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VOICE

INTEGRITY
FREEDOM
RESPONSIBILITY

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VOICE

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"Liberty consists in the freedom to choose or refuse
one thing at a time."

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Dr. Oldham and Work: Part II

In the second part of his booklet,* Dr. Oldham points out that the Christian must bear in mind the distinct questions of how he may act rightly in a given situation, and whether it is his duty to do what he can to change the situation. In what follows Dr. Oldham does not always make it clear which way he approaches the current situation, although he points to "the radicalness of the break which Christianity demands with prevailing values, standards and practices."

Another difficulty in reading the treatise is that the author nowhere makes an explicit distinction between work that is done for money, and work that is done as creative activity, whether paid or not. Normally he evidently means industrial employment when he uses the term work, together with some subsidiary paid activities, and he states that "the primary purpose of the economic order and of industry is to produce goods for the benefit of the consumer." If this principle were firmly applied, we should hear less, surely, of the needs for the export drive and for trade. Socrates tried to find justice written large in an ideal community, and we can certainly see folly written large in the American pronouncement that her economy relies heavily on foreign countries. For American economy could obviously produce more than enough to satisfy American consumers.

A further point is that our own economy has radically changed from one designed to benefit the consumer by producing goods that last to one that benefits the producers by producing goods that wear out. Dr. Oldham says: "Work is not an end in itself nor the sole fulfilment of man's existence. . . . Man finds his highest fulfilment not in work but in communion and enjoyment. . . . Work has become an end in itself taking possession of all men's faculties." These welcome principles suggest that man is an end in himself, especially when Dr. Oldham says that the Christian "knows the folly of elevating any temporal end into an absolute end and is in consequence free from fanaticism."

*Note: *Work in Modern Society.*

Unfortunately Dr. Oldham wavers, it seems, and his argument breaks down here and there. He holds that in a Christian view work should be vocational and should minister to the needs of society. But then he lamely adds that a man may find his vocation in providing for his family, almost regardless of what he has to do for a job. An industrial undertaking should be "an association of persons co-operating in a common enterprise for the common good." Yet he says that a manager may find he has to dismiss some of his staff, "though he knows that it will mean personal disaster for them and for their families." Yet Dr. Oldham does not appear to regard such disaster as an intolerable affront to man's dignity and a damning indictment of the system that so penalises a man because it has no further use for one of his functions. He also notes the "dis-integrating effect of unemployment," whereas what might be called *unemployment* was what caused the "personal disaster."

Dr. Oldham boldly states that, "The conception of the superman and of collective man are for the Christian ruled out from the start," and throughout the treatise he marks the growth of collectivism, but does not always indicate whether such instances all meet with his disapproval, as they should if he maintained his principle. He notes the "vast impersonal forces that tend towards dehumanisation." But a force is not in origin impersonal, but is applied by someone in pursuit of his policy. Or what, he asks, is to be the Christian attitude to the "great adventure" in which man is trying to control his destiny. ("Is it 'a monstrous collective repetition of the crime of Prometheus?") On the one hand, then, "man" is trying to control his destiny: but instead of resulting in freedom for men, the adventure subjects men to impersonal forces. What he calls the "collective adventure" evidently centralises power in the hands of a very few, instead of distributing it. For Dr. Oldham admits that the "area of personal decisions has become narrower and the range of matters which are subject to collective decision has been enormously extended." A group is composed of individuals, and I find it hard to understand what Dr. Oldham means when he uses the abstract term, *group*, as follows: "It is the group, not the individual, that must answer to God's demands."

He adds that modern society is "more difficult for people in considerable numbers to contract out of." To applaud these developments would surely be the mark of a good communist rather than of a good Christian, and Dr. Oldham does not applaud them, but he does not deplore them too much either, although he notes that the great adventure may lead to an insupportable contradiction between its demands and Christian principle so that people will abandon Christianity. He notes: "What men do is in an increasing degree determined not by individual choice but by the collective decisions of society as a whole." The conception of collective man is ruled out from the start, and so

we are left with the great adventure on our hands as a dubious and *phoney* manifestation of someone's policy, directed admittedly against personal freedom.

