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VOICE

INTEGRITY
FREEDOM
RESPONSIBILITY

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Startling Lectures

I must admit that I had never heard of the Edward Allen Lectures before reading *Our Culture*,* which gives the lectures for 1944-45. The students of Dulwich College who heard the lectures may well have been only a little more startled by the bombs which interrupted the course for six months than with what they heard from the lecturers, and the book has lost none of its freshness through the passing of time.

Canon V. A. Demant edited the book and gave the first and last lecture, calling the opening contribution *The Aims and Assumptions of Our Culture*. In this he defines culture as "a certain pattern of life which influences the aims and habits of men," and complains that it has become a mere superstructure which has been "stuck up more firmly by something called planning," and he draws an analogy between the soul of an individual and the culture of a nation.

Our own culture, he continues, assumes that there is an objective truth; secondly, it is convinced of a rightness for men and things which assumes absolute good and evil; thirdly, it holds that Natural Law is above the State and this expresses the conviction that "persons have a certain priority over institutions"; and fourthly our European culture recognises a universal character in all human beings, despite their inherent inequalities, and demands equality in the fundamental rights of each "to associate," (we would add, to dissociate as well) "privately to own material goods, . . . to participate 'free of charge' in the elementary goods needed for human life, so far as society can provide them. . . ."

But influences are undermining these assumptions, for when the Church was regarded as a "counter institution" it upheld the axiom that in some spheres the writ of Caesar does not run, and the European tradition of liberty derives from "a culture in which no one power was supreme." The first threat arises from an outlook which is a denial of the transcendent and which reduces man to "a minnow whirled in an impersonal flood"; secondly, we are overconfident in a rational and scientific method; and thirdly the economic side of industrialism has defeated the right use of the machine, for full employment has been set up as the social goal.

Dr. Demant's views accord with those expressed in *Voice*, and we trust that the Oxford students, where the author now teaches, are still receiving this sound doctrine.

Dr. Hodges then contributes a paper on *Our Culture: Its Thought*, in which he deplores that God has vanished from contemporary thought, and that scientific thinking has "set a premium on the abstract calculating intelligence"

and led to a partial atrophy of that side of the human mind "by which human situations are understood and human values recognised," while philosophy has failed in the task of synthesis. But he hopes for a new stability which Christianity will be able to accept "by seeing governing principles in a wider context." Dr. Hodges was evidently optimistic, although the enlargement of vision remains part of our duty as well as the right choice of governing principles.

Christopher Dawson then writes on *The Crisis of Christian Culture*, examining education in particular, and warns that the education of the backward could mean "the mass conditioning of populations for the purposes of power politics." Utilitarians, he says, predominate in education, and he warns against "unlimited power, concentrated in the hands of the masters of the world," and at the same time noting that Christians fail to understand the depth of their own tradition and its "inexhaustible possibilities of new life."

Dorothy Sayers contributes an interesting chapter called *Towards a Christian Aesthetic*, recalling the "trinitarian doctrine of the nature of the Creative mind," for a true work of art is something new, a creation, and the art of the poet forms a trinity of experience, expression and recognition. But false art brings about a "complete corruption of the consciousness, which can no longer recognise reality in experience." We would underline this point, for the failure to recognise reality shows that the mind is softened and in danger of receiving any impression that unscrupulous rulers (and rulers generally are a bit unscrupulous) might desire to make on it.

Mr. M. B. Reckitt's essay on *Work and the Crisis of Our Culture* should make us stop and think again today about what work is, for he says that there are two ideas about work. In the first view, it is a curse and burden from which man tries to relieve himself by devising labour-saving appliances, and he quotes Lamb. ("Who first invented Work—and tied the free and Holy-day rejoicing spirit down. . . .") In this view, work imprisons us and denies us the spontaneity of leisure. But in the second view, which is often exploited but remains authentic, it enables man to hold "lawful tenure upon earth," and its performance is a title to honour and "many would (I think mistakenly) argue, to remuneration." It is then both a curse and a blessing, but a different sort of curse since the Industrial Revolution. He notes that the Puritan prestige of routine and the Marxian prestige of mass production are new ideas in history and unhealthy exaggerations.

Mr. Reckitt's quotes the view that the universe has been handed over to man that he may make it worthier of God, that nature without man is less divine than nature with man, and that work humanizes the world and makes man divine. And he concludes from this that strain and satisfaction are both elements in work, but that "inhuman

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VOICE

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one thing at a time."

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disabilities" are a different matter, adding that "the curse of Adam is one thing, the curse of Adam Smith quite another."

