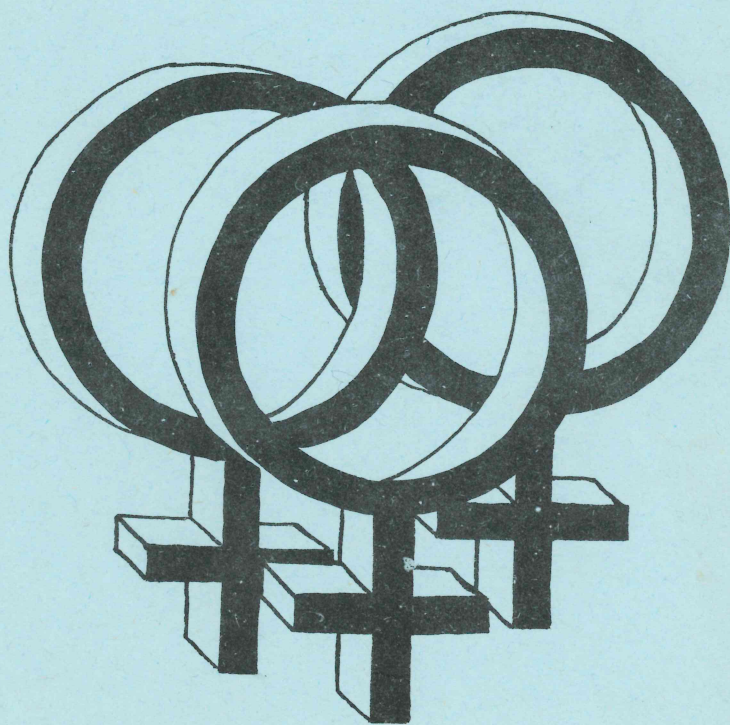


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EDITORIAL.

This is International Women's Year!

Women, in the past, have not had the opportunity or encouragement to contribute as fully as they might to the spiritual development of the Church and because of the enormous influence of the Church, their contribution, even to society, has probably been considerably retarded. They have not been able to speak or lead a service and only grudgingly permitted to take part in discussion. Is this right? What is the reason lying behind this situation? It is probably twofold.

Most men, if they will admit it, are chauvinists to a degree and can with comfort fall back on the second reason, namely, the authority of the Apostle Paul's words in the first letter to the Corinthians:-

"As in all congregations of God's people, women should not address the meeting. They have no licence to speak, but should keep their place as the law directs" (14:34 N.E.B).

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TIME FOR ONESELF.

This year, 1975, is International Women's Year. With so much attention focused on women one cannot help asking, "How many women are content with their lives as they are?"

As I have talked with other women (men too) of all ages, with different lives and experiences, I have noticed that many are experiencing an inner restlessness. This shows in different forms; even those with smoothly running days and no apparent outward problems often lack real relationships with other people and indeed with themselves.

Perhaps I may share a few thoughts with those who, realising their problem may be trying to weave another pattern into their day; a pattern more suited to their individual needs. I write for myself too, so that I may rethink my own particular pattern of living.

You may be a wife or mother; you may have a career, or support yourself. Each of our lives is differently shaped, and determined by many things. Our background and its pressures, our hopes and ambitions, each has played its part. Most of us feel that we want to face up to our responsibilities; to give and take; to carry out our obligations with friends and family. Life in these modern times consists of ever-widening circles of contact and communication, and one is called upon to meet community and even national demands also. Can we in fact do this if we are not 'at peace' with ourselves?

I believe that a 'central core' to our lives is essential if we are to carry out these activities as well as we can. By 'central core' I mean an inner harmony, essentially spiritual, which is transformed into outer harmony: perhaps I could borrow from the language of John and Paul of the New Testament to live 'in grace' as much of the time as possible.

Most people I think, are aware of periods in their lives when they seem to be 'in grace', and other periods when they feel out of grace. In the first, happy condition,

one seems in tune with everything and everyone, as if swept along on a great tide, and in the opposite state, we are restless, struggling very much against the tide. Are there certain rules of conduct, or modes of life, of which we can acquaint ourselves, which are conducive to this inner harmony we seek?

We have the writings of others also occupied in this search, to which we can turn and helpful as these are, I think it is essential that we learn as much as possible from our own experiences. The very first thing we ought to realise is that we are all individuals, and that our needs are very different one from the other. Secondly, as we grow older these needs change. For my own part I am forced into believing that simplification of life is one of the essential ingredients. Unfortunately, life for most of us in the western world today, does not foster simplicity.

My own particular life involves a whole string of complications - home, husband, family, food, bills, health, school, holidays, transportation, clothes, shopping, mending, letters, telephone calls etc. It involves friends - my own; my husband's; the family's. Surely, I tell myself, this is not the life of simplicity that leads to harmony, but rather to fragmentation. One's mind reels with the pressures that are put on the modern woman, and I am sure this is true, not only of my life, but of countless other women too. How, then, can we find harmony in the midst of such turmoil? How can we remain strong and calm when we are being pulled in so many different directions? I think this problem is particularly a woman's. Distraction does seem to be inherent in the fairer sex.

It may be that man in his sphere has more opportunity of giving himself creatively in work. We do not see the results of our giving as concretely as he does. Can a woman point to her constant tangle of household chores, errands, and fragments of human relationships as creative? It is sometimes hard to think of it even as purposeful, especially as so much of it is automatic. We have lost so much of the art and craft of housework. Surely such simple tasks as baking bread and weaving cloth must have been more satisfying than being the family chauffeur or shopping at supermarkets.

I am sure nothing nourishes the centre more than creative work, however humble.