Finally, says Dr. Oldham, the Church will have to become less "Church centred." The laity must be the spearhead of Christian action, and the Christian minister "must learn from those who have first-hand experience of the strains of life in the world, which he does not possess." I should think that the Church should become more 'Gospel centred.' But the suggestion advanced apparently means that the Church is to take its advice from the captains of industry and their minions. I have heard one bishop of former days complaining of the fibre of his clergy, and another warning against pulling the lion's tail too hard.* And I have heard it said that the noble Earls Lloyd George and Baldwin snubbed the bishops when they offered their mediation in industrial disputes. But Dr. Oldham's words might be taken as suggesting the surrender by the Church of its mission, which it can accomplish precisely because it stands partly *outside* the industrial labour camp, and so is able to state principles and to voice Authority. Our criticism of Canon Warren,† which some readers found surprising, sprang from his unquestioning acceptance of the right of a few to plan the lives of the many in an age when at last the material facts make possible a great extension of individual choice.

Labour not for the meat that perisheth, said a greater than any social teacher, planner or collectivist. *Consider the lilies of the field*. And He stated that Mary had chosen the better part. Yet at a time when these commands could be widely obeyed, I read the other day that a great thinker considers that "Total war on contemplation" is being waged. Dr. Oldham has presented various sides of the picture, but such conclusions as he has put forward—and his thesis was intended rather to promote discussion than to draw conclusions—are inadequate to the present day. The Bishop of Oxford's statement in his Diocesan Magazine carries the discussion a great deal nearer the truth about man, his work, and his leisure.

Dr. Oldham concludes with an appeal for new theological thinking on these problems, which I cordially endorse. We are trying to see the problems from the standpoint of reality and would insist that a man's life, while not consisting in the abundance of his possessions, amounts to a great deal more than the solitary and—in view of automation—obsolescent function of industrial employment. H.S.

An Opportunity

The University of London, Department of Extra-mural Studies (Extension Courses), in association with Moor Park College for Christian Adult Education, has arranged a week-end residential course on "Freedom and Authority in the Modern World," at Moor Park College, Farnham, Surrey, from 16th—18th March, 1956, at which the Lecturer will be Mr. J. D. Mabbott (Fellow and Tutor of St. John's College, Oxford). The inclusive fee for residents is £1 10s. 0d., or 5/- for the course and small amounts for meals as required. It is hoped that there might be readers

*Note: *i.e.*, Criticising the State

†Note: *Caesar, the Beloved Enemy*.

willing to attend this course, perhaps as quiet representatives of our point of view as well as for the instruction which it promises. Details may be obtained from the Director of Studies, Moor Park College, Farnham, Surrey; on the notice is the remark, "It is the intention of the College that no one should be prevented from attending the course for financial reasons," and we should be glad to hear from anyone who, after perusal of the details, thinks that it might be of value.

—Christian Campaign for Freedom, Penrhyn Lodge, Gloucester Gate, London, N.W.1.

"Feed My Sheep"

"Feed my Sheep" was Christ's last order to St. Peter. It is the fashion to suppose that Christ only referred to spiritual food, and that Peter need not concern himself with anything else. This attitude would seem to be at variance with the Gospel narrative. Are we to believe that the wine at Cana was a spiritual wine, and that the 5,000 were fed on spiritual bread? All men, to live full and abundant lives need physical, mental and spiritual food. To deny man any one of the three kinds means starvation of one kind or another. As the Bishop of Armidale, Australia, pointed out in a broadcast sermon in 1947—"We are, in the end, what we feed on."

If man appeared as if by magic on this earth, full-grown, strong in muscle and mind, it would be quite correct to refer to him immediately as a "worker." He could get busy and work for his living at once. As we know, this is not the case. We all start life as babies. Babies are not workers—though at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution they were almost regarded as such! Babies, even before they are born, are consumers—who-in-course-of-time-become-workers. Inside the family circle they are regarded as consumers without question. The one thing which bothers mother is her baby's refusal of food. After fifteen or more years baby becomes a "worker." Does this change of status also change the natural sequence which has been followed for fifteen years? Not at all. The grown-up baby still follows the old order—he consumes his "daily bread" in order that he may build up his strength on which he relies to do his work. From his first breath to his very last, he is primarily a consumer, and secondarily a "worker." Nature herself imposes this sequence on us all—only the financial system insists that this is not so, and implements its insult to Nature by insisting that a man can work for at least a week before he gets his reward—money—with which to purchase his food. In this "scientific" 20th Century we need, more than ever to remember Christ's injunction—"Except ye become as little children —."

