

Fulness

Being yourself: *Gerald Coates*

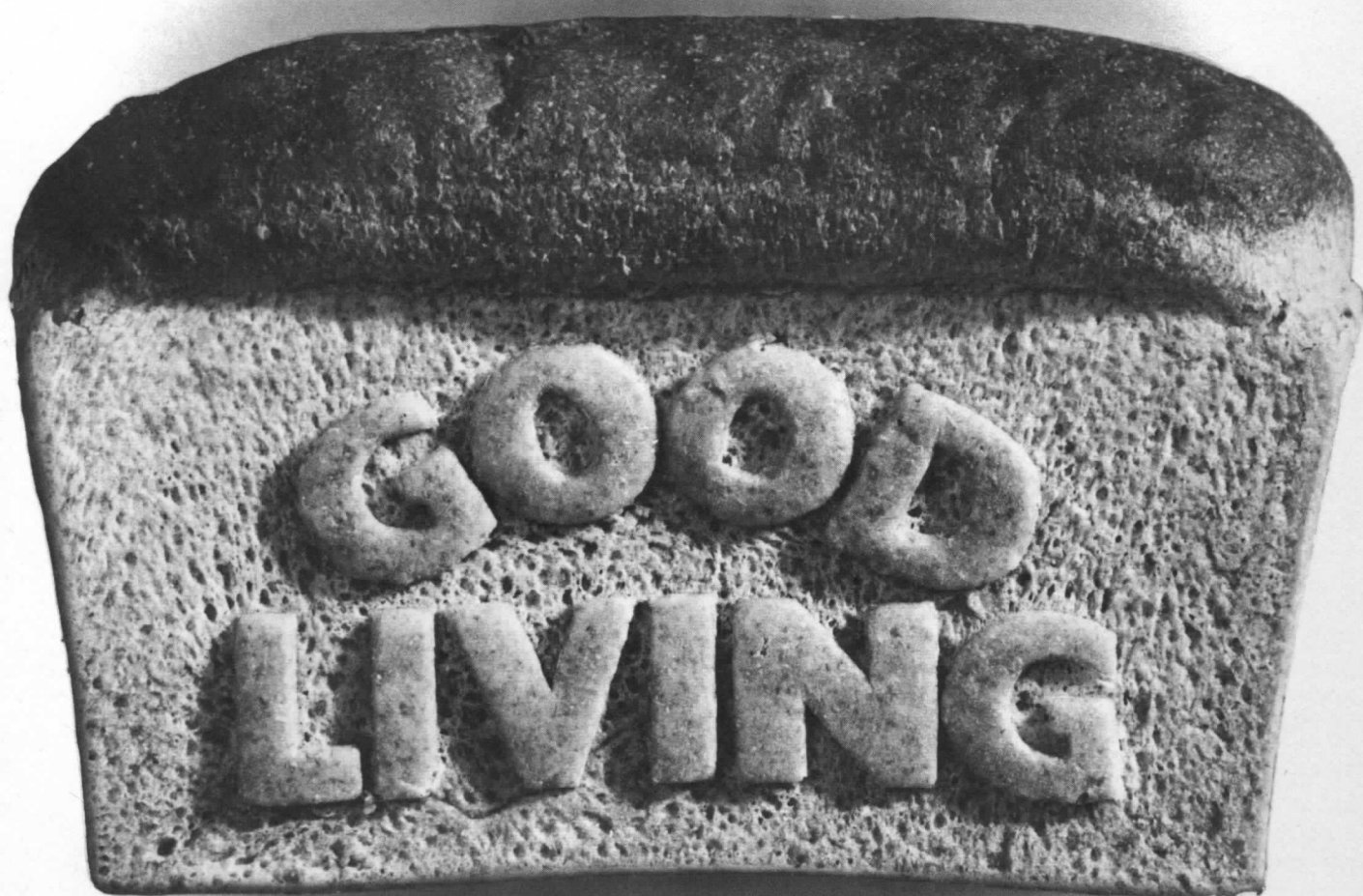
Joie de vivre: *George Tarleton*

Wholefoods: *Trevor Martin*

Squash: *John Noble*

Pressure: *Maurice Smith*

Be it ever so humble: *Nick Butterworth*



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Editorial

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This issue could well be entitled 'A Guide to Good Living'!