Our instincts as women demand that we give, but here is a strange paradox. Why do we so often feel resentful? What is wrong with giving, if it is our function to give? Are women so miserly? Could it be that we fear our energies may be going down the drain? Are we trying to water a field instead of a garden? Purposeful giving, I am sure, is not so apt to exhaust one; it seems to belong to that natural order of giving which renews itself; like milk from the breast - the more one gives the more one has to give. The milk in the breast must be replenished, of course, by food taken into the body. If it is our function to give, we must be replenished too, but how?

I am beginning to discover that for myself, the inner spring is best refilled through solitude: I feel that every person, and a woman especially, should experience a period of solitude during each day of the year.

Every paid worker, no matter where in the economic scale, expects a day off a week and a holiday a year at least. By and large, mothers and housewives are the only workers who do not have regular time off. Why is this? Is there no energy after the daily cooking, cleaning, and washing for an hour of creative solitude? Is there no time left over from the weekly housework for a day off?

Strangely, women rarely complain of this lack of free time, apparently not considering occasional time to themselves to be a justifiable need. Here lies one key to the solution. If women were convinced that an hour of solitude was a reasonable ambition, they would find ways of attaining it. It is not a question of outer pressures, but rather of inner convictions. The world does not seem to understand that there are times when a woman, or a man for that matter, has a need to be alone. Of course, there is a sense in which one does not like to think of being alone, it seems to imply rejection or unpopularity. In fact some people seem to be so afraid of being alone, that they never let it happen. They choke the space with constant music, chatter,

and companionship, and when the noise stops there seems to be nothing to take its place. Some people may have to learn to be alone.

If one sets time aside for a business appointment, or a visit to the hairdressers, or a shopping trip, that time is accepted as being inviolable, but if one declines an invitation to a function on the grounds that the time is to be spent in a period of solitude, one may be considered rude, egotistical or eccentric. What a sad reflection this is on our society, when being alone is considered suspect; when one has to apologise for it, or hide the fact that one practices it, like a secret vice.

Yet it is so important. I am sure these quiet times are among the most important hours in one's life; there are things to learn about ourselves, that can only be found out in this way. The artist has always known that he must be alone to create; the writer to think out his thoughts and the holy men to pray, and we need to be alone in order to find the true essence of ourselves. Certain springs are tapped only when one is alone.

It may be difficult to practice the art of solitude for an hour and yet if one can achieve it, there is a quality of being alone that is incredibly precious. Life rushes back into the void richer and fuller than before. One actually feels closer to one's fellow men, and we realise that it is not physical solitude that separates us from one another, but a spiritual isolation. How sorry I feel for city dwellers who are subject to continual turmoil; how difficult it must be to find a quiet place: may I suggest a church outside service hours as a possible haven.

In the recent efforts of Western woman to emancipate herself; to prove herself to be equal to man, she has been drawn into competing with him in his outward activities and perhaps to the neglect of her own inner springs. I know the answer is not going back, but neither is the answer to be found in wasting time on purposeless occupations and striving towards more accumulations. Do not believe the advertisers! Some of the things that are supposed to simplify life actually burden it, with gadgets

which we have no time to use or appreciate. On the contrary, we must consciously encourage those pursuits which are more conducive to a drawing together of the self, such as a quiet time alone. For some this may be spent in prayer, study, reading or with music. For others it may be an artistic or even a physical activity. Time does not need to be spent on an enormous project, but it should be something of one's own; something that is essentially oneself. Arranging a bowl of flowers in the morning can give a sense of quiet to a crowded day, as can writing a poem or saying a prayer. What matters most, is that for a time, one is "inwardly attentive".

Let us ask ourselves this question, "if we neglect to keep our inner core intact, will we have anything of real value to offer our families, friends or the world at large?"

Charles Morgan in one of his poems describes inner stillness as:

"the stilling of the soul within the
activities of the mind and body, so
that it might be still as the axis of a
revolving wheel is still".

This is a beautiful image to hold before us. Is it possible that women could be the pioneers in this turning inward for strength, which could make a new stage of maturity for materialistic western society?

A.C.

WHAT CAN WE DO ?

In a back street of a forgotten part of Birmingham; in a very dirty and squalid council flat, live an old lady and her son. He is unable to talk, read, or write, and can only communicate in animal grunts and aggression. Yet he may well be intelligent, and in different circumstances have led a normal useful life.

He was born illegitimately when his mother was thirty. Not wanting anyone to know about him, she kept him hidden, and for the first forty years of his life he was kept in the attic. Food was left for him at the bottom of the stairs, and he never went out or saw anyone.

Every day the District Nurse goes in to pull him out of bed; wash him; find the clothes under the bed, and dress him. He then sits in a chair looking at the colours of children's comics; eating biscuits, or food out of tins with his fingers. His mind is, apparently, as good as a cabbage.

So what can be done for him and his mother? The state provides them with a pension, an allowance, Social Security, and extra money is found for the many times when their income somehow does not stretch to their needs. He has the District Nurse daily; the Health Visitor looks after them, and a Home Help battles with the layers of grime and dust covering everything. For a time he went to a Day Hospital to have a little elementary education, but his mother soon decided that he was too ill to go. The young volunteers put linoleum on the previously bare floorboards, and decorated the walls. The Laundry Service provides him with clean linen as he is incontinent.

In theory, they have all their material needs catered for. The tragedy is that such a thing could have happened. In our neat orderly lives it is easier to believe that such things do not exist. Is it the whole answer though, to provide everything they need, and leave it at that? Their sad case is, fortunately, unusual, but in the poor parts of Britain's cities are plenty of underprivileged people with different but often equally complex problems. Somehow, even in a welfare state like ours, some people manage to get left behind. We have the poor with us always.

In another street nearby, in a tiny terraced house, a Health Visitor found an old man very ill with bronchitis. It was very cold, and the upstairs bedroom, in which he lay, had no heating at all. His bedclothes were minimal, and he had no nightwear and no sheets, though he was incontinent. The floorboards, as in the rest of the house,

were bare and dirty, and the paint was peeling off the damp walls. His wife spends her time in the living room, also very bare, but at least equipped with a fire, a television, and a large ferocious dog chained to the sideboard.