Old habits of thought, sanctified by ages of use, are extremely hard to break. Galileo, champion of Copernicus, found that out to his cost. Man has been taught for so long to regard himself primarily as a worker, that it may take—as did the teaching of Copernicus—about a century to get the new idea to take root! Yet we have only to use our common-sense to see that man is the only living creature on this earth who has to pay a penalty to others of his kind before he is allowed his daily bread. It is as if some daemonic power has altered the Lord's Prayer to "Give us this day our daily *work*," so important has work-

finding become in this age of hard-working machinery! No living creature—other than man—works for its living in the sense that man does. Everything, from lowly amoeba through the vegetable and animal kingdoms is provided with food by the Creator, without prejudice and without penalty. Where does the greenfly plant its eggs? Does it lay them at the base of the rose tree with the admonition "You can have your food when you have worked for it. Climb this tree and you will earn your keep." As we very well know, those eggs are planted on the most succulent parts of the rose buds and leaves. The very finest silk is provided by a lowly caterpillar—misnamed a worm—which stuffs itself to bursting point with mulberry leaves. From the metabolism which takes place *after* it has fed, the creature produces silk. No mulberry leaves, no silk.

Every living creature on this earth is subject to the law of natural sequence—consumption, production, distribution. Even man's mechanical imitations of living creatures—the steam engine, motor engine, *etc.*—are subject to this law. The steam engine must be given its food—fuel—before it will generate (produce) steam which enables it to move. Similarly the motor engine needs a free gift of petrol, oil and air before it will move an inch. But poor man, before he can enjoy his daily bread must defy the natural law and "work" before he can feed himself.

Experts of the "work-that-you-may-live" school will point out that "You *have* to work to provide food!" That is not denied—but the "work" that is done is *secondary* to the provision of daily bread. In the case of the work provided for man in these days, it is often far removed from providing food—it is just as likely to provide death, if the worker happens to work in a munition factory. It is necessary to point out emphatically that no work done *to-day* will provide today's food—except by distributing that which is already in existence. If I work in my garden today, and sow lettuce seed under glass, the energy I use has been provided by yesterday's food, but I won't see any lettuce to eat for another three months at least. Another criticism is voiced as "If you gave people their food freely they would never do any work." If you happen to be a member of Her Majesty's forces, you will have found that as soon as you joined you were given freely your daily food, your uniform or possibly two, and that wherever you went you travelled freely. In return for this you do a lot of quite unnecessary work—it adds nothing to the sum total of things required for life—but you certainly do "work." Many of the great discoveries have been made by people who have been fortunate enough to have their living provided without the necessity of doing a daily "job." They have worked at the only work really worth doing—the kind they have chosen because they are deeply interested therein. Most "workers" after a fortnight's holiday are quite pleased to get back to work. A well-fed man—unless there is something wrong with his brain—must do something with the energy generated by his daily bread. If he is denied a useful outlet for his energy, then, of course, Satan finds plenty for him to do.

Obviously the financial system, which is founded on the fallacy that man is primarily a "worker," needs to be altered in accordance with the natural sequence, so that man is regarded primarily as a consumer. He will then naturally draw a national dividend without prejudice, so that his daily bread is assured, and on the energy so given he will be fit

to do the work that he is fitted for. "Feed my sheep" will become an actual fact on the physical plane, and the feeding on mental and spiritual planes will have a far better chance of leading to the betterment of all mankind.

H.E.B.

Freedom—"American" Style

Some years ago an old doctor who used to tramp the lanes of Devon remarked to me, "We are as thick as thieves." These words I believe implied the professional solidarity and honour among doctors who at that time, regulated their own affairs in accordance with a strict code and who, in conjunction with others who dealt with the problems of sickness, had built up a medical service that was marked by tact and confidence in the doctor's discretion.

In other professions a similarly high code is desirable. Writers direct the thought of others towards truth or away from it and they can refine or debase the language. Eight prominent American writers recently broadcast what they called "A Tribute to Ezra Pound," together with a recording of the poet reading from his own works. The Yale Broadcasting Company presented this tribute which had been "recorded specially" for this broadcast.

Yet after almost eleven years, Ezra Pound is still denied liberty, although other writers consider that he deserves a tribute. Such confinement suggests that the "American" government differs from its better known writers or that these writers at least hold a different idea on liberty from those who deny the poet his freedom. Possibly the government does not worry about writers or literacy in any but the most superficial sense.