Then, Jesus Christ emphasised Contemplation, and we are being made to apply mediaeval sanctions for work "to a set of entirely different social circumstances," and we need a restatement of Christian teaching "about the relation of man to his work and his livelihood." For, he goes on to say, economic secularism has "culminated in the complete social irresponsibility of 'Sound Finance' which is ready to mutilate man, physically and psychologically, to preserve the validity of 'economic laws.'" He attacks the wage system as a perversion, and deplores the suggestion that a man's status and security ought to depend on his being "fully employed." For his occupation should be a ministry, a vocation, and should have the quality of a partnership.

The author then quotes the Rev. P. McLaughlin's disapproval (in *The Necessity of Worship*) of finance "which dominates and controls the whole economic system in its own fictitious interests." For, says Mr. Reckitt, an economic system is now held to be justified primarily by the degree to which it furnishes 'Full Employment,' "which is not an authentic objective and cannot be permanently achieved."

We note that the objective of 'Full Employment' has not varied a jot over the intervening years, while Mr. Reckitt's views represent an alternative that we are frequently emphasising. For, he says, we need to detach the means of subsistence from its identification with the reward for labour; a large proportion of our wealth is a heritage, "so we are due a 'social dividend.'" He notices the danger of the multiplication of meretricious products (in the interests of 'Full Employment') and on the subject of Leisure demands that power production should be used to "release men to handle their free time."

He points to the dangers in 'mobility of labour,' and specifies the possibilities of the infringement of liberty and of the servile state, noting the threat to family life and to religion and the loss of civic sense when men are rootless. He ends, "A society which does not understand what man is will never discover what work ought to be."

The editor sums up with a paper on *Our Culture: Its Religion*, in which he says that it is "impossible to exaggerate the extent to which Christianity has stimulated the sense of individuality in European man," for it held that Temporal and Eternal were both significant. He quotes Pascal ("What is possible as well as our concepts must be measured by

reality") and has little patience with rationalistic explanations that are made "in abstraction from the reality of human existence."

He repeats that a counter authority, a tension, was "the condition of that growth of liberty which has specially marked the culture of the West." H.S.

"A Higher Law"

We recently printed the views of Cicero on Law, showing that he believed that law, originating in the mind of God, was given to man for his guidance and, together with justice and love, was implanted in his nature. Mr. Christopher Dawson, lecturing at Bangor in August (reported in *The Tablet*, September 15, 1956) restates this belief which is part of the foundation of Western Europe, and of civilisation itself. For, he says, all the great civilisations "have admitted the existence of a higher law above that of the tribe and nation," and consequently have subordinated "national interest and political power to the higher spiritual values which are derived from this source. On this point there is a consensus of principle which unites all the world religions and all the great civilisations of the past alike in the East and the West."

We notice the *limiting* effect which this belief has on Power, and that with its removal power is unchecked. Some people ask us what our objects are and certainly a great object is to recall Authority to its rightful function of a restraining critic of power, and to see that what is done (in the matter of taxation, for example) has some sounder basis than juggling with figures, so that individual responsibility may not be replaced by subservience to all-pervasive power.

Mr. Dawson continues: "The changes in the conditions of war and world power make it more important than ever before to re-establish the traditional religious and moral limits in man's social activities, and to make the nations conscious of their responsibilities to God and their neighbour."

"The belief in the Law of Nature and the Law of God is so ancient and so universal that it has been taken for granted and dismissed as a platitude, or else misinterpreted in accordance with the philosophical fashions of the moment, and thus denied. Today, however, it has become the vital principle on which the survival of civilisation and indeed of humanity depends."

One of the greatest contributions that we can make as a country to the survival of humanity is to so arrange our internal affairs that we do not participate in the fight for foreign markets, which is an even more dangerous business than it sounds; and if we listened to reason we should not have to participate in the scramble. And we shall fail to respond to the call of reason, still less of intelligence, unless we look at things in the natural way and, for a start, make a distinction between real goods and services on the one hand, and the financial ticket to goods and services, money, on the other; and I think we should recognise that it is wrong to confuse the two. In fact people are willing to cut away the roots of civilisation—as outlined by Mr. Dawson—before they will think clearly about distinctions between things that are radically different. There is deadly danger in "confusing the substance."

CORRESPONDENCE

"What End?"

The Editor, *Voice*,

Sir,—If there is any positive merit in the apprehension *per se* of truth, it may be that Mr. Wyndham Lewis is to be commended for his perception of the distinction to be drawn, which is nevertheless not drawn commonly, between real wealth and financial wealth.