All the help available was brought in. The young Volunteers laid linoleum in the back, downstairs room, and the bed was brought down. A gas fire was installed. The Health Visitor ensured that they were receiving all the financial help that they needed. The District Nurse went in every day to wash him and sit him out of bed, and sheets were supplied by the Laundry Service. The wife was given money to buy him some night clothes, and curtains and a light shade for the room. Yet in a very short while they had not enough money to put in the gas meter for the fire, or to buy essential food and pay the rent. Perhaps their unemployed son was taking their money for himself, but it could not be proved. It seemed as though the more they were given the more they needed.

In comparison with the poor of some parts of the world, the starving and homeless, the poor of this country are certainly very well off. From the examples of these two couples it is plain that providing all material needs will not miraculously raise standards of living. We cannot dismiss people as ignorant and beyond help. As Christians, and as members of the same society, we are bound to help each other, and particularly those who are unable to help themselves. Despite the National and Voluntary Services and Societies there are so many gaps to be filled in supporting the underprivileged. It is so easy to become engrossed in our own lives and problems and conveniently forget or ignore the appalling poverty so close to us.

In an area that will one day be redeveloped, is a large decaying hall. A side room has been made into a community centre, to advise and help the residents with their problems. Various groups are organised, including an evening for children, once a week. It is run by Social Workers and volunteers. Dozens of children, aged five to eleven, eagerly queue to come. In the coldest part of the winter the heating broke down and was found to be irreparable.

The hall is a depressing sight, with its large high windows broken and patched with rags. But it does not deter the children or the organizers. The boys play games and learn handicrafts, and the girls are taught sewing, cooking and other crafts. The activities may appear to be limited or commonplace, but to those children they are more than that. They come from the surrounding rows of terraces, all of the two up, two down variety; nearly all in a terrible state of repair. Their backgrounds are very inadequate; mostly from large families with many problems. They virtually live in the steets, and find sharing and co-operating with each other to be very difficult. They often have limited abilities in playing constructively, and there is little opportunity for them to develop interests. Their backgrounds make them insecure.

Educating these children from underprivileged areas in practical, elementary living will not only prevent them from becoming hooligans and juvenile delinquents, it will help them to avoid their parents' problems. Not that it is anything like as easy as that. They need love; a very basic and essential requirement of life. They need education, job opportunities, a steady income, good housing and a positive environment. So many things we have, and take for granted.

Opposite a large, noisy foundry is a short row of terraced houses. Many years ago they were declared to be part of a slum clearance area, and put on the list for demolition and redevelopment. A few years after that, the inhabitants were moved and rehoused, and the houses boarded up - and left. About a year ago, an Indian family moved in. The parents can speak very little English, but some of their six children who go to school are learning fast and make good interpreters. The house is dark, dirty and cramped, and the rats and other visitors are troublesome. There is no form of heating, and very little furniture. The father has difficulty in holding down a job; this especially when his wife was last in hospital having a child. They are unable to claim many of the normal benefits, as they

have not been in this country long enough to be eligible. They are only one of thousands of families in a desperate situation; struggling for survival. So many live in indescribable poverty despairing of ever getting better. No one person can transform their lives, but that is no excuse for ignoring them. How to begin to tackle the problem of helping the underprivileged is an overwhelming problem in itself. We can join voluntary societies, of which there are many. We can visit the lonely, elderly. We can try to find out more about the poor in our area, and then find out how we can help them. We can support those who do work in the community. The Church of England vicar and the Roman Catholic priest attend to all those in their area; should we be ignoring them? And we can remember the needy in our prayers. Above all, we must not ignore the problems, and forget their existence. To love our neighbours as ourselves is to do more than smile at the person next door, as Jesus taught in the parable of the Good Samaritan. His teaching is full of encouragement to give in charity; to sell our possessions and give to the poor. "Anything you did for my brothers here, however humble, you did for me".

W.R.

R E V I E W.

Mister God - this is Anna. By 'FYNN'
Published - William Collins Sons & Co.
Ltd., London. Price £2.50.

"There are good books, indifferent books, and bad books..... but in my language there is another category: there are Ah! books. This is one of them. Ah! books are those which induce a fundamental change in the reader's consciousness. They widen his sensibility in such a way that he is able to look upon familiar things as though he is seeing them and understanding them for the first time. Ah! books are galvanic. They touch the nerve-centre of the whole being so that the reader receives an almost palpable physical

shock. A tremor of excited perception ripples through the person."

So begins the Introduction to "Mister God - this is Anna." How much of Anna is real, and how much of Fynn (which is the only name by which we are permitted to know the author - the 'I' of the book) is a secondary matter, and opinions on this will differ. Truth has different levels. Much of what we say to a child is not literally true, but it is true at that level. And each reader will take this book in his own way - at his own level. One may read it as an entertaining and rather incredible story of a precocious East End child, with all that that entails of hilarity - and vulgarity - whilst another will see it as "an arch wherethro' gleams that untraveller'd way ..." and will catch glimpses of himself and "Mister God" which will leave behind a deeper understanding of both.

The book is cleverly illustrated with impressionistic line-drawings, which capture the impish quality of Anna as well as her volcanic activity. She erupts into the story out of nowhere, and will not reveal her origin, but is instantly welcomed by Fynn and his large-hearted Irish mother, who are incensed at the marks of ill-treatment she carries, and is adopted forthwith. And an amazing foster child she proves to be, keeping the 19 year old Fynn in a state of constant bewilderment by the acuteness of her perception, and adding a new dimension to his world.

To choose one of her least surprising sayings: "The difference from a person and an angel is easy. Most of an angel is on the inside and most of a person is on the outside." And, again to quote the introduction, "a few seconds' thought and then - the tingle in the mind."

