

This field of scientific enquiry is pursued with equal success by Christian and non-Christian, and in the same manner. The Christian will have a different view of science as a whole (e.g. as a God-given method to exercise 'dominion') but as to what is scientifically correct, he will share with all users of the scientific method.

Christians may point out that the scientific enterprise arose out of the idea of God as rational and dependable, Whose ways are open to humble investigation and possess an order and completeness. They may argue that the 'discontinuous' and unpredictable view of God's activity in Islam is one reason for the lack of scientific enterprise in that culture. So much may be granted, but does this mean the Christian will make a 'better' scientist? It may be said he can give a fuller and more coherent account of science, better based and more closely related to a total world-view. But the Humanist—with his emphasis on evolution (biological and psychosocial)—can also give an account of considerable coherence and 'tight-knittedness'. A Christian might better say that his view is more comprehensive; as randomness gives place to pattern, he can say 'This is because there is a Designer, and He may be related to many other fields than the scientific. This is just one meaningful way of looking at God's World'.

But a scientist (Christian or other), *as* a scientist, does not value this portmanteau, overall view—it is not itself part of science. He abstracts sections from experience for study. The pattern he discovers is *consistent with* Christianity, but does not *necessitate* it, and indeed is logically independent. Attempts at logical relation—e.g. to say from religious premisses what scientific discovery will be like—lead only to confusion. Again if we look at different overall world-views, we find they have to be modified in the light of science, or fall by the wayside. The Hindu and Muslim views of the world are now both under pressure from science. Christians, at various times, have had to spend a lot of time re-interpreting Genesis because of their inability to dissociate science as a separate limited area of observation and analysis from a world view in which God is creator and sustainer. Many kinds of 'gods' must be discarded if one is not to contract out of the scientific enterprise.

This general position of the relationship between science and religion has now been convincingly argued,² and the autonomy of science is widely accepted by Christians. It is accepted without the fear that in so doing, the Faith is being jeopardised. The two are logically distinct. No amount of description of the psychology or social milieu of Jeremiah can decide whether his 'thus said the LORD' is an actual communication from God

or not. Within the scientific field Christian, Humanist, Communist, or Hindu *must* arrive at similar conclusions, for if they all engage in science they are thereby working under identical principles. How they square these conclusions with other fields is a separate question. Christians see this inevitable agreement in scientific enquiry as a God-given boon which defies the efforts of evil to twist it. Things *are* so; they *can* be understood; here is one ultimate human possibility.

Use and Abuse

Of course it will be rejoined that even if evil men cannot twist scientific truth, they can put those truths to evil ends. *How* to produce atomic fission is a scientific matter all agree upon, and cannot be altered. *Why* and for what purpose such power is used is a very different matter. This introduces us to the transition to another possibly autonomous field—that of morality. Merely as scientists, Christians, Humanists and Nazis may agree that knowledge could be gained by experiment on human beings. But Christian and Humanist would most likely find themselves together at some point in resisting this, or similar, *unlimited* pursuit of science. The ‘desire to know’ is not the only thing to be pursued. This consideration, however, does not arise *within* the scientific field itself, but from outside. Science is being viewed from an outside viewpoint from which it, as a discipline entire in itself, is put in its place by reference to other considerations. If asked ‘Why should we not experiment, for example, on Jews?, both Christian and Humanist will give *reasons*, but not the sort of reasons they give in the scientific field. They will talk of ‘rights of individuals’, ‘equality of opportunity’, ‘people as ends in themselves’.³

Morality

Morality can be seen as the area of reasoning logically about values and actions, of ‘having reasons’ for what we do. Note that this is in fact what *does* happen in practice. Challenged about a particular action, we attempt to give reason for it, to show that although at first sight it is against some general principle, the present circumstances make the differing action appropriate. If this ‘quest for reasons for actions’ is pursued long enough, we are driven back to a few basic principles. Principles such as: truth-telling, impartiality (i.e. not making difference of treatment unless there are observable, relevant differences in the cases), liberty, considering other people as able to determine their own ends. If questioning persists at these points, the questions become of a different logical kind. Up to now they have been of the form ‘What is the reason for doing A rather than B?’: they now become of the form ‘Why have reasons?’ i.e. ‘What is the reason for having reasons?’ and this is logically like saying in science ‘Why should I go and look?’. Exponents of the autonomy of morality as an area of thought assert that the few basic principles referred to are ultimate, and can be shown to be ultimate, in the same way that observation, regularity and causation are ultimate in the structure of scientific thought.⁴ Nor will it do to say that we can choose our basic principles (any more than we can choose our ultimate points of reference in science). It is logically un-

sound to say that we go in for impartiality and the rest because the majority of people *desire* it. Just as what 'ought to be' cannot be derived from 'what is', so it is independent of 'what we should like to be'. If there is a consensus of opinion that impartiality is ultimate, it is not the consensus that validates the judgment. The consensus *must* arise among rational beings, insofar as they are true to their rational nature, because impartiality is the outcome of asking for reasons for behaviour in a community of rational beings'.⁵

Misgivings about the Autonomy of Morality

The autonomy of morality is less readily allowed than the autonomy of science, and several points arise for consideration.

1. Are the two autonomies the same? We can think of God biblically as sending man off to do his own scientific thinking. Saying, 'Here is the world. I'm not going to tell you all about it. You can find out if you look and reason. You will find it answers to the treatment and thus you will come to the truth. When you find how to control it, remember you are My stewards in the earth'. There is no shame or sting in this 'being sent out'—it is, rather, of a piece with man's dignity.

But traditionally, the 'knowledge of good and evil' has been seen as the result of the Fall. Man is 'sent out of the garden'—very much with sting and shame—with the ability to recognise good and evil (but unable to practise the good). How can these autonomies be the same?

The answer lies in the fact that the present discussion is concerned not with the religious origin, but the present status of moral and scientific knowledge. However and whenever man got his abilities, he is *now* in logically similar positions in science and morals. He is equipped with tools to obtain knowledge—a do-it-yourself kit—and he cannot excuse his ignorance in either sphere on the grounds of inadequate provision. For scientific enquiry he is provided with logic, senses, the external world to work on. In morality he has logic, senses, human relations and the basic principles mentioned on the previous page.⁶

How unfallen man knew God's will is not clear,⁷ but the *present* situation is substantially as stated above, and Romans 2 may be taken to support this interpretation.

2. 'Autonomy' is often used to describe man's attempt to do without God. 'You will be as gods' is the primeval temptation, and refusal to submit to any law is the essence of sin (I John 5). But in the present discussion 'autonomy' is intended in its meaning in logic. 'Autonomy of morals' for this purpose does not mean that man is trying to go it alone, but that judgments of moral truth form a system which is logically consistent, dependent on a few basic principles that are not derivable from any other area of knowledge. When we say that man decides to go it alone, to suppress the moral knowledge (or neglect the effort necessary to obtain it) and this is 'sinning', we use the language, not of morality, but of man's relation to God.