I cannot however follow the argument of your contributor, Mr. Watson, concerning Mr. Lewis's views on painting which seem to me merely perverse and more likely to promote the 'decay of all thought' than to revive the art of painting. If Mr. Wyndham Lewis had wanted to write music, I can't see that there was anyone to stop him. The inescapable fact is that, by its nature, even the most "abstract" painting cannot be anything else but "the visible real," though we may not be obliged to look at it every day. You may colour a design as you please. The Egyptians did it. So did the Greeks, and I well remember that it was the practice of Messrs. Doulton when I was a boy and still is. There is nothing new about it. But, only by analogy is a dinner plate either "a riot of colour" or "a symphony." Likewise with forms. Few diners at Edwardian dinner-tables were aware that their backs were often supported by inaccurate representations of the human uterus borrowed from Egyptian theology through the "visible real" of the funerary urn. And the mortality of the Victorians was just as assured as our own! There is nothing more or less immoral about the exploitation of opportunities in painting than in anything else; but, as Mr. W. H. Auden said as lately as last June, "the more one loves another art, the less likely it is that one will wish to trespass upon its domain." This was said about music and poetry. Poetry is naturally much closer to music than painting is.

It is characteristic of a decaying civilisation that while it lasts the *reason* for doing anything is progressively lost sight of. Why did Mr. Wyndham Lewis want to paint at all? If he wasn't satisfied with the immemorial means available to him for painting (and not writing music) *why* wasn't he satisfied? What did he want to do besides 'just something'? Even the greatest art is only a means to an end. What end? The artist is not called upon to *say* what the end is; but he must *know* or act (in his practice of his art) as though he knew. If he doesn't it does not matter what means he exploits: the proper ones or the improper ones.

Another thing Mr. Auden said at Oxford which strikes me as pertinent: "Some cultures make a social distinction between the sacred and the profane, certain individuals are regarded as NUMINOUS, and a clear division is made between certain actions which are regarded as sacred rites of great importance to the well-being of society, and everyday profane behaviour. . . . There are other cultures, like our own, in which the distinction between the sacred and the profane is not socially recognised. Either the distinction is denied or it is regarded as an individual matter of taste with which society is not and should not be concerned."

While our abstract painters do not, of course, by any means constitute 'society,' our own or any other, they seem to have fallen, for the present, between two stools: recog-

nising that there is, or may be, a distinction between the sacred and the profane, they cannot find it and seek it where it is not. It is idle to say that is not their fault. As artists it is their fault, for it is to find it and exhibit it for all to see that artists are for.

T.J., Llanelltyd.

Equality and Power

A review in *The Tablet* (September 1, 1956) of C. Hollis's "A Study of George Orwell" contains the following illuminating passage of which Orwell, not Mr. Hollis, is the subject:

"Influenced by, it must be admitted, his excessively fashionable sensitiveness to class distinction, his concern with equality came slap up against his hatred of power. For it by no means follows that equality of power goes with equality of income; still less that power without profit will be benevolently exercised; rather the opposite is true—a lesson which the present Socialists (*vide* their recent tract) have yet, conspicuously, to learn."

Present crises and vacillations would suggest that power has got out of hand and that its nature—something to be most carefully watched and checked—is no longer recognised: the recognition of hard facts of this kind constitutes a part of wisdom, and the failure to recognise such facts is, among politicians especially, a part of folly if not of treason. For if the price of power is to dissipate the national heritage, by surrendering what they should guard to others, this amounts to treating their electors as of less concern than alien interests.

"Proper purposes"

"The work of the Church in the world has its critical side—the dissipation of the illusions and the exposure of the evils that obstruct the life and obscure the truth of society. This is part of the Church's prophetic function, to bear witness against the iniquities and against spiritual forces and ideas by which people tend to become possessed. But more than this is required, for our Faith has not only to combat and defy, but to illuminate and to project. . . . But while the Church will rejoice to see the institutions of a Christian realm operating according to their true nature and affording thereby authentic vocations for a Christian laity, it can never surrender (and least of all in a 'post-Christian' age like our own) its responsibility for making plain what the proper purposes of these institutions are and how they may need to be modified or transformed to serve the laws of God and the nature of man. . . ."

"The good life for man is, in the Christian faith, something to be recovered rather than created. It is therefore in the name of the *natural* man—and not for instance in the name of charity or aspiration or divine grace—that the Church indicts and resists the specific idolatries and errors of the age."

From *The National Church and the Social Order*, issued by The Social and Industrial Council of the Church Assembly.

We shall examine this document in detail, but would emphasise that the proper purpose of an institution is surely to serve its members.