Between Anna and Fynn, an East Ender with rough background but cultivated tastes and many accomplishments, there is a perfect relationship; innocent yet sensuous; the harmony of similarly enquiring minds; Anna trustful yet ever running ahead and Fynn protective, experienced and yet content to follow the swift, instinctive leading of this incredible little comrade. Many will feel sympathy with his "mixture of credulity and scepticism which is always prepared

to abandon well-trodden ground for intellectually virgin territory." In the concluding words of the introduction, "Fynn and Anna ... put back the 'Ah!' into that mixture of mess and marvel which makes the mystery of our mortal life."

What Anna might have become in later life is a matter of conjecture. She died by accident (trying to save a kitten) at not quite eight years old. Her ideas on "reading the Bible" and "going to church" might have matured had she lived longer, but she would inevitably have lost that innocence and confidence in her relationship with Mister God and with Fynn which are the very atmosphere we breathe in this book.

Fynn, according to his mother, had three mistresses - mathematics, physics and electrical gadgetry. His absorption in these was shared by Anna, and what she made of them is one of the most intriguing elements of the book. With Fynn's oscilloscope she works out - fairly accurately - by the pitch of its hum, how many times a minute a bumble-bee flaps its wings. And what she discovers about the magic of numbers is uniquely Anna - a mixture of the naïve and the numinous. And all these things - to Anna - add to the exciting and indescribable wonder of Mister God.

Another facet of Anna's character is her tenderness towards all living things. When we see her making friends with Nobby, an enormous Shire horse, and with Fynn's dog and cat; when she holds a sprinkling of seeds in her hand, sensing their wonder; when she involves a policeman in her game of Peaseblossom and Mustardseed, we realise that she is withal an intensely human and lovable child.

Yet she gets right to the very heart of things. "Questions", she says, "are in boxes, and the answers they get only fit the size of the box." "Please, please, Mister God," she pleads, "help me to ask real questions."

When their talk, inevitably, touches on the question of sex, her approach is entirely rational, showing how the down-to-earth knowledge derived from her East End background can co-exist with Edenic innocence. Her theory, as interpreted by Fynn, was that the whole universe had a sex-like quality

about it - the seeds of words, for instance, produced ideas. "Church puts seeds in your heart, and makes new things come." Sex was never 'dirty' to Anna, though it might be funny - gloriously, side-splittingly funny, but only as any subject may be funny, without making a separate 'thing' of it. Purity such as Anna's is neither ignorance nor 'hush-hush', but approaches every subject with interest, wonder and reverence, as all equally the works of 'Mister God'.

A brief review can give only the most fragmentary idea of this amazing book. The best advice is - read it for yourself and discover whether for you too it is an Ah! book.

E. Ladson.

BALANCE.

As we grow older and our experience of life broadens, we often become aware of lack of balance both in our own character and in those of others. This lack of balance spoils and can even ruin lives and indeed the whole course of history has often been altered by the unbalanced behaviour of national leaders. In Jesus, on the other hand, we see the supreme example of perfect balance and it may, therefore, perhaps be helpful to look at the records of His Ministry to see wherein the balance lay.

The four Gospels between them present a very balanced view of Jesus. Matthew, the Jewish tax-collector, presented Him as the Messiah; the answer to Jewish hopes of a king, although a very different type of king to the one they expected. Mark, who probably wrote his Gospel under the influence of Peter, showed Him at the other extreme, as the servant aiming to serve both God and men. Luke, the Gentile doctor, showed Him as the Son of Man with His humanity as the example of perfect manhood, whilst John, whether it was the beloved disciple himself or some other, showed Him as the Son of God and told his readers that this was his reason for writing his Gospel. If the early church

had fully accepted this fourfold picture of Jesus, there would have been no conflict in the church between Jew and Gentile and in later years there would have been none of the disputes concerning the nature and person of Christ which led to the extreme forms of Unitarianism and Trinitarianism still with us today.

Turning now to actual incidents in the life of Christ, it is clear that in a short essay such as this it will be impossible to consider all aspects, or in detail any aspect, of the balance of character shown by Jesus. We shall have to confine ourselves to one or two cases and have chosen those which perhaps have special relevance for us today.

The contrast between the gentleness and severity of Jesus is clearly shown in many ways. The healing of the man with the withered hand is one example. Mark⁽¹⁾ records that Jesus "looked round about on them (in the synagogue) with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, "because they preferred to keep the letter of the Sabbath law rather than allow a man to be healed. The gospel writers record many acts of healing because Jesus had compassion on the sufferers. We read of His compassion for the leper who appealed to him for healing insomuch that He was prepared to touch even the unclean;⁽²⁾ of His compassion for the blind men whom He touched with healing too, when they appealed to Him to restore their sight.⁽³⁾ His compassion for the widow of Nain, whose only son had died⁽⁴⁾ and His reaction to the mourning for Lazarus,⁽⁵⁾ even when He knew that He was going to raise him from the dead, are in marked contrast with His scathing denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees for, amongst other things, taking advantage of widows⁽⁶⁾ and for their concern with the trivialities of and man-made additions to the law rather than judgment, mercy and faith.⁽⁷⁾ Even so, this very devastating attack is concluded by His sorrowful outburst, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."⁽⁸⁾

The implications of this balance are valid today for our relationships with both our brethren and sisters and the world outside. Any religious group, by virtue of its very organisation as a community, is in danger of becoming pharisaical because it is so much easier to live by the letter of the law than its spirit. Successful keeping of the law can lead to pride, whereas the spirit of the law may involve transcendence of it in mercy and faith after exercising judgment. Jesus' treatment of the woman taken in adultery⁽⁹⁾ is one example of this and another is His comment on David taking the shewbread.⁽¹⁰⁾ On the other hand, if we claim that we are not pharisaical in our attitude, do we show such kindly sorrow over those whom we think are?