3. However plausibly the autonomy of morality is argued, the fact remains that few people act so rationally; they act from habit, or upon authority, or by hunch. Yet much of such action is right. Does the present discussion contend otherwise? No, the correctness of a statement or action is not in question—as in science it is quite possible to have the right result without the right reasons. What the present discussion contends is that such actions while being ‘right’ are not ‘moral’. It also urges that, as far as possible, everyone should be encouraged to act with reason. Otherwise, what criteria are available to judge between contrary customs, hunches, intuitions and authorities? Because action *can be* rationally based, we should encourage the practice. This not only gives a defence against imposture, but also makes decisions and actions more fully personal as they are more fully understood.⁸

4. What, then, is the status of ‘intuition’? The discussion is concerned with logical structure; i.e. how the judgments may be substantiated if challenged. It may be that people jump to the right judgment—or accept it upon authority. What is important is that they can do the moral sum—‘fill in the working’ and *show* that the judgment was right. And they should be encouraged to do so. Intuition of itself *guarantees* neither truth nor error.

5. What *is* rationality? Is it purely intellective? What is its relation to emotion? Moral judgments involve general reasoning—what would other people in this kind of situation do? This is certainly an intellective process. But moral judgment is accompanied by emotion and some of the factors to be taken into account in making moral judgments may well be the emotional responses of people involved. But the *judgment* itself is intellectual, recognising the emotional elements present, but assessing their weight according to relevant principles. This may involve ‘discounting’ our personal emotions—attempting to stand back, outside our own particular concern with the situation. This is clearly involved in the ‘general reasoning’ referred to above. For example: ‘I can’t stand the sight of blood, but this should not stop my helping in this accident. If the aversion is so strong that I shall probably faint, then I must help in some other way such as going for assistance’. Emotion may give powerful motivation for a course of action once decided upon, but it does not validate the *judgment*.

Here it may be noted that when a person asks ‘Why should I follow reason and not emotion?’ he is in fact asking a very odd question. He is asking for reasons for having reasons, thereby supposing that actions should be backed by reasons. Of course, he may not put the matter this way. He may make the assertion ‘I shall act how I feel’. This puts him out of range of any logical argument.

To summarise, then, we may say that there *are* certain moral principles which are ultimate—there is a ‘givenness’ about them which means you can’t ask any further questions, for they define moral reasoning. We may arrive at these principles in all sorts of ways—reading them in Scripture, hearing them from parents, teachers, or however. Having got them, we

can, if challenged, arrive at them logically, and it is this logical status which makes them morally binding upon us as rational beings. In this process, no recourse is necessary to other fields of thought.

Does Faith Add Anything?

It might be possible to argue for autonomy in other fields too, such as art or politics. But if all mankind has access to these areas, without reference to God, what does faith add, or unbelief subtract?

Negatively, one sign of sin is the failure to do what is known to be right. Moral knowledge does not give the ability to be moral. Another sign of sin may be the slowness with which mankind comes to both scientific and moral knowledge. Pride, rivalry, idleness, bigotry have all played their part in frustrating the pursuit of scientific knowledge, and the same is no doubt true in other fields. As true ideas of God preserve the autonomy of science and morality for fruitful investigation, so unworthy ideas spill over into other areas. E.g. Romans 1, pagan thinking about God ended with 'all their thinking turning to futility'. It is remarkable that the biblical accounts are so free of erroneous cosmology. In Genesis, God is creator separate from his creation. Contemporary Sumerian accounts show confusion between spiritual and material, and gods whose morals are as confused as men's.

Does the Christian, then, have any additional faculty, or does he merely maintain the autonomy uncluttered by extraneous unworthy ideas and unimpeded by neglect or unwillingness to perform? In the justification of actions, the Christian is in general on all fours with others. He gives reasons of the same sort related to the same basic principles (he, of course, sees this autonomous structure as God's gracious provision). He will, however, go beyond the demands of autonomous morality at some points, basing his actions on revelation. There will be two stages in his argument, and they are closely related. When he accepts revelation, he does so *on reasonable grounds*. Thus, the statement 'God is good' uses 'good' in the sense of 'moral excellence' which includes all qualities referred to as 'good' in the autonomous area of moral discourse. Because God shows reliability, impartiality, truth, man has *reason* for accepting His authority, and then it is not unreasonable to say 'Whatever He tells me, I will do'. So the eighth century prophets argue that God should be obeyed—He is open to test in the area of His actions with His people, so they should accept His authority and standards in areas yet untested. For Christians the case is stronger still—the revelation of God in Christ shows every moral excellence and gives solid ground for accepting His direction in all affairs. Thus we justify our allegiance to God rather than Moloch, and acceptance of the Bible rather than the Koran or Gita.

It is undoubtedly part of the divine humility thus to open Himself to examination (e.g. John 8: 46, Isa. 5) giving man this step towards Him—still more, in allowing man to retain the possibility of moral knowledge and scientific understanding even when they are not used as stepping stones to Him.

Thus the Christian response will be twofold. In many situations he will make moral judgments just as unbelievers. In *some* situations, he will see other principles, beyond those which have non-Christian justification, as relevant to the case. If challenged here he will say 'My reasons for these actions stem from revelation, which I accept as reliable because wherever it runs parallel to logically ascertainable positions it is supported by them'. Such areas will include judgments about the spending of time and money, attitude to worship, attitudes of humility and forgiveness. (The New Testament emphasis on humility, for example, is derived from man's creatureliness before God. It is difficult to derive more than a pale reflection of it logically from other premisses, though when one has known Christian humility, other humiliations—such as before grandeur in nature, or a work of art, or human self-sacrifice—are recognised as kindred qualities. The following of Christ, therefore, is thus a new *style* of living, within the demands of morality because deeper and more demanding. Love is the fulfilling of the law. And the discipleship does not begin discontinuously—it is continuous with the appreciation of Christ's moral excellence by reference to judgments available to all men.

One further suggestion may be made about revelation. If sin has blurred and slowed the quest for knowledge, faith has sometimes given truth (without the full logical support) in a way which may be described as 'beyond the context'. For example, the hygiene laws of the Hebrews, for which we now know scientific reasons, were in advance of the knowledge of the times.⁹ The compassion and humanity of Deuteronomic law was in advance of any contemporary code.

Another way in which belief or unbelief affects the area of morality is this. The Fall means that Morality is not recognised as being relevant to the relationship between God and man. In whatever way (see above) unfallen man might arrive at moral truth, it would be recognised as the will of God. Fallen man may arrive at moral truth,—may even occasionally perform it—seeing in it no more than 'acting according to reason' or 'what must be if we are to live in community'. The Christian (by God's regenerative grace) has become aware that Morality, as a complete area of knowledge, is the mediation of God's will which he is bound to fulfil. The failure to fulfil it, is not only irrational, nor only offence against fellow rational beings, but 'sin' against God (Psa. 51 etc.). So by the law is the knowledge of sin. Two concepts can be distinguished—'man' and 'man-before-God'. The 'good pagan' lives within the first concept, the Christian within *both*. This leads to a further question.

Has the Christian Different Motivation?

