

policy, will never return to the disorders of complete freedom, so in international affairs we have to look for a definition of certain fields of trade in which there has to be more order than in the past, and other fields in which unnecessary controls will have to be removed. The principles of division in these two fields may correspond with those in internal trade. The basic rights of weaker nations have to be recognized, and they too may have to be guaranteed their minimum

standards of living at the expense of the richer powers.

These notes outlined above were submitted to each contributor to this issue as a statement of socially desirable objectives. It is recognised that knowledge of goodness does not necessarily lead to the good life, but the knowledge is nevertheless primary and necessary. The following contributions elaborate some of the difficulties, mechanical and human, that are likely to confront society in any attempt at social reconstruction.

## Christianity and Reconstruction

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**H**AS Christianity any special contribution to offer to post-war reconstruction? Certainly it cannot by any illumination of its own determine the probable effects in the political and economic spheres of the various proposals which may be brought forward. Its concern is not with ways and means, but with objectives and ends. But here it has a great deal to say, part of which it says in common with other ethical religions and with some non-religious ethics, part of which belongs specially to itself.

In its insistence upon the true ends of life it must also insist on the distinction between means and ends. For the Christian, economic wealth can never be an end; indeed, in face of the warnings in the Gospels, individual possession of economic wealth beyond what is needed for a full personal life in fellowship with one's neighbours, should never be an object of desire at all. Riches are a responsibility and a snare; if they come to any Christian, he must either renounce them or accept the responsibility, recognising and avoiding the snare. But they are not a true end of human endeavour. There is only one chief end of man—"to glorify God and enjoy Him for ever". In comparison with this, all else is relative. But there are also real ends which are subordinate forms and expressions of this one absolute end—friendship, family

affection, knowledge, appreciation of beauty: these are true ends of man because they are all forms of communion with God, whether they are recognised as such or not.

The distinctive contribution of Christianity as compared with other ethical religions is the primary place which it gives to Love—Agape. This gives a special quality to the Christian's conception of Justice or Righteousness—Dikaio-sune; indeed I should claim that only in the light of the Christian doctrine of Love it is possible to give a fully intelligible meaning to Justice. In what follows we shall find at least one point where this special Christian emphasis is relevant. For the most part the Christian is guided by the ethical principles common to all systems of thought which recognise a moral law as supreme, over against those ideologies which give the supreme place to a nation, a race, or an economic group.

The first insistence of the Christian is upon the human person as an end in himself; that is common to all religions which postulate for man the destiny of eternal fellowship with God—or exclusion from it—and to all systems which, like the Stoic or the Kantian, accept the guidance of universal Reason. For the Christian it is essential. He believes that man was made in the image of God for

fellowship with God; that when man defaced that image and broke that fellowship, God, in the Person of the Son or Word—that is, in the self-expression due to His Nature of Love—lived and died as a Man, God's perfect image; and that by so doing He set moving among men who heed that self-disclosure a new power of love and of restored fellowship with God—the Holy Spirit. If God has so dignified the person of man, we have an obligation to give honour where God Himself has given it.

So the Christian will insist that the supreme concern of those who in any way order human life must be the Human Person. This does not imply unlimited individualism, for the Human Person can only exist and be himself in community. It is therefore to the Person in Community, the Fellowship of Free Persons, that the Christian will direct his efforts. This means in general terms, the provision of all that makes for the full development of every citizen in such a way as to encourage and not to stifle his individual initiative and enterprise.

Here it is well to note in passing that there is no antithesis in practice between security and enterprise. No doubt it is true that to aim at safety first is very different from adventure; but psychologically a large measure of security is a necessary pre-condition of adventurousness for most people. Anxiety is the most paralysing of all states of mind: a general situation which creates anxiety for a large number of people is precisely what will lead them to seek "safety first". Give them reasonable security, and many will use it as a spring-board for adventure. To renounce wealth, like St. Francis, and live in voluntary poverty is an assertion of independence and of individual freedom; to be condemned to involuntary poverty is a restriction on freedom and a denial of independence, so that the springs of adventure are sapped.

So our reconstruction will be planned with a view to gaining for all citizens the basic securities—a house fit to be the home of a family, adequate and properly balanced nutrition, and educa-

tional facilities by which each may develop to the full his or her own aptitudes and capacities.