When Jesus said 'I have come in order that you might have life—life in all its fulness', some have limited his meaning to include only spiritual life. Life then becomes synonymous with conventions, ministry, prayer meetings, the baptism in the Holy Spirit or some such experience.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Life for Jesus could mean nothing less than a full-orbed experience of God's provision for the whole man. God intended that man should enjoy creation, that the whole of life should vibrate with his love, the common and mundane throb with his glory, the small and insignificant fulfil his purpose.

Some Christians are so intense in their spirituality that they cannot relax and enjoy God or his creation. They have an aura of religiosity that casts a shadow on the simple things of life. Somehow without saying a word they can exude a spirit of condemnation that suggests anything that is not religious is a waste of time. They would entice the unwary into their small spiritual prisons and shut them off from the life that is life indeed.

The division between sacred and secular is so often artificial and cloaks much unreality. This issue stresses the need to bring food, exercise, and the home, as much as

ourselves, into the realm of God's kingdom.

Nothing need be beyond the redemptive touch of the Holy Spirit. All things can be baptised into a new relationship with the Creator. When the totality of existence is brought into the kingdom of God, life becomes exciting, an exploration of God's unbounded wisdom and grace. United with Christ we are new creations, 'there is a new world, the old order has gone and a new order has already begun'. In this new order of life 'he richly supplies us with all things to enjoy'.

Graham Perrins

In the beginning God was himself with Adam and Adam was himself with God. We will perhaps never see anything so beautiful as God being himself with his creation, and those, redeemed by his grace, being themselves with him. They will not have to put on airs and graces or reach a standard in order to be loved, but simply be themselves.

Such a concept is foreign to many Christians. The Church is not filled with people who are simply being themselves in glad obedience to God. The Church is not marked with spontaneous joy in everyday living. There is much pretence and unreality. We try to live beyond ourselves, motivated by the feeling that underneath it all we are total failures.

It was sin that separated the Creator and his creation, and sent Adam and Eve into hiding. How laughable that they thought they could hide behind the leaves of a tree and how utterly absurd that men today think they can hide behind fashionable clothes, professional qualifications and half-baked philosophies.

God's original intention was to populate the earth with men who were real, real in their relationship with him and with one another. Holy men, inasmuch as they were living unto him. As we look at the present state of affairs it may seem to us a hopeless objective, but God's intention has not changed one degree. He does not modify his plans. He is not satisfied with just bringing people to forgiveness and granting them a degree of happiness—there is much more for us than that.

Authentic spirituality can be summed up in one word—reality. How unreal we have all been in the Church. Allow me to highlight a few areas, there are so many. Firstly, reverence: what an overplayed but undervalued word. Whenever there is noise or dancing among God's people, this old chestnut pops up. To truly revere God is to receive his word on the basis that he is the almighty God, maker of heaven and earth, and to get on and do what he wants us to do. A lot of so-called reverence is nothing but religious rubbish that bears little relevance to everyday life.

Secondly, the Lord's Supper: the emphasis on the symbolic nature of the bread and the wine is often reflected in a unity that is only



Being yourself

by Gerald Coates

symbolic. How many churches are there where the whole company is truly of one heart, soul and mind? Remarkably few, but we continue to break bread slavishly once a week, as though the only thing that was wrong in the world is the world.

Some time back a friend of mine was at a meeting where they were about to take the bread and the wine. To the minister's horror, there was a fly in the wine. With 'due reverence' he passed the cup around. The more discerning were able to see the fly in the wine but the cup was passed around the entire congregation, the object apparently being to see if the fly was still in the wine after the sip had been taken. Such an event would be hilarious if it were not so tragic. If at the local pub the barman served

a beer or a glass of wine with a fly in it I could not imagine anybody quietly drinking it or passing it on to his friends, but such is the unreality of the Church.

On another occasion, at an Anglican church, the Christmas service was being held—a candlelight service. As people entered the darkened building the books were handed out. The service started with a well-known carol and everybody sang heartily. But the vicar then introduced some little-known carols. They were all in the book, he thought to himself, so it was only a matter of getting to know the tunes. The building was packed, the organist struck up carol after carol, but the singing was almost non-existent. What had happened? Inadvertently, the church warden

had handed out the prayer books instead of the hymn books! The service lasted nearly two hours, but not a single person stopped the proceedings to tell the vicar what had happened. Everybody was uptight, the whole thing was unreal.