He has additional motives because he lives both the moral life (i.e. as rational 'man') and also the religious life (i.e. as 'man-before-God') Moral principles, which on the first level were 'moral'—rationally coherent—are on the second level expressions of the mind of God—claims upon our obedience to Him.

This uses 'motive' in the sense of 'grounds of action'. It is also often used in the sense of 'power to act'. It is a Christian claim that God is at work within him 'both to will and to do God's good pleasure' (Phil. 2). This *claim* is not open to investigation in the field of moral knowledge and is strictly outside the present discussion. Moralists of all persuasions have distinguished moral knowledge from moral power. Romans 7: 19 is common ground to Paul, Ovid and many others. Such moralists also show that clearer moral understanding often strengthens desire to perform, yet makes them more conscious of failure.

Summary

The discussion above may be summarised very briefly as follows. It would seem that experience is so arranged that certain areas of knowledge, autonomous in themselves, are available to all. This is the way that things *are* and presents men with a fundamental human possibility of knowing. Man discovers that experience answers to reasonable investigations in a variety of ways. This, in the Christian view, is God's gracious giving. Things are not like this by chance, but by God's will. Properly understood, this reasonableness of the world may serve as guidepost to God.¹⁰

Some Remaining Questions

Two main areas await exploration:

- A. The relation of this discussion to Biblical vocabulary. A few points are listed briefly for further thought.
 - (a) 'conscience' appears to be used Biblically to mean 'the mechanism by which men arrive at moral knowledge' and is therefore the subject of the above analysis.
 - (b) The work of the Holy Spirit. This appears as (i) convincing men of sin—i.e. leading to the recognition of morality as a whole as man's duty to God. (ii) 'striving against the flesh'—this is involved in the building of Christian character and may be described as giving discernment in applying principles, motivation to do so, perhaps overcoming tensions within the personality that make clear thought and steady judgment difficult. Observationally it does make a difference over a period (though a crucial experiment is difficult). The Biblical use would lead us to expect that the exact mechanism is difficult to describe (e.g. John 3: 8). New Testament illustrations include both separate influence (Rom. 8: 14) and inner resource (John 7: 38). (iii) glorifying God. The crucial division between Christian and non-Christian is not behavioural, but attitude to God, i.e. not moral but religious. The knowledge of God is not logically deduced (I Cor. chapters 1 and 2) but, when revealed, is found to be congruous with the highest that the world, by its wisdom, can know.

- (c) 'faculties trained by practice' (Heb. 5: 14) and the general idea of character building. A morally disciplined person is more likely to make the right judgment when there is no time to 'do the sum of reasons'. He is, however, also likely to reflect on the situation afterwards, with a view to appraising his snap judgment. In this way faculties are trained and differing factors more surely assessed.
- (d) 'repentance' involves not a change of moral reasoning, but an acceptance of it and its conclusions, and the taking seriously of its demands as binding upon *me*. It will also in the New Testament sense, include the awareness that this is binding on me not only as a rational being but as God's creature.
- (e) 'love'—the usual word in the New Testament is *agapē*. Other 'loves' are largely emotional words, and need to be 'kept in their place' by reason. *Agapē* is often used as applying to a person completely, i.e. it has a strong intellectual component. To seek the good of the other involves knowing what 'good' is. It is suggested that there is nothing in the New Testament idea of love as moral spring to conflict with the most rigid analysis of *reasons* for action.¹¹
- B. Some other philosophies do not place such emphasis upon reason as fundamental. Existentialism, for example, in some forms seems to make 'will' rather than 'reason' the mark of authentic living. Logical positivism writes off all moral statements as non-sense, seeing them as expressions of emotion. Naturalism attempts to reduce the whole area of moral discourse to a sub-area of the scientific.

It may well be an instance of Common Grace that opposition to such philosophies comes not only from Christians, but from agnostics who still take rationality as a distinctively human attribute.

Man, said Pascal, is a reed, but he is a thinking reed. And herein we may see perhaps, for want of a better term, the 'mechanism of Common Grace'. God graciously provides both to just and unjust the tools for living in the world and in society, and even the grossest neglect and misuse has not blunted them beyond use.

NOTES

1. e.g. Adam naming the animals *before* the Fall suggests that classification—a rational activity—is original in man and not a later 'restraint addition'.
2. e.g. in the Symposium *Christianity in a Mechanistic Universe* edited by Professor D. M. Mackay (IVF)
3. There will, of course, be occasional *ad hominem* arguments and prudential reasons such as 'You might be next for the experiment', but argument is basically back to a number of high-level statements of value and duty.

4. Some readers may be familiar with the work of Immanuel Kant which results in conclusions similar to the above.
5. The argument of this section is more fully worked out in R. S. Peters *Ethics and Education*, (Allen and Unwin).
6. It is disputed whether these basic principles should be regarded as *given* (i.e. 'innate ideas which all men have') or inevitable consequences of logical pursuit of moral discourse. In either case it is assumed that they are not 'invented' by man, but in some way 'discovered'.
7. C. S. Lewis's suggestion of intuitive awareness is attractive. See his novel *Voyage to Venus* (originally published as *Perelandra*).
8. There may be an analogy here with art—a 'right' result would be hailed as a fluke or accident, not as a work of art, if it was based on faulty aesthetic principles and techniques.
9. Many of these instructions are paralleled, of course, in the taboos of Canaanite and other Semitic communities.
10. See e. g. C. S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity*, section I. 'Right and wrong as clues to the meaning of the universe'. and Acts 17: 26-7.
11. e.g. in the much-quoted 2 Cor. 5: 14 the motivating power of 'Love' is based on a rational 'judgment'.

APPLICATIONS

C. G. Martin

The three preceding papers direct attention to questions which have not been the primary concern of British evangelicals during the last century. The emphasis on personal salvation and sanctification has absorbed most attention, leaving time for only casual glances at the wider world. Present conditions demand a re-assessment of the position. Terms like 'pre-evangelism' are heard. The traditional preaching is way beyond 'secular man'; he sees us as living in an entirely different world from himself. The three papers have tried to show that we *do* live in his world as 'man', but that for us this is part of the wider experience of 'man-before-God'. The good he enjoys as 'man' comes from God just as the greater good of reconciliation and regeneration comes from God when he makes the response of faith.

The following notes, presented as guide to further study, suggest six areas where these principles may challenge us to work out more fully Christ's Lordship and God's giving.

1. Secularisation and the New Theology

Over the last fifty years Western thought has attained an undreamt-of scientific and technological expertise. The mechanism of nature and society is increasingly understood and these can now be extensively controlled and used. If this is an autonomous field of knowledge, it can be understood without religious presupposition. Alongside it there remain many traditional Western values (derived from Christian sources but not acknowledged as such). Overall, people have the impression that God is no longer necessary—certainly not a miracle-working God taking over where man cannot cope. This age (*saeculum*) in fact is fairly well understood and under control. The age to come is doubtful or irrelevant. This process of bringing experience under human knowledge and control may be referred to as secularisation. To the Christian it may be seen as the sharpening of the tools for 'dominion'—part of Common Grace. He will welcome it himself, and be sorry that others should accept the gift and deny the Giver. It must be conceded, however, that in such a situation, preaching that *assumes* in the hearers an acceptance of God's existence and righteous character, and then goes on to explain the mechanics of atonement, is starting too far on. It seems quite irrelevant to 'modern man'.