The parable of the Good Samaritan is the pre-eminent one to guide our external relationships. Luke is the only Gospel writer to record both this parable and the incident at the home of Martha and Mary when Martha put household chores before sitting at the feet of Jesus to learn of Him.⁽¹¹⁾ We know that Jesus told the parable to show to the self-righteous lawyer, that his neighbour, whom he should love as himself, was anybody in need. Other lessons were involved in the parable too; one of which particularly pointed out the contrast between the compassion of the Samaritan, believed to be outside the scope of God's consideration, and the lack of it shown by the religious leaders of the day. It is probably true to say that as a community we have of recent years tried to behave more as the Samaritan towards the world outside, but there is no room for complacency. Yet even so, there is a danger of getting things out of balance because it is often easier to concentrate on Samaritan activities to the neglect of deepening our spiritual understanding by reading and meditation. Some of the reasons for this are quite understandable, though others are more reprehensible. Some prefer doing to learning and choose the former since time and opportunity are limited, whilst others make the same choice because they prefer more spectacular performances to working in the background. Could it be that Luke immediately followed this parable with the record of

the incident of Martha and Mary to show that there are times when we need to stop "doing" and sit at the feet of Jesus to "learn"? We need to learn from Jesus what to do and how to do it.

Spiritual heights can be reached without great intellectual power but, on the other hand, it is inconceivable that the Word of God, is incapable of stretching the greatest intellects to the uttermost since God is its author. Yet we are failing in Christian love if we make a parade of learning amongst the less intellectually able or if, on the other hand, we insist that nobody should ever be adventurous in thinking because we are not. Jesus taught the multitudes and his disciples in parables based on the common experience of life and yet could meet and confound the intellectuals of his day with the most subtle arguments as John's Gospel account of His confrontations with the Pharisees shows. It is all a matter of balance, the broader aspects of which we have tried to consider.

In Jesus, we can find the answer to our own personal imbalances because He can "be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." He was "in all points tempted like as we are," (12) and "in that He himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." (13) "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (14)

Sheila Crawford.

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REHABILITATION.

'Write me an article,' said the Editor, 'and as you have been talking about rehabilitation, I think you should write about that.'

The dictionary defines "rehabilitation" as, restoring someone or something to privileges, reputation or a proper condition. Roget's Thesaurus suggests the idea of restoring a person's rights to him. So a rehabilitated person or house can be thought of as an enabled person or house: the person forgiven, restored, energised, fully human; the house able to be lived in, added to, decorated and enjoyed.

When I was in my late teens and early twenties, I believed that humanity (myself included) was worthless and sin ridden. In the name of Christ I felt that he had little use for children because they were not baptised, and little use for the mentally deficient because they could not understand. The list of folks who were no concern of mine was endless. Thus, I dismissed the whole world, secular and religious, past and present, with a wave of my hand. I could not see, in spite of regular Bible reading, that Jesus loved the unlovable, touched the untouchable and spoke to the unspeakable. The result of my blinkered attitude was an impoverishment of my daily life - the Lord was returning soon and in the meantime I waited joyless in the wilderness. Any idea that the Kingdom was within me, or that the Spirit of God might be an indwelling guide, or that God works through simple human need was alien to me. This parody puts it well:

Sit down, O men of God;
His Kingdom He will bring
Whenever it may please His will.
You cannot do a thing.

My experience of rehabilitation, and therefore the rehabilitation of myself as a person, began fourteen years ago in a rough, tough city school. The cartoonist Giles has depicted its like time and time again, as far as the building is concerned; but even he does not quite convey its uncontrolled atmosphere as felt by a naïve, newly trained teacher. The pupils were a wild and savage crew indeed! However, during the three years I taught there, realisation dawned on my insular mind: the outlandish clothing, frantically frizzy hairstyles (back combing was 'in') speech which was rude in all conceivable senses of that word, unappetising attitudes to life, were not reliable guides to the value and potential that lay buried underneath. How little effort is made to seek and to save that which is lost, especially if the exterior packaging smells rather ferret-like! This was far more of a personal revelation than can readily be put into words.

An area in society where rehabilitation is desperately needed is in our prisons. The prison system is too often the author of the very things it is now realised it ought to ameliorate. People, not yet hardened criminals, find an education in crime inside, and come out more proficient in thievery than they were before they went in. On coming out, they find old mates, old habits more attractive than making a new life - often because of the lack of positive encouragement from society. Years in prison make human minds atrophied and skills in living and loving are lost. Because of all this I was delighted to be asked to join a scheme which is sensibly bent on rehabilitation.

Suitable inmates from what used to be called a criminal, lunatic asylum are being prepared for life outside in a special unit which is separate from the prison. Here, among other activities, men are trained in a trade. The prisoners in this scheme felt that their social graces might need brushing up a bit so they asked their supervisor if they might have a series of open evenings to receive visitors, - preferably female. As a result, a group of housewives visit the men to talk and get beaten at scrabble, table tennis, darts, weird Egyptian and Chinese chequers, and at other games. They also find themselves reading books that are

being written, looking at paintings and photographs; and drinking tea and being treated to cakes and scones that exhibit various weights of hand at pastry making. All this takes place to a deafening musical background. I went to these evenings feeling nervous and inadequate at first, only to enjoy myself and learn a great deal - particularly how good other folk are at small talk. The small talk can be revealing; so are the long conversations and the odd dropped remark. One man asked me what I had expected to find as "X" Institution had a terrible name. I was able to say quite truthfully that I had expected to find ordinary people and had had no unpleasant shocks. These are simply, human beings, not monstrous or menacing - although their victims undoubtedly found them so.