All this can be accomplished only in a world of relatively secure peace and of general prosperity. Here, as against the Totalitarians, the Christian will repudiate the acquisition of Power as the end of the State. The end of the State are fully developed persons in the widest and deepest Fellowship. But the Christian will urge (as I think) that the State must possess power, not as an end, but as a means of protecting the civilisation and human welfare of which it is trustee against the aggression of States which have made Power their end.

So much is generally agreed. But we are learning that the economic aspects of reconstruction are as important as the political in the international just as in the national sphere. Here too our aim must be freedom in fellowship. What does this mean in practice? An illustration is here the easiest way of stating the difficulty.

Great Britain has developed a population and form of life which makes her dependent on imports; for these she must be able to pay with exports. But there has been a tendency to press exports beyond what is needed to pay for the imports, in order to secure what is called (perversely enough) a "favourable trade balance". This means that others are in debt to Great Britain. As this debt is something outstanding after needed imports have been received, the "loan" is often converted into investment in the various services of the debtor nation—their railways or the like, so that the public utilities of this debtor country are largely owned by Great Britain. The debtor country may come to resent this situation; then tension arises and is a pre-disposing cause of war.

The two world-wars have caused Great Britain to part with most of her foreign investments in order to finance her military operations by sea, land and air. She is more likely now to be a debtor nation than a creditor nation. But others will be creditors. The problem for the

United States in the later twentieth century is likely to be more acute than it was for Great Britain in the nineteenth. I understand that the United States must export—not to pay for imports but to keep her people employed. (Has not something gone wrong if that is so? It implies that there are in America all the goods which all its people want, and a good many over. To work hard so as to maintain that superfluity, and plead that it must be exported to keep the work going, has an air of Alice through the Looking Glass. Is the trouble, perhaps, that money is not issued proportionately to the goods produced so as to make an “effective demand” for them as well as a mere human need for them? But this is a matter for the experts. The Christian as such is not concerned with it except to insist that human need is paramount).

The United States, then, must export. But she does not wish to import. How are those exports to be paid for? She does not want gold—(Who does? We dig it expensively out of a hole in the ground in Africa and bury it in an expensively made hole in the ground in America. More “Alice”)—and she excludes imports by tariff walls. Will she make all other nations her debtors? But this is economic imperialism, turning other nations into tribute-paying vassals. It is terribly likely to lead to another war.

Plainly the basis is wrong. Commerce ought to be for the benefit of both parties to every exchange; but a method of conducting it which makes one group of nations permanent debtors to another group is not a method conducive to the growth of freedom and fellowship. We have followed a false lure so long that we have created a tangle from which it must be difficult and perhaps painful to extricate ourselves. The way out, however painful, is for the economists to indicate. The Christian’s task is to insist that it must be a way which leads to greater freedom and wider fellowship; he will insist that in such a situation it is important to remember that Justice is not a mere establishment of monetary equivalence, but is the expression of the

principle “thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself”. Political, social and economic measures must all be fashioned with that aim in view.

An American reader is very likely to say: “All very well; but you British have had your innings; now it is our turn”. As a British citizen I could only reply—“That sounds fairer than it is! When we re-invested our surplus credits abroad, we did it in new and rapidly developing countries, and those who were developing those countries were largely European immigrants. But already that situation has changed, and there was a growing resentment in those quarters that foreigners should own their public utilities, their industries or their land itself. If the loans had been—as I think all loans and investments should be—self-amortising so that the debtor-credit relationship was transient, very little harm would result from the following of the same method today.”

As a Christian I should reply—“The fact that A followed a less than ideal course in the past is not a sufficient reason why B should follow it in the present. From the Christian standpoint Great Britain and America are irrelevances, except so far as they are nations deeply influenced by Christian principles. But our concern is with the Human Person whatever his race or nation and his opportunity to live as a free man in community.

Moreover America has inaugurated a new method in the Lease-Lend Act. I have no doubt she will follow her own inspiration and so become the pioneer of a more Christian relationship between nations in their economic dealings.

Freedom and fellowship: the Person in Community—those must be our guiding principles. Fellowship with God on the part of the human person made in His image and restored to it in Christ; fellowship in God with his neighbour as equally with Himself as God’s child; freedom of each fellowship of neighbours to develop its own communal life; fellowship of each free group of neighbours with every other such group in the world-wide family of God.