It is to this question that the new theologians have addressed themselves. Their interest is evangelistic and we may commend their intention however much we may deplore some of their programme for carrying it out. The subject is too wide to treat here, but three points are mentioned as having a bearing on the subject of the papers:

(a) The impression is sometimes given by new theologians that the 'ordinary decent chap' is almost a Christian though not using our jargon. The present papers help show why we may agree he *is* a 'decent chap' but still desperately in need of reconciliation. His basic trouble is not that his 'decency' is less than 100 per cent (so it is for most Christians), but that 'God is not in all his thoughts'.

(b) God's immanence as 'Ground of Being' is stressed and it is sometimes taken as if this exhausted God's being. But as Niles comments (*We know in part*) "Yes, in him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17: 28)—that precisely is the sign of his grace, but we may not forget what this means. It does not mean that he is the ground of our being, but that the ground of our being is in him". The concept of Common Grace preserves the universal evidence of God at work, God giving to all life and breath and all things, but still maintains His transcendence as separate from what He gives.

(c) Ethics. The new theology urges us to abandon authoritative bases for moral statements. We should not start with 'The Bible says' but draw out of each situation the appropriate action by reference to some high level inter-personal principle labelled 'love'. The third paper suggests we can go a long way with this, provided we see the whole area of moral enterprise (seeking reasons for actions) as part of God's giving to us. We may then also see the weakness of Situation Ethics—that the circumstances may determine what *can* be done, even if it be the lesser of two evils, but cannot make the lesser of two evils 'right'. 'The Bible' will still 'say'—both what is within the compass of reasoning and what must be accepted as revelation. Christians will be able to co-operate in the former and be surer of their reasons for accepting the latter *as* revelation.

The subject is worthy of a *Journal* issue on its own and is mentioned here only because it seems to the writer that Common Grace provides a bridge to understanding and dialogue with the new theology: a bridge by which we can import many good insights from their thinking and experiment, and a bridge along which we may more acceptably approach them.

2. Biblical Interpretation

An unbalanced study of God's interest in the individual and the Church has perhaps led to the neglect of a wider study of God's character displayed in his dealings with all men and society at large. The preoccupation with personal salvation in terms of entry upon eternal life (seen as antithetical to life in society and the world) leads to neglect of joy in creation and duty to society. This has been reflected in extreme dispensationalism (e.g. Scofield's note on Matt. 5 'The Sermon on the Mount in its primary application gives neither the privilege nor the duty of the Church. These are found in the epistles', and the long note on alleged distinction between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of heaven.) It is reflected too in a tendency to be ill-at-ease in the study of the gospels but giants in exegesis of the epistles. The prophets Isaiah, Amos, Hosea, Micah and Jeremiah

in particular, deserve fuller treatment. Grammatical rather than typical exegesis may be commended—how often is the parable of the Good Samaritan assumed to be primarily a gospel medium, and Old Testament stories used as vehicles of ‘gospel’ addresses! We might suggest, too, a renewed interest in the Psalms: not only in those which express personal piety and safety, or prefigure the sufferings of Christ, but also in those which express the wider joy and conviction about God’s creation and judgments in the earth.

3. Evangelism

Three main points arise:

(a) Continuity with experience. Secularisation is a fact. Men *do* appear to get on without God. The framework in which they do so is often the fruit of Christian heritage, and God-given reason—i.e. Common Grace, but to them God *is* irrelevant. There must therefore be some introduction, some bridge of understanding. There must be some explanation of how *their* experience fits in the Christian world-view. In many things we stand *with* them, only we accept it as God’s giving. Can we make our Christian declaration in some way continuous with their experience—let us extol the blessings of science, family, art, love, and then go on to declare that God who gives us these things intends ‘that we should seek the Lord, if haply we might seek after him and find Him’. (We might even think how this would affect some prayers at the beginning of ‘gospel’ meetings!)

(b) The call for repentance must be examined. Mr. Barlow suggests “We make it unnecessarily hard for a man to recognise (his unrighteousness before God) if, like Job’s friends, we refuse to acknowledge in any way whatever the goodness he already recognises and exhibits”. The real nature of sin is the failure (neglect or refusal) to see morality as *before God*. Let us then direct such denunciation of sin as we think necessary at this point, and show that the forgiveness in Christ brings reconciliation and the establishment of the believer as ‘man-before-God’ justified, ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven. The alternative preaching—aimed to show that fancied goodness is only ‘glittering sin’ raises the retort—Aren’t I as good as most Christians?’ and the word-play that often follows leaves them with the impression ‘You seem to think sin doesn’t matter so much to them, because they’ve believed’.

Also, we do not ask people to renounce the world and society except insofar as they ‘deny *themselves*’ i.e. cease holding the world for *themselves* and begin holding it and using it for the true Lord of nature and society. This means that some of our strictures against ‘worldliness’ will need re-assessment.

(c) Threats of doom just bounce off ‘good pagans’. They seem both unlikely and unreasonable. We may know them to be true, and this may powerfully motivate our evangelism, but the method of communication needs a fresh look. Newbigin’s *Honest Religion for Secular Man* (see booklist) suggests a way of approach.

4. Co-operation with Unbelievers

Kuyper, we saw, had no inhibitions about involvement in every sphere—even a political party—but his University and party were Christianly-based and most members were Christians. The English tradition is of no Christian political party, and reluctance even for evangelicals to join existing parties or secular organisations. The previous pages suggest we might welcome the efforts of unbelievers to support society and (from differing world-views, perhaps) work with them. This raises problems:

(a) Joint pursuit of common social ends must not blind us to our responsibility to bear witness *to them* of the Lordship of Jesus. We may, of course, do this best by our good works. Matt. 5: 16.

(b) Priorities. God calls some to the ministry of the word, some to serve tables—both of these at home and overseas. We need to be sure our priorities are in line with God's will for us and at the same time avoid the heresy of the 'specially spiritual'. (The idea that, e.g. the evangelist is doing more 'spiritual' work than the Christian housewife or Marriage Guidance Counsellor.)

5. Education

This is a special field of the former. Do we go all out for Christian schools and universities? Do we work within the secular system? or both? Within the secular system, may we teach morality as an autonomous system, basing it rationally on the 'high-level principles', and showing how these are arrived at by asking questions about living in society? This will be flanked by, but not based on, religious education. Can we welcome secular learning and scholarship, and see the ability to live lawfully and usefully in society as a worthy aim of education in its own right?