Constructive rehabilitation is not mollycoddling criminals. Society (that means you and me) only stands to lose if they revert to crime. It is clear from the prisoners' troubled backgrounds that the lack of a loving, good example shown to them in early life made them victims first. Victims have a nasty way of wreaking their vengeance on the innocent; that is, victims create victims. Inadequate people at all levels are destructive: the vicious circle has to be broken somewhere. Many of the men I have mentioned committed their crimes fifteen to twenty years ago and are no longer the same people. They have been rehabilitated insofar as they would not do the same things again. Unfortunately, the stigma attached to them (for a period which is prolonged by those who attach an unhealthy importance to punishment) can make it very difficult for them to be accepted back into society. And it is only that acceptance which completes their rehabilitation.

Another sphere of rehabilitation of which I have a little personal knowledge is a trust called Family First. It offers homes to one-parent families over a period of two and a half years, or until they can be settled in council accommodation. This scheme buys and renovates old properties and then harnesses local goodwill to do the cleaning, provide the furniture and do all the other jobs that crop up. When the tenants have moved in, welfare, rent collecting and the organisation of house repairs are also done voluntarily. Here, then, houses as well as people are being rehabilitated.

Rehabilitation is a popular word. However, successful rehabilitation can only be carried on by individuals - paid or not - who take time and trouble. This is an area in which individuals need not feel excluded by impersonal monopolies. The Church, which ought to be a great power house of rehabilitation, too often remains in the past with Abraham or in the future with the Kingdom. Sitting in corners and theorizing about our Lord or about Atonement or about anything else will in the end produce neither sound doctrine nor a satisfactory Christian life. As John teaches us, sound doctrine arises from the will to do the will of God. Doctrine is not meant to be pickled and put into a jar labelled 'Truth', only to be admired and taken down for dusting occasionally. Truth is vibrant, growing and risky; it involves the believer in losing his life, not saving it. Let me present you with some wrested Thurber*:

Time lies frozen there,
It's always 'Then'
It's never 'Now'.

If our religious life is to succeed in bringing us to God, 'Now' itself must be rehabilitated.

*

Jennifer Craddock.

From 'The Thirteen Clocks'.

LUCIES AND LAURIES.

One year ago,^a a baby girl was born in an Edinburgh hospital. Lucy's arrival had been eagerly awaited and her first cries were a delight to her mother and father. Numerous relatives enthusiastically made their way to view this new darling and soon she was triumphantly transported to the cosiness of her own home. A V.I.P. indeed!

Lucy has every security which it is humanly possible to give her. If, at any time, her parents were unable to care for her, for a long or short period, then many other loving hands would smooth her path in life, to the best of their ability. Through the tumbles of babyhood, the disturbances of her teens or the more serious problems of adulthood, she will find support. And what is more, Lucy will be taught spiritual values and will be given every opportunity to grasp them.

Seven years ago, in the same hospital, a baby boy, Laurie, was born. Laurie's birth was not hailed with the same delight as Lucy's. His "father" had left his mother some eighteen months previously and the paternity was in doubt. Laurie had numerous relatives but they were not in a position to offer support. Of his four older brothers, aged 22, 20, 17 and 13, two had criminal records. The other two, together with his sister of 9, were struggling to survive from the effects of the same deprived upbringing which Laurie was to experience.

Since his birth Laurie has witnessed many an unhappy scene, heard many a harsh voice, and the little, fair curly headed boy will have been puzzled by many a strange event.

When Laurie was three his mother was admitted to a psychiatric hospital and Laurie was taken to a children's home where he found "Auntie Jean", the matron upon whose love and care he had to depend, together with her staff. After three months he returned to his inadequate mother and, along with the many other children in the neighbourhood with equally inadequate mothers, he bore the brunt of miserable deprivation.

Laurie would become used to visits to the Social Work Department and to being visited by a Social Worker, "that woman" who would not comply with his mother's unreasonable demands. He did not understand why his mother suddenly vanished; why, later, when she returned, he was whisked from one address to another. Nor did he understand whom the man was, now said to be his father, but then who suddenly was not, nor why he went to four different schools in less than two months, nor why at the time of writing he is back

with "Auntie Jean" in the children's home. Little wonder Laurie was described by his Head Teacher as "rude and unco-operative." In ten years' time, Laurie will still not understand the niceties of society, nor will society understand Laurie - why he is anti-social and inadequate, or violent, or why he is one of the vandals who plague the housing estate.

What do we, as Christians, do about the Lucies and the Lauries? We might be tempted to think that the former, receiving so much loving care, will automatically become the dedicated young Christians their parents hope for. Yet many a well-meaning parent has experienced the anguish of wondering why their little darling, such a joy to the heart during infant days, has, by the time she reaches sixteen, become a veritable pain in the neck. This, however, is a problem not at present to be pursued, a complicated matter, growing more and more complex as the complexity of the world gathers momentum.

Perhaps less thought has been given to the Christian's responsibility to the innumerable Lauries "born to fail". How does God regard them? He loves them as much as the Lucies, but somehow, there seems a tragic measure of unfairness. What hope have they of finding true spiritual values and eventually gaining eternal life?

This is an area in which God needs our help - for how can they hear without a preacher? Work among the deprived will not bring a spectacular number of conversions to the Christadelphian community, nor to any others, but we should remember that our Lord's preaching did include going amongst the people; doing good; mixing with the publicans, sinners and prostitutes. Our own preaching is geared to the middle class. The people from the depressed areas would not have a clue as to our meaning. For some of us dedication may seem to lie in giving out bills (invariably unread) and holding meetings (invariably unattended). The work with social misfits could hardly produce less results than these more orthodox methods.

There are many avenues open to young, and not so young, Christians through which the deprived can be reached. We would not suggest that being employed by the Social Work Department (in England, Social Services) of a local authority is in itself a form of dedication, but it does offer a tremendous scope for Christian work, and few careers could offer more. Some local authorities welcome volunteers and, in every town, there are voluntary bodies, such as the Councils of Social Service who would gladly use helpers. There are always the homes where children wait for the parents who do not come, and the homes where elderly parents wait for the children who do not visit. Someone with a little time to spare could help tremendously.