We may at least entertain suspicions of the good faith of a power that on the one hand is intent on 'liberating' others while on the other it confines a writer to whom other American writers have just paid a tribute. The excuse that few Americans are aware of the situation was one advanced in connection with horror camps. Possibly the people have been innocent in both cases, of the solitary prisoner and of the mass prisons—but unfortunately it is not the people with whom we have to deal, but with those in power. H.S.

Income Tax

Congressman Gearheart told the house that he considered income tax the most unjust and unequal tax ever to be devised by man. He referred to it as an instrument of discrimination, a destroyer of incentive, a penalty upon the talented, a sapper of our national economic strength, a rattler of the chains of communistic slavery in a country that asks nothing but the right to remain free. He pointed out that Karl Marx is the father of the income tax as we know it today. It is the second of ten most important steps to be taken in the communistic drive to destroy the capitalistic system of free enterprise. Mr. Gladstone, speaking in the House of Commons, declared: "Of all the taxes on the statute books, the income tax is the only one through which it is possible that socialism or communism or anything like them can find an entrance into our system."

—*Women's Voice*, reprinted from 1948.

WITH ONE VOICE

WHICH IS TO GUIDE SOCIETY?

CHRISTIAN TRUTH OR A GODLESS MATERIALISM?

There are three possibilities:

1. The Church may be silent about social, political and economic policies, leaving society at the mercy of selfish power-mongering materialistic forces and an increasing pressure of technology will more and more dominate education, thought and people's habits of life.

2. The Church may continue as at present, a Body with many differing and uncertain guarded voices—thus it can be at the best a very inefficient brake on catastrophic trends.

3. The Church can be one in the Truth, crying it "from the roof-tops"—an Authoritative guide to men and women, not on technical matters, but indicating clearly what are Christian social policies.

If the Bishops and clergy will speak with *one* voice in agreement with the Bishop of Oxford, they will begin to give a new and true direction to men's thoughts on the proper place of work, how leisure may be constructively and creatively used, what steps are necessary to prepare people for it; and at the same time they will provide society with a central guiding Truth which all can recognise as something to which economic and financial policies should be subordinated.

As a first step to this end we invite the Bishops and clergy to tell us that they agree with what the Bishop of Oxford has said, as quoted below, and to sign their agreement.

What the Bishop of Oxford said:

" . . . The introduction of shorter working hours has given a larger amount of free time to a whole section of our population, though at the same time social changes and the shortage of domestic help have deprived others of some of the leisure they would normally have expected forty or fifty years ago. . . . Provided that enough work is done to sustain the common life of the nation, I do not see any reason to regret these changes, in so far as they have brought more leisure to more people. Work for work's sake is not a Christian maxim. We work in order to live. To reverse this principle would be to suggest that man is a mere producing or organising machine, which must indeed have a rest sometimes, but merely as a biological necessity, in order once again to go to work efficiently. Man's life, on any Christian view is something far greater and more profound than his capacity to produce goods or organise their production. Freedom from unnecessary work is something to be welcomed and even extended as far as possible. But this, like all forms of freedoms, brings its responsibilities. If leisure may be defined as the time we have free from prescribed duties, we have to give some thought to how this time is to be used. Our time is given us on trust; there is a limited amount of it; this is one of the conditions of our life here as God has given it.

"Perhaps the danger to-day is that so many people are thinking of life solely in terms of work and amusement. . . ."

—*Oxford Diocesan Magazine*, August, 1955.

The following Bishops have signified their agreement with the bishop of Oxford:

The Bishop of Liverpool.	The Bishop of Gloucester.	The Bishop of Barking.
The Bishop of Chicester.	The Bishop of Exeter.	The Bishop of Kensington.
The Bishop of Bath and Wells.	The Bishop of Truro.	The Bishop of Lancaster.
The Bishop of Sheffield.	The Bishop of Chelmsford.	The Bishop of Thetford.
The Bishop of Chester.	The Bishop of Hereford.	The Bishop of Penrith.
The Bishop of Ely.	The Bishop of Wakefield.	The Bishop of Tewksbury.
The Bishop of Birmingham.	The Bishop of Lewes.	
The Bishop of Carlisle.	The Bishop of Buckingham.	

I AGREE WITH, AND WISH TO SUPPORT THE BISHOP OF OXFORD IN WHAT HE IS QUOTED ABOVE AS SAYING IN REGARD TO CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

SIGNED.....

PARISH.....