“Considered Policy”

In the course of a letter to *The Daily Telegraph*, August 20, 1956, Muriel G. Butland describes her impression of the schools and educational system of the United States “as it would seem these are the pattern for the comprehensive schools that are being established here.”

The following extracts deserve consideration: “In that highly industrialised land the schools are often described in terms of factories. I have heard school superintendents refer to their schools and equipment as ‘plant,’ and to the pupils as ‘raw material’ and ‘finished products.’ The very size of them makes some schools look like factories. . . . This does seem to take the human touch out of education.

“Generally any segregation or classification by ability is frowned upon as undemocratic. Thus provision is not made for the sub-normal or highly intelligent pupil. This conception is the considered policy of educationalists, many of whom are concerned with the training of teachers. So their influence is widespread, and the American educational theory tends more and more towards mass production.”

When she has revealed that educational ‘authorities’ consider that reading, writing and arithmetic are “chores” which children should not all be expected to master, we are not surprised that “Surveys and reports in 1940 and 1953 have shown very discouraging results in all basic subjects.” But we might ask, discouraging to whom? If the considered policy were that of turning out mass produced morons, then the policy has achieved a measure of success!

In our view, democracy or whatever a worthwhile system is called, implies the maximum of freedom and the maximum of development for the individual which involves the minimum of interference. The system of conditioning which the correspondent describes strikes us as a menace to man, for it embodies the ancient fallacy of fitting him into the bed of Procrustes—he must be not too short and even less must he be too tall. He will face the world with a pocket full of hack phrases, all prefixed with an emotional adjective like ‘democratic’ or ‘undemocratic,’ and will be poorly equipped to make a judgement or to have a mind of his own. He will rather have the mind of his owners, it seems, and instead of bringing the best out of a pupil, education has apparently the suspect aim of putting the second rate into him.

“The Climate of Freedom”

The Church Times (September 7, 1956) prints a letter which religious leaders of the United States have recently addressed to “the perplexed among Communists.” The following extracts may be of interest:

“What is the good life for man and for society? What is its ultimate test? The test, as every honest human being knows—the Communist as much as the non-Communist—is not the number of tons of steel or kilowatts of electricity produced in a given society. It is the climate of freedom and hope in which people live, the degree of self-respect and sense of dignity which they enjoy, the possibilities open to all for personal development and fulfilment.

“The issue before the world, and pre-eminently in the minds of all sincere, decent human beings, is the inalienable rights of man versus the totalitarian State.

“This issue can be put in the form of a very simple question. *Is man made for the State, or is the State made for man?*”

“In this spirit we plead with you not to turn your backs on the modern martyrs of the working class . . . the toilers of Poznan, men in overalls, marching in solid ranks in the face of machine-gun fire and crying for bread and freedom. . . . They ask for your help as well as ours in the struggle to lift our staggering world back on to its true foundations.”

We would merely add that man has “inalienable rights” against such man-made institutions as money or arrangements like “full employment,” and in this connection we note with interest that the Polish dissidents evidently had plenty of *work*, but demanded *bread* and *freedom*. A Bishop at a Battle of Britain Sunday address recently called for more “sacrifices,” but we do not wish to sacrifice to the Great Dollar Idol and consider it time that the financial powers considered a little sacrificing on their side.

True Social Liberty

A definition of true social liberty is given in *ABC* (June 16, 1956), in which it is said to consist of “the ability to exercise unopposed all those rights which do not unjustly harm another.” It needs, says the writer, a “strong and well subordinated Government in which the unauthorised has not authority and law has the greatest possible authority.” We take this to mean that irresponsible power should not undermine responsible government.

FUNDS URGENTLY NEEDED.

Contributions to The Treasurer, Christian Campaign
For Freedom, Penrhyn Lodge, Gloucester Gate, London,
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The Challenge

John S. Craig, an industrial secretary, asks in *Life and Work* (February, 1956) whether “the Christian motive” can operate in industry. He says, “‘Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness’ seems to sum up all Christ’s teachings on the purpose of life. . . . Stories illustrate that when men do what is right because they believe it is right, and without thought of consequences, something is added. . . . Too few of us accept the challenge, implicit in our membership of Christ’s Church, to work incessantly for the building of a new industry, a new economics and a new world.”

Perhaps the first step would be to decide what industry is for: whether it is to provide paid employment or to produce goods for consumption or goods for export; and why labour-saving machinery is introduced if it is not to save labour; and, the industrial system being highly efficient in producing, why our financial system should cause a bottle neck so that we confuse real wealth and money. We might answer that the purpose of production is consumption, that all should benefit from improvements since they are part of our heritage, and that finance should reflect these facts.