6. Art and Culture

There has been some awakening to the power of literature, music and art as evangelistic media—in the case of music there has been an almost pathetic urge to 'get with it' and set lyrics of doubtful orthodoxy to inferior guitar accompaniment. There has been less readiness to see art forms not just as means of communicating the gospel, but as worthy in themselves, expressing God's power and greatness and giving some insight into creation. The modern playwright and existentialist novelist raises the problem of man's destiny and significance. Where are the evangelical playwrights and novelists to show the *whole* picture? (a British evangelical Mauriac?) In art we naturally fear the excesses of veneration and idolatry—and may deplore Renaissance humanistic art anyway. But can we not see something valuable in Sutherland tapestries and Spence's architecture—and maybe encourage young artists to excel? And beyond this in both fields, may we not thank God and acknowledge His giving in the perceptive work of non-Christians in these fields—and pray and work that they may see this, not in a self- or man-centred context, but as one giving of God who challenges them to repentance and acknowledgment of Him as supreme judge and giver?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Dr. Hanson has appended to his article an exhaustive reading list on the history and analysis of Common Grace. (See p. 31).

A short treatment of biblical and historical material can be found in Berkhof *Systematic Theology* (Banner of Truth) pp. 432-446.

Books relevant to the 'Applications' topics include:

L. Newbigin *Honest Religion for Secular Man* (SCM). This gives a good account of secularisation as providing tools for doing God's will in the world. He also deals penetratingly with the New Theology's attempt to deal with the secular.

C. Davis *God's Grace in History* (Fontana) analyses the concepts of 'secular' and 'sacred' and explores the ways in which all life can be seen as under God's control.

R. Murray *The good pagan's failure* (Fontana). The author is daughter to Sir Gilbert Murray, and gives a most sensitive account of the disillusionment of the 'good pagan'. She shows how much the whole secular programme is undergirded by the heritage of faith.

Examples of books arguing a Christian moral standard on rational grounds:

C. M. and W. Whiteley, *The Permissive Society* (Methuen).

S. Duvall, *Why wait till marriage?* (Hodder)

The topic is also dealt with in R. S. Peters' *Ethics and Education* (Allen and Unwin) and Essays edited by R. Niblett *Moral Education in a changing Society* (Faber).

An instructive example of the thinking of the 'good pagan' can be obtained from the essays by five prominent Humanists edited by H. J. Blackham under the title *Objections to Humanism* (Penguin). These show both the intellectual acumen, the goodwill of non-Christians, the difficulties of presupposition they face, and the fact that the basic 'sin' is failure to see the whole human enterprise as God-given, God-maintained, and subject to the judgment of God.

MEMBERS' CONTRIBUTIONS

REVIEW

The New Scofield Reference Bible. (Oxford University Press, 1967).
Pp. xvi, 1392 + concordance and 9 maps. Various prices.

The appearance of a new edition of the world's best-selling reference Bible is indeed an historic event. And it will be of special interest to the members of the Christian Brethren Research Fellowship, both because of its widespread use in the churches which we represent and because of the historical roots within the Brethren movement of the dispensationalist theology it represents.

The new edition is a thorough revision, and one can say without fear of contradiction that the changes made are almost without exception for the better. A few of the noteworthy changes may be mentioned.

Although the Authorized Version remains the text which is the basis of the notes, changes are made within the text itself (rather than in the margins, as was the case in the older edition) where clarification is needed. Obsolete and archaic words have been relegated to the margin; words that have altered their meaning have been replaced; indelicate words or expressions (which may not have been so to seventeenth century ears) have been modified; archaic relative pronouns (such as "which" in referring to persons) have been altered; proper names which occur in the Old and New Testaments have been made to conform; and blatantly incorrect translations have been corrected.

Again, no dates before 2,000 B.C. have been indicated. (The older edition indicated 4,000 B.C. as the date of the creation!) Dates between 2,000 and 1,000 B.C. are considered to be only approximate. After this, dates are regarded to be a little more certain, but they are all considered to be tentative rather than finally established.

The notes have been polished very carefully. The editors have been very much aware of the criticisms of the earlier edition; and, where these criticisms have seemed justified, they have made the necessary changes. (One may note in passing that the *New Scofield Reference Bible* is much more the work of a committee of scholars than was the original edition and, therefore, avoids many of the individualistic interpretations of the earlier edition.)

Members of the Fellowship will be interested in the change in the note concerning the 'Nicolaitans' of Revelation 2: 6, 15.

The dispensational approach to the interpretation of the Scriptures is maintained in the new edition as well as the old, but it is a sophisticated and refined Dispensationalism. The editors are very much aware of other points of view, even when they differ from them. A careful comparison of the new edition with the old will show that there have been many modifications within dispensational theology during the last half-century. Many Evangelicals will undoubtedly find it necessary to disagree with this point of view in many important details, but they should be aware of what the point of view with which they disagree really is. There will be no more excuse (if ever there was one) for scholars to criticise Dispensationalism as it was in the days of John Nelson Darby and the early Exclusive Brethren, or as it was in the earlier edition of the *Scofield Bible*, as if that were the position today. Dispensationalism has not remained a static movement, but has developed considerably since those days. For an up-to-date picture of what present-day Dispensationalists hold, one must study the *New Scofield* and, in addition, the writings coming out of the seminary and Bible college movement represented by its editors.

However, Dispensationalism is not the main feature of the *New Scofield Reference Bible*. Perhaps only five to ten per cent of the notes are distinctively dispensational; the rest are typically Evangelical. And as such it will undoubtedly be a help and blessing to many thousands of believers in their study of the Word of God.

We join the editors in their prayer that the Lord of the Book may be dearer to each reader of it.

WARD GASQUE

CORRESPONDENCE

MR. CLINES REPLIES ON LITURGY

MR. DAVID J. CLINES (Dept. of Biblical History and Literature, University of Sheffield) writes:—

It is very encouraging to see the interest that has been aroused by the issue of the *Journal* on Liturgy, but I must confess to a suspicion that the majority of the correspondents have been so pre-occupied with defending the *status quo* ('the foundations', as one member put it, CBRFJ xvi 37), that the positive thrust of the articles has been largely ignored. In particular, it is remarkable that Stephen Winward's paper, which was the most fundamental in that it dealt with the theoretical issues involved in liturgy, received only one brief derogatory remark (xvi 37) and that without reference to the main point of the article.

I should like to make some replies to criticisms of my article 'Liturgy without Prayerbook' (xv 6-18). The fact that I do not offer to defend Philip Stunt's paper is partly evidence that I do not agree with all of it, and partly evidence that there does not exist any group of 'avant garde' (xvi 32) or 'New Look' (xvi 42) Brethren, who seem to have some authority to allow variations in Brethren services (xvii 40)! The authors of the articles do not form a pressure group within the Brethren, nor do they represent, unhappily, a widespread tendency within the Brethren movement (xvi 32), nor do they attempt definitive solutions for the questions raised; all the papers were really highly experimental, which is not to say coat-trailing (*contra* xvi 32), in order to broach the subject.

Further, for my part let me stress that I do not regard the reform of our worship as the most pressing need of our churches at this time (cf. xv 17, last paragraph; *contra* xvii 42), nor do I see it as a universal panacea for the ills of the church, nor as an end in itself which would dispense with the necessity of 'finding the Church in a yet more radical return to New Testament situations' (xvi 31), nor do I advocate changes in the pattern of our worship in order to attract to our services members of more liturgical churches (*contra* xvi 29, 41; xvii 41). Rather, the very fact that worship exists is sufficient cause for, indeed, imposes the necessity of, constantly scrutinising its value and function; the church that is not always being reformed does not bear one of the marks of a true church.