This unreality produces a niceness, but not true spiritual life. An unwritten code has been formulated that says we must never offend or upset people. The resurrection life of Christ becomes rather irrelevant in such an atmosphere. We have ceased to be what Christ made us. Our voice has been lost among the other 'nice' charitable causes that litter our towns and villages.

It is time to stop pretending, time to stop trying to be a Christian, time to say 'I'm not what I was by the grace of God and I'm not yet what I will be by his grace, but I am what I am and I'm jolly well going to enjoy being that. I'm accepted by God and I'm going to accept myself. I'm loved by God and I'm going to love myself'.

We are told to love our neighbour as we love ourselves. Most Christians despise themselves and undercut themselves, feeling that this is true humility. Some say that a little bit of sin in our lives will keep us humble. But Jesus was the most humble man that ever walked the earth, and he was sinless. No, sin is not a part of our true selves; you and I are an extension of the life of God.

Many Christians wish that they could change their circumstances and then they could really start to be spiritual. If only I was married. If only I wasn't married. If only I was more extrovert. If only I could learn to keep my mouth shut. If only I was more colourful. If only I wasn't so loud. If only I could read the Bible more, etc., etc.

Once, on a car journey, a friend of mine stopped to ask the way. After consultation with his friends, the man he asked walked slowly back to the car, looked my friend straight in the eye and said 'I'm awfully sorry mate, but you can't get there from here!' There are many Christians like this. They feel they can't start being what God wants them to be from where they are.

We can start being real right now. We are not sinners occasionally breaking through into sonship, but sons of God who occasionally break

out of our sonship into sin. Let's begin by enjoying life a little bit more than we do. The words joy and enjoy are closely tied together, aren't they. Scripture says 'The joy of the Lord is our strength'. He was filled with joy, even when approaching Calvary—'Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame'.

Even through all the suffering and separation from God on the cross, there was joy that was set before him. If you see a Christian without any joy you can be sure that he is in weakness and prone to sin, and if you see a Christian in true joy, not a 24 hour Colgate smile, but true deep joy, clean, wholesome, able to laugh and cry, then that man is strong in the Lord.

We have a brother living with us who, prior to working with me, had done three years at Bible College. Having been blessed with the fullness of the Spirit, he found that he didn't fit too well into the system there. However, through him and others who joined him, 70% to 80% of the students on the campus were baptised in the Spirit. At the end of his three-year course he passed his exams with flying colours and went to receive his certificate to become a BA.

After the ceremony one of the sisters there drew him aside and told him that she had been concerned about his life at college. She felt he needed more discipline. He agreed that this may well be right, but said that he was relating to the elders in Cobham and was under the direct covering of myself. That didn't seem to impress her too much. After prolonged hesitation she blurted out with the utmost sincerity, 'Tim, the area in which I feel you need discipline is the area of leisure. I have noticed recently that you have been enjoying life far too much for a Christian!'

Well, I want to say that I am enjoying life, the church in Cobham is enjoying life, and in countless church communities throughout the world there is an increasing enjoyment of life. Jesus said 'I have come that you might have life and that you might have it abundantly'.

Such a lifestyle can only come out of a revelation of the character of God. It seems to me that the average Christian lives under a perpetual cloud of uncertainty concerning God's will. What to do in a career? Who to marry? What

car to buy? Where to live? All become issues of a gigantic proportion. However, God has set us free to follow our own wills in these areas. We are of course to be guided by our love for God and our love for our brothers. On the surface it would appear more spiritual to wait on the Lord than to simply go ahead and do the obvious thing, but it is not.

Some time back I spent a day at Buckingham Palace with a friend who works there. Towards the end of the day a middle-aged man, very smartly dressed, came and had coffee with us. He showed me an album filled with beautiful photographs that he had taken abroad, mainly in Switzerland. This man, it appears, lived his whole life for the Royal Family, not doing much from one week to another, saving his money to enjoy a holiday abroad. Suddenly, he looked at his watch, got up, straightened his bow tie, pulled the tails of his coat, and left. About five minutes later he returned and continued to show me the photographs explaining how and where they were taken. Then again he looked at his watch, went to the door, straightened his bow tie, pulled his tails, smoothed back his hair and off he went. Eventually I asked my friend what he was doing. She explained that he was waiting on the Queen during supper.