In this kind of work we can never tell how far reaching the effect may be. If we are to spread the gospel we must meet people. Meeting each other on a Sunday, at our fraternals and socials, keeps us very much to ourselves. Perhaps we need to be more outgoing. This is, of course, no new suggestion. Many in the community have already gone out into the world, letting their lights shine before men. Perhaps more of us could follow. Perhaps we could then truly regard ourselves as lightstands, instead of knowing in our hearts that so many of our present efforts to reveal Christ to men neither help them in this life nor toward the life to come.

Ruth McHaffie.

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WOMEN AND FREEDOM.

"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasoning". (Rom 1:21-2).

In this passage originally relating to the pagan world Paul speaks of a period where men knew the truth and deliberately turned away from it.

"We who live in the northern European culture, including America and Canada, have seen this verse in our generation carried out with desperate strength. Men of our time knew the truth and yet turned away; turned away not only from the Biblical truth, the religious truth of the Reformation, but turned away from the total culture built upon that truth, including the balance of freedom and form which the Reformation brought forth in northern Europe in the state and in society; a balance which has never been known anywhere in the world before."

These are excerpts from the beginning of Francis Schaeffer's book, "Death in the City".

In this book, based on Jeremiah and Paul's Letter to the Romans, Francis Schaeffer shows how far men of our time have fallen from the way of God. As he says, "Everything floats in space: a fifty-one per cent vote or some type of right-wing or left-wing totalitarianism must decide what is acceptable, or some form of hedonism must be adopted".

But although modern man sees himself in the deterministic situation, where morals have no meaning, Schaeffer gives a startling illustration to show that he cannot live this way.

This concerns the Marquis de Sade, who was not only a pornographer, but a real philosopher.

"Those who are materialists have something to wrestle with in the Marquis de Sade's formulation, something that no determinist has ever been able to answer. The Marquis de Sade says that since everything is mechanistically determined, then whatever is, is right. Think about that for six months. The simple fact is that, if you are a determinist, there is no way around that conclusion. De Sade is right. And sadism is the perfectly logical result. Obviously, nature made the man stronger than the woman: therefore, a man has the right to do anything he wants to a woman.

That was de Sade's particular form of sadism. Nobody who holds any concept of determinism can explain why the Marquis de Sade is wrong. "Determinism leads in the direction of cruelty and inhumanity, whether it takes the specific form of de Sade's sadism or not".

Schaeffer then shows that the Marquis de Sade could not live by his own philosophy. At the end of his life he was in an asylum for the insane, at Charenton, and he spent his time grumbling about the way he was being treated by the jailors! Even the Marquis de Sade could not live by his own belief that there is no such thing as morality, and that all is a fixed system!

There can be no doubt as we look around us, that our western civilization has lost the faith and culture of the Reformation, and no doubt either that the prevailing creed is one of materialism and determinism as Francis Schaeffer shows. Thus, I believe it is logical to accept his proposition that we are on the road to more and more cruelty and inhumanity. As far as this concerns women, then it is also clear that the further we stray from the Reformation, the worse will become the lot of women.

Instead of writing now in general terms, about women in our civilization as a whole, I wish to make it more personal. If it is true that the Reformation brought forth a balance of freedom and form in state and in society which has never been known anywhere in the world before, then do we understand what the great pillars of the Reformation were? Does our religious community stand on these pillars, and have we each personally accepted Reformation truth for ourselves?

Simply in "L'Abri", Edith Schaeffer gives the two "pillars" of the Reformation as (1) "a non-humanist authority, which the Bible gives - an authority outside man's relativistic thinking and (2) "a non-humanist approach to the absolute Holy God, upon the basis of the finished, absolute work of Christ upon the cross in space, and time in history".

Or, in a slightly more complicated explanation, Francis Schaeffer says in his book, "Escape from Reason", "For the Reformation, final and sufficient knowledge rested in the Bible - that is, Scripture alone, in contrast to Scripture plus anything else parallel to the Scriptures, whether it be the church, or a natural theology. Second, there was no idea of man being autonomous in the area of salvation. In the Roman Catholic position there was a divided work of salvation - Christ died for our salvation, but man had to merit the merit of Christ. Thus, there was a humanistic element involved. The Reformers said that there is nothing man can do: no autonomous or humanistic, religious or moral effort of man can help. One is saved only on the basis of the finished work of Christ as He died in space and time in history, and the only way to be saved is to raise the empty hands of faith and, by God's grace, to accept God's free gift - faith alone".

It seems to me that generally the Christadelphian community is closer to the Roman Catholic position than that of the Reformation. As I began to understand the Reformation position through reading evangelical books and listening to good evangelical preachers, and most of all through reading Paul's letters in the New English Bible, a light came to me that I think first came to Saul the Pharisee, and later to Martin Luther, the Roman Catholic monk, besides multitudes and multitudes of other folk. It is the only light and the only freedom there is.

"For it is by his grace you are saved, through trusting him; it is not your own doing. It is God's gift, not a reward for work done. There is nothing for anyone to boast of. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to devote ourselves to the good deeds, for which God has designed us". (Ephesians 2:8-10).

Those readers who live in Britain may have seen the television programme showing Malcolm Muggeridge and Alec Vidler following the journeys of Paul. The dialogue has been made into a book, "Paul, Envoy Extraordinary". At the end of this book, Alec Vidler writes a striking epilogue, in which he shows how his attitude to Paul's letters has changed since his youth. He says that he was nearing his forties when a turning point came. He says, "It came to me, with the force of a revelation, that man is basically incapable of saving himself or putting himself right, and that is why it is 'good news' that God sent his Son into the world, to save the world, and to give all who will accept this good news a new start in life".