And 'reformation' does not refer solely to inward revitalisation, but also to a changing of the forms and structures. 'Outward form is not a matter of indifference to the interior concerns of religion' (W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, vol. 1, p. 404). Faith is always searching for a 'body' through which to express itself; the spiritual demands physical expression, as is witnessed by the doctrines of the image of God and of the incarnation. It is not true that the Brethren position is 'moral and spiritual, and not ecclesiastical' (xvi 36) if by that is meant 'not ecclesiastical at all'; ecclesiastical order and orthodoxy without moral and spiritual values are

indeed worthless, but ecclesiastical things have their place in a spiritual society, as the author of the phrase (F. E. Raven, of all people) ought to have been only too well aware. There is no single 'road to recovery' (xvi 36); we need movement, whether advance or retreat, on all fronts at once. It is not a simple question of 'better ministry' (xvii 43) or 'higher quality prayers' (xvii 40).

It will perhaps be best to organise my rejoinder on the same pattern as my original article.

In the first place, I admit the criticism that my use of the word 'liturgy' was not precise enough; my definition, 'a set form determining the content, order, and phraseology of a service of worship', was intended to cover both liturgy proper and the paraliturgy which evolves in most Brethren churches. It may be reasonably objected that the former is liturgy and the latter is not liturgy at all. Very well, but the latter bears unmistakable affinities to liturgy, and may, I suggest, be called 'liturgy', with inverted commas. I should have put those inverted commas consistently throughout. When I speak of possible liturgical developments within the Brethren (xv 11, 14), I do not primarily envisage written, inflexible forms, but simply a greater concentration upon the significance of form. Therefore I do leave open, as Mr. Lilley says (xvii 40), the question of whether written forms are necessary. I can see a larger place for them without any subjection to bondage; and no criticism can be made of the use of set words by a church that often spends one-third of the time of a service in repeating set words (hymns). In no case do I think of a uniform service to be imposed on Brethren—a disastrous calamity even if it were at all practical politics!

On *content*, an important objection is this: Agreed that Brethren 'worship' really means 'adoration', why should we not restrict ourselves to 'adoration' at the breaking of bread? (xvi 33; xvii 39; xvi 38f., where the writer, though he thinks the view that Brethren consider worship to be only adoration doubtful, proceeds to define worship precisely as I define adoration). I reply that there is no necessary reason why we should not have a meeting just for adoration, any more than that we should not have a meeting just for intercessory prayer. But we are not speaking of meetings in general, but of the particular meeting we hold for the breaking of bread. That is the primary purpose of the meeting; therefore we must consider what things, if any, might be suitably associated with this act. It is remarkable that two correspondents acknowledge that 'there is no essential reason why the meeting for adoration should be linked with the breaking of bread' (xvi 33, 36), yet they proceed to advance 'liturgical' theories by claiming, in the one case (xvi 33) that breaking of bread and adoration 'go very well together', and in the other that scripturally the breaking of bread should be associated with Bible teaching (xvi 36). The significant thing is that as soon as one begins associating churchly acts which are not in themselves essentially and necessarily connected, one is making a liturgy. This illustrates perfectly Mr. Somerville-Meikle's phrase (xv 4): 'It is too late to ask "Should we use a liturgy?"; rather the question must be "What sort of liturgy . . ." We would, indeed, fulfil Christ's command by

simply breaking bread and drinking wine, without hymns, prayers, readings, announcements, or collection. Yet it has seemed good to the collective wisdom of the church (which is not beyond criticism, of course) to make the breaking of bread the climax of an extended meeting of the church; but we may not take it for granted that our resolve to meet to break bread will automatically determine correctly the content or course of that meeting (*contra* xvi 30, 38; xvii 41 'the theology is safeguarded by the pre-occupation').

The phrase 'public worship' means, to me at least, nothing more than the collective worship of the assembly, as distinct from the private devotional exercises of individuals; how can that be called 'un-Biblical' (xvi 35; xvii 41)?

When we turn to the elements which I suggested were largely lacking in our services, it is not surprising that most comment has been elicited by *confession*. The arguments advanced against the practice of confession in church are not particularly convincing. Matt. 5: 23f. and 1 Cor. 11: 28 (*contra* xvii 39) do not seem to me to deal with confession *before* worship; if Matt. 5: 23f. is to be applied to a Christian service of worship, it would refer to an interruption of worship by an act of reconciliation. Agreed (xvii 39), in the communion service one is concerned with Christ's sacrifice and his forgiveness, but it is precisely the purpose of confession to direct the attention towards Christ and his forgiveness. It is no argument against the confession of sins to say that our sins have been forgiven (xvi 39f.), still less that many who say the General Confession are not clear about what forgiveness means (xvi 33). Only when we have stopped sinning will we have escaped the necessity to confess, i.e. to acknowledge our sins. It is absurd, of course, to suggest that the notion of confession derives from the doctrine of purgatory (xvi 40), since the notion of confession is already plain in the Old Testament, both in law and in the psalms, when purgatory was as yet undreamt of. To ask for forgiveness ought not to be caricatured as a desperate striving to win God's favour (xvi 39); it is rather a confident appeal to the mercy of God as revealed in Christ. To ask for forgiveness is not the Christian equivalent of appeal for deliverance from Egypt when one is already in the land, but rather of pardon for failing to exterminate the Perizzites. No one in the correspondence has taken seriously the mention of forgiveness in the Lord's Prayer (xv 8). I was not advocating 'confession to one another' (*contra* xvi 33), though that is by no means excluded from what confession in church may involve.

Perhaps there is some confusion over what the purpose of confession is. It is not in order to transfer the shriven sinner into a temporary state of innocence so that he might be worthy to eat the Lord's Supper; no one is worthy to eat the Lord's Supper, and it is simply of Christ's grace that we are given a share in the Supper at all (1 Cor. 11: 27 does not speak, contrary to a common opinion, of being 'worthy to eat', but of 'eating worthily', which is a far different thing, that is, eating decently, respectfully, and intelligently). Confession is an acknowledgment of the state in which we inevitably are when we come before God. We do not come to

the Lord's Supper as 'purged worshippers' simply (*contra* xvi 33, 40), but as purged worshippers who are also sinners (Heb. 10: 22 does not refer to entry to a service of worship but to the Christian's right of access to God without bringing a sacrifice for sins; confession of sins is not a sacrifice for them).

On the *order* of a service, one correspondent seems to agree that a service should have a theologically significant pattern (xvi 40); it so happens that his pattern ('The worship of the Father leads logically to the remembrance of the Son and from the pure table blessing flows in ministry of the Word by the Holy Spirit') is not mine, nor that, I believe, of most Open Brethren. But at least we have some common ground in demanding an intelligible order (though at other places in his letter he suggests that the order is of no great importance: 'order arises from necessity rather than invention', xvi 37; 'Could it be that Brethren just worship without wondering if they are responding to God's activity, etc.', xvi 38. The answer to the latter question is that of course many of them do, and that is why so many morning meetings are so bad). Others do not seem to think that it matters. The question remains: Why, if order does not matter, do we seem to have such a fixed one? And other questions continue to arise: Is it a *good* order? Does it express the centrality of the Lord's Supper? Does it put the sermon in the best place? I do not by any means propose that we should have an agenda for the breaking of bread meeting which should be inflexible and the same everywhere, but simply that we should analyse and criticise the agenda that we now have.

On *phraseology*, it is easy to denigrate liturgical services by pointing to the formality which can soon overtake them (e.g. xvii 42). My own criticism of large quantities of liturgically determined words in a service is plain enough in xv 15, though that paragraph was apparently not noticed by those who imagine that liturgy, even 'liturgy', necessarily involves no spontaneous items at all. All I suggest is that we should enquire whether there might not be more room for congregational participation by means of the use of written prayers, creeds, or passages of Scripture; the remarks in xvi 41 against the idea of increased vocal participation are based on an idealised view of the situation, for the fact that sisters have in mind hymns and portions of Scripture which are in fact about to be used in the service may not be evidence of extra-sensory spiritual perception—but of a good memory for the stereotypes of a morning meeting.

Finally, let me say that my advocacy of 'liturgical' thinking does not arise from some childhood fantasy that the grass is greener on the other side of the denominational fence (*contra* xvi 32), nor from some masochistic tendency (*ibid.*) to find fault with everything in the Brethren. I have not the slightest intention nor wish of becoming an Anglican, much less a Baptist, Methodist, and so on. My position arises out of a commitment to the Brethren movement and my observation of the futility, formality, and lack of purpose in many morning meetings, where people do not seem to know what they are doing there except inducing, or having induced in them, a blessed experience. I too 'should hate to do anything

to inhibit a young brother—or sister—from simply giving thanks at the breaking of bread' (xvii 42), but I submit that it is our present 'liturgy' which makes it so difficult for them to do so, and that a movement toward a clearer and more rational pattern whose content was not so consistently ineffably 'spiritual' (i.e. 'drawing aside from the things of time and sense') as it is now in many places, would be a help and not a hindrance. By all means, let us drop the word liturgy from our discussion, since it seems to be greeted with such ill will, and let us examine the positive suggestions that have been made on their own merits.

THE N.T. USE OF THE O.T.

MR. W. J. LEAROYD (8849 Berri, Montreal 11, Quebec, Canada) writes:—

I was glad that you brought up the question of the N.T. use of the O.T. in the January 1968 issue. This surely has much bearing on the subject of dispensationalism which was also treated.

What is needed is not to shun typology, as G. P. Richardson suggests (p. 18), but rather to further extend our use of it in the O.T. As defined by Fairbairn in *The Typology of Scripture* a type is simply a pre-ordained resemblance of things of the O.T. to the 'better things' of the N.T. This is in line with what Mr. Richardson himself says (p. 17) about the compatibility of 'literalism and interpretation when properly understood'. The eternal and internal grace revealed in the N.T. does not need much manipulation to apply to all circumstances of our complicated lives, so that what we really need in order to interpret and apply the O.T. is only to relate it to New Testament revelation. The Holy Spirit revealed on a small scale, and in a national, ceremonial and carnal context, in the O.T., principles which find a universal and spiritual application now that Christ has come. What we need is a fuller understanding of the way to relate these principles to the N.T. dispensation in which we live.

It may seem wrong to put teachings in another context if we do not realize that the Word of God is always 'living and powerful' wherever it is applied by the Spirit. The Epistle to the Hebrews, while it teaches much typology, does so by showing how every word receives its fulfilment in such passages as Psa. 110: 4. Our Lord taught that the letter of all prophecy will be fulfilled (Matt. 5: 18), but that may happen in a fuller sense than the original context suggested.

We may refute the charge that typology violates the letter of Scripture by the same method that Fairbairn used, by showing that even the O.T. reveals the existence of heavenly counterparts for the various aspects of the temple service, and predicts a spiritual repetition of the Exodus. Paul's insistence on the singular meaning of the word 'seed' (mentioned by R. Aris on page 12) can be justified by the application of the name 'Israel' to an individual in Isaiah 49: 3. Notice also in this case that in Gen. 22: 17 the possessive pronoun applied to the seed is singular ('his enemies') although such need not have been the case as the verses Gen. 15: 13; 17: 8 show ('their God', 'their land').

We need a fuller understanding not only of the way in which the N.T. authors use the O.T. but also of the way in which the later O.T. writers use the writings of their inspired predecessors. My interest in this subject was awakened by a note in the *Bible de Jerusalem* to the effect that Obadiah 17 was quoted in Joel 2: 32, and by the realization that the 'deliverance' or 'salvation' mentioned first by Obadiah and enlarged on by Joel was referred to very often in the N.T., although literally it concerned the deliverance of Jerusalem and the calling back home of a remnant of exiles. We might almost say that passages of the N.T. which quote O.T. promises are taken from the context of one or the other of these two aspects of the deliverance of Israel, either in the land or by a return to the land.

Why do Brethren so easily find types in the period from the Exodus to the Conquest of Canaan and yet so seldom see parallels for the Church in the similar return to the land in later history and prophecy? Perhaps because the future literal accomplishment of these promises for Israel seems to exclude a second meaning applicable to the church. But the prophecy of the 'covenant' applied to Israel's future conversion in Rom. 11: 27 is applied in Hebrews 8 to Christians.

In the review by Ward Gasque (p. 26) the *sine qua non* of dispensationalism is considered to be the radical distinction between Israel and the Church. That is distinctive only as concerns the final destiny of Israel and the Church. George Fox, the Quaker, distinguished no less radically than the Brethren the differences between the earthly order of the O.T. and the spiritual order of the N.T. As I see it, the error is not to see the rapture of the Church coming before the conversion of Israel and of the world, but rather to fail to see that we may now, in advance, taste the powers of that age to come (Heb. 6: 5), be a kind of first fruits of his creatures (James 1: 18), because we 'first' trusted in Christ before 'all things' are gathered together in Him (Eph. 1: 12, 10). As the firstfruit is, so is the lump (Rom. 11: 16). The Promises of the Kingdom found in 'the scriptures of the prophets' (Rom. 16: 26) are now to be made known and obeyed. Let us not therefore make too great a distinction between the millennium and the Church which is the firstfruits of the millennium; God's program will not go backwards. Let us understand the prophets in a more spiritual way.

FROM THE MONITORS

HUMANIST, August to November, 1967

The controversy about the name continues. Some people want it definitely anti-religious 'Secular Humanism' or some such; others want it left more open. One correspondent suggests that the 'no-nonsense statement of the chief aim' by the anti-religious radicals would cut them off from use of legacies left to the Ethical Union. In the October issue H. J. Blackham assures him there is no such danger, and concludes 'there is no intention of muting the outspoken basis of Humanism (which is a practical assumption that man is on his own and this life is all) to admit any 'Christian Humanists' of any stamp. However, if they want to receive the literature, they may join as Associate

Members without voting rights'. Other correspondents are not too sure about Mr. Blackham's soundness in the agnostic faith.