In concluding this article, I would say that I believe that in this present world, the best freedom for women exists when society is guided by Reformation and Biblical principles: for each individual woman freedom comes with the personal acceptance of God's gracious gift of His Son who died uniquely for her personal salvation.

Anne Clarke,
Australia.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

"The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof."

This world is God's, not ours. The miracle of birth, the mystery of growth, the darkness, the vastness of heaven, the beauty of flower and insect, snowflake and sunset, cobweb and dawn challenge us with the power of the Almighty.

"When I look at Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained, what is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou dost care for him?"

What is man but God's creature, set over His works?

But man denies the overlordship of the Almighty, the kingship of the Creator and sets himself up as supreme. So the beauty of God's sovereignty is marred by rebellion and sin. Yet God's purpose still lies enshrined in His revelation.

"As surely as I live, all the earth shall be filled with My glory."

He chose a people to reveal His glory and character. He manifested Himself in signs and wonders, in acts of mercy and deliverance that they might be to Him "a kingdom of priests" among all peoples, that they might show to all people the character of God's sovereignty in justice, mercy and truth, to be witnesses to Him among the nations.

But they failed, for they turned aside from the ways of God to the ways of the people around; they failed to express His goodness and love. The prophets in denouncing their waywardness, were inspired with visions of God's true sovereignty, when the blind would see, the deaf would hear and the desert would bloom, though through pain and cost and death.

And Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of God and saying, "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand."

"This day this Scripture is fulfilled in your ears."

"The blind did see, and the deaf did hear, the powers of sin were conquered." "I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven."

To the poor the gospel was preached. In Jesus the full glory of God's Kingdom was revealed, for in Him was the true manifestation of God, in Him lay all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

"And He dwelt among us, full of grace and truth."

This was God's sovereignty openly displayed before men in its mercy, its truth, its love and finally its victory. He conquered death with life, hatred with love and human power with divine grace. Through suffering and weakness lay the path to supreme triumph.

The victory was won, but still man fails to see; the treasure of divine grace is like the hidden pearl or the slow-growing mustard seed. God's wheat still grows among the tares, and the triumph of divine truth is fought out day by day in the conflicts, temptations and challenges of daily life, as He showed it would be. The Kingdom of God is like seed or leaven or treasure, growing, hidden, to be sought, and yet still bearing fruit in a hostile world of challenge, compromise, criticism and cruelty.

"Thy Kingdom come." - This world is not yet the Lord's, for they rejected His King and still deny His sovereignty. So the Kingdom of Heaven is also like a drag-net out of which the bad are ultimately cast away, or like the harvest when the wheat and tares are divided out. There is a time of reckoning when the judge will sit and the sheep and goats will be separated. For it is like a man going into a far country from whence he will return and take account of his servants. And then the King will come in His glory and the Kingdom shall be truly the Lord's, for He will reign. We may not know what that will mean "for eye hath not seen nor ear heard what God hath prepared for those that love Him."

"But he hath revealed these things to us through the Spirit;" for said Jesus, "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

We do know the character of the Kingdom, for it is that of Christ; - His works of love, His mercy, His forgiveness, His humbleness and meekness. These are the qualities of the Kingdom as they are of the King. And where there is Christ's character and work, there is He enthroned as King. Wherever His grace is poured out in love and truth, the blind do see, the feeble knees are made strong, the young men mount up with wings as eagles and sorrow and sighing flee away, for the lame leap and the deaf hear.

"For the Kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

These are the first fruits of the glory that is to be revealed when the earth is truly full of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea, when God shall be King over all the earth and the nations shall learn righteousness, for sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

"Thou art where'er the proud in humbleness break down,
Where self itself yields up, where martyrs win their crown,
Where Thou art in the heart, City of God Thou art."

Sheila Harris.

ENDEAVOUR MAGAZINE.

NEWS ITEM.

CENTRAL LONDON BIBLE CLASS
1975 SESSION.

STUDY TITLE

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE WORLD

Study Leader Bro.E.Wille.

The Session will commence on Tuesday September 16th (Not September 30th as previous notice).

The Session will be in two parts:-

Tuesday Sept.	16th	Tuesday Nov.	18th
	23rd	"	25th
	30th	Dec.	2nd
Oct.	7th	"	9th

The Starting time - 7. p.m.

At first this seems clear enough, but looking deeper, is it not rather odd that he says in the same letter:-

..... a woman, on the contrary, brings shame on her head if she prays or prophesies bare-headed; it is as bad as if her head were shaved. (11:5).

We may well ask, "How can a woman prophesy ('publicly expound') if she is to remain silent, whether or not she is wearing a hat or veil?!" It has been observed that this passage about women (14:33-35) seems to intrude into the middle of the Apostle's argument about the behaviour of brethren at meetings, and the possibility arises that it may have been slipped in by the Church at a later date. Let us look at the passage: - "What then brethren? When you come together each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue" Here comes the reference to women - then (14:36-40) "What did the word of God originate with you? So my brethren, earnestly desire to prophesy but all things should be done decently and in order".

Although there are no textual variants to support the idea of an insertion here by a later hand, nevertheless the phrase "In all the congregations of God's people" seems to suggest a well established Church, which was hardly the case in AD 56, the approximate date of this letter.

Well, be this as it may, we are sure that Christ made no laws as such, but established principles that we must try to apply to our day and generation and in such a way that is appropriate to it. This generation has seen equal education for women and smaller families have allowed them more free time which they can use to think and develop spiritually.

There would seem, therefore, no obvious reason why they should not play an equal, albeit not an identical part, to men in spiritual matters. We say not identical as man and woman are complementary and combine to make a whole. Most men tend to analyse situations and reach conclusions on objective grounds, whereas women are more intuitive and frequently reach a deeper understanding by a subjective approach.

The better approach may be indicated by this issue in which all the articles are written by women. On the other hand, we may conclude that there is plenty of room for each one of us to make his or her contribution in Christ's family.