From this discussion, it seems clear that the real unity is negative—i.e. in what is denied rather than what is affirmed. There is a great interest in human problems, and personal relations, but a reluctance—indeed refusal—to consider the possibility of 'outside' information or help.

The personal and social interest are well illustrated in:

August 1967. Excellent factual articles about the ways in which science puts power into men's hands, and the way it may be misused. Chemical and Biological Warfare, *The Incomparable Crime* (review of book of this title dealing with Nazi genocide) and review of Dr. Pappworth's *Human Guinea Pigs*, all show how the interests of science and the individual may clash, and how insensitivity may dull the sanest of men. A Christian might think the lesson was of man's need of redemption, but this is not hinted at (except to acknowledge that Dr. Pappworth was 'a very religious and observant man').

October Review by Pat Sloan of societies devoted to Preserving the National Heritage.

The reluctance to accept a Christian solution is reflected both in asides and main articles. Contributors, or the editor, seem quite unable to let sleeping Christians lie.

In *August* issue, Billy Graham is taken to task for hitching a sermon to the Middle East crisis. The BHA members are commended for circulating leaflets outside Earls Court asking 'Is it right to trick people into belief? Does Billy's proselytizing do good or does it do harm by distracting people from making their own efforts to improve life around them?' These are good questions—asked by Christians as well, only Christians may believe it is possible to come to true belief without trickery.

The new look at the Vatican attracts attention—Pat Sloan, 'a well-known Marxist', writing on the papal encyclical *Populorum Progressio*. The Pope's plea, after 'the routine repudiation of atheism, materialism, and isolated Humanism', for a 'complete Humanism' is seen as a step in the right direction. She concludes "Pope Paul's Encyclical, on balance, is undoubtedly in accord with contemporary Christians' growing preoccupation with questions of life on earth, and Humanists—whatever their reservations—should welcome it as a stepping stone for further advance in the direction of giving priority to the "good life" on earth as against the piling up of "treasures in heaven".

In *October* issue, R. I. Mostyn investigates the 'Split Mind of the Catholic Church' and,—like many Evangelicals—does not know whether to take the 'new look' in the R.C. Church as genuine or a façade. Papal infallibility is still very much on the book; mariology is reaffirmed; there are no changes in the vast underworld of Catholic superstition, etc. He concludes 'Catholic liberals would obviously find it easier to remain inside the Church if it accepted the full logic of development; otherwise, like Charles Davis, they may despair of fundamental change and come out. What would Humanists prefer to see?' An interesting question, this, for evangelicals, too!

In *September 1967* issue, Derek Wright (psychologist) gives a very fair summary of two recent reports on religious attitudes in England. *A Sociology of English Religion* by David Martin, and *Background of Belief* by R. J. Rees. The latter deals with undergraduates. Both these reports showed convincingly that religion at the personal level is not dying out in England, especially among students. The article admits 'If by a secular society we mean one in which the majority have rejected religious beliefs, then plainly England is not a secular society. . . . Religious beliefs serve very fundamental human needs. The mature Humanist position, which involves a full awareness of these needs with the added capacity of being able to do without beliefs the meaning and truth of which cannot be established, involves a degree of personality growth it is unrealistic to expect many people to achieve'.

In *November 1967* issue, the editorial discusses the 'void' left by the disappearance of Christianity. Many of its 'good works' are taken over by the Welfare state, but the 'vast army of the emotionally homeless' are still in desperate need of human fellowship.

'More technology will mean more leisure and the risk of greater alienation. You cannot make friends with machines, and if God does not exist, there is only Man. That is enough, if we make it so'.

One such area of attempting to meet these needs is described in *September*, where a satisfied customer of Alcoholics Anonymous recounts his experiences. He is at pains to point out that God has nothing to do with his recovery, and makes the very pertinent comment: 'On these twelfth-step jobs, as we call them, I find it significant that even the fervent religious are advised to steer clear of "God-talk"'. The emphasis is on the sharing of real, very earthly experiences—those of drinking, those of post-AA'. (In view of the claims sometimes made for dramatic release upon conversion, this other side of the picture needs consideration. Perhaps there is scope for a study group to produce a balanced paper—unless they are more profitably employed making balanced converts.) The faith may rightly profit by testimony of those who have found release through it, but we ought to remember that testimony also includes the following: 'Humanists concerned with human problems might find it of interest to learn that without the help of a God or gods this compulsive drinker who drank himself into the gutter has not touched alcohol for nearly twelve years'.

The third emphasis in these issues is on education. This always ranks high in Humanist priority since in it alone is the real hope of changing mankind. Christians, who accept a divine power, might also welcome the educational tools He gives.

One correspondent would like there to be enough Humanist parents to sponsor a Humanist school, but most contributors are prepared to settle for the existing system, with suitable amendments to RE. They are sorry the TV *Your Witness* debate failed so dismally to abolish RE, and one correspondent attributes the failure to the Christian-Humanist Report.

The *November* issue includes two very important articles on this subject. First by Derek Wright who argues for Humanist participation in Religious Education. This is not so paradoxical as it sounds. He suspects the idea that RE linked to morality necessarily involves the rejection of both at adolescence, and sees the possibility of conveying information about religion without aiming at conversion. (Most Christian RE teachers would agree) 'If we take responsible decision as the goal, not only can Humanists take part, but it is urgently necessary that they should'. He would like to see Humanists taking qualifications in religious education.

Christians may not think Humanists could do the job without bias—Humanists don't think Christians are all that fair, either. Perhaps this attitude on the part of Humanists could be matched with a similar one from Christians and result in real dialogue—who fears conversion most?

The other important article is Reuben Osborn's reply to Professor Eysenck's article in the Rationalist Annual. He seeks to give a Rationalist Basis for Ethics. If the traditional religious basis is discarded, what can be substituted. Eysenck had suggested that the only alternative was subjectivism. Russell 'cannot see how to refute the arguments for the subjectivity of ethical values, but I find myself incapable of believing that all that is wrong with wanton cruelty is that I don't like it . . .' Where such angels fear to tread, Osborn is indeed rash to rush in. His solution is that the objective basis is 'other-centred' rather than egocentric behaviour. 'For the development of rational life, the capacity to transcend egocentric aims, is the process by which men become human, i.e. by which they develop their peculiarly human characteristics. This process can be stunted and thwarted by circumstances'. This still leaves open, of course, the question 'Why is an other-based view superior to egocentric?' 'We cannot, as rationalists, or critics of religion, look for some extra-human source of support'. In view of current interest in the autonomy of morals—whether a claim to moral knowledge can be substantiated without religious presupposition—this article is of some interest.

Your monitor feels that often questions of considerable *human* importance are discussed in this magazine, often with openness, and awareness of the limits imposed by non-religious methodology. He could wish that there was a more consistent analysis of the questions by evangelicals from a Christian world-view of equal breadth. As Blamires says there is a crying need for a 'Christian mind' on many truly human issues.

C. G. MARTIN

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