God spoke to me through that experience. The man knew the mind of the Queen and the Royal Family. He was not waiting around with great intensity for instruction. He knew what was to be served and when to serve it. He knew roughly speaking how long it would take the Royal Family to eat the various courses. So it is with the will of God.

We are able to enjoy life whilst being completely responsive in our desire to serve him. Of course, some things are specifically forbidden in his word, but outside such things the will of God is not a tightrope but a broad pasture where all the sheep are able to feed. The shepherd does not guide each sheep to its own square metre of grass; they are allowed to choose.

Recently at a meeting a young man came to me most disturbed, 'I've got a scripture,' he said. I asked him what about. 'About a wife.' 'Oh, I see,' I said, having been through this routine many times, 'Who is the lucky girl?' 'Well I

think it is that one over there,' he said. 'What is the problem?' I said. 'Well the problem is she doesn't like me.' 'Do you love her?' I asked. 'Love her?' he looked at me quizzically. 'Love her, no, but I have got a scripture.' I told him that it would take more than a scripture to keep his marriage together. God doesn't want a man to marry a woman because of a scripture but because he loves her. And he leaves it to us to make the choice.

We must rise above the slave mentality where we are pushed through the praise, worship, discipleship, submission machine to end up as standard Christians. We have got to be ourselves. The easiest people to get on with are those who are being themselves. It doesn't matter too much what level of maturity they have reached.

What I am saying is that religion differs from life. Christ is not the centre of a religion, he is our life. The normality that I have been speaking of is not divorced from God but comes from him. The life of Christ in us is the visible demonstration of the norms of heaven, the joy and obedience, laughter and tears. It is this note of reality that is missing from so much of our preaching, teaching and behaviour in the Church.

At a recent meeting a friend of mine was praying with about 20 friends. One brother began to thank God for the news he had heard about his wife. All suddenly put up their spiritual antennae. Was this the answer to their prayer? The wife of this brother had not been able to conceive and the friends present had been praying for them over a period of many months. Instead of simply asking him, 'What did you mean when you were praying?', they continued for another half-hour or so to the end of the time, all desperate to know what it was that the husband was giving thanks for.

When eventually all the praying ceased, they gathered round the couple to hear the good news that she had become pregnant—but what unreality! How good it would have been had they felt free to ask him straight away. What rejoicing there could have been. What a shame they waited for the 'meeting' to finish. They had ceased to be themselves. That happened in someone's front room. You can be as religious in a

front room as you can in a building with a bell on top.

In certain circles there is a hidden law. All problems have to be resolved with a word from God, a tongue, a prophecy or a word of knowledge. If you have a sin problem you have got a demon. If you are insecure you were probably dropped out of your cot when you were 13½ days old and you need the healing of memories and so on. I am not belittling the manifestation of the spirit, but I am coming to see that many Christians need some sane commonsense, not special 'spiritual' answers.

Only a few days ago my telephone rang at my bedside. I picked it up in the dark not realising what the time was. It was the wife of one of the leaders of an Anglican church. Her husband was out of the country on business. She had a friend to supper and they had got into an intense time. Could I help? 'Of course,' I said, 'Come round.' I turned the light on, it was nearly 12.30. I thought I must be mad.

Soon the doorbell rang and in they came, both looking a little the worse for wear. The older sister had invited the younger around for supper. During the course of the meal one or two things in the life of the younger sister were touched upon. Eventually a claustrophobic intensity overcame them both and they ended up in confusion. They both began to seek the Lord. However, unless you seek the Lord with direction, your mind will wander all over the place. This is exactly what happened. They had been up 25 cul-de-sacs, had misread lots of signs and both were now thoroughly fatigued.

It became quite obvious to me as the girl shared her problems that she was totally self-orientated. The older sister had done everything she could. She had had one or two pictures that she felt were from the Lord, and one or two words that she also felt were by the Spirit. They may well have been. However, it was quite obvious that, up until this time, most people who had counselled the girl told her everything but the truth about herself. Eventually I stopped her talking and said, 'Look, dear, your problem is that you are totally self-willed. All this talk about demons, not being loved and everything else is a camouflage. You must repent of that and turn to God and we'll help you to do that right now.' There

are occasions of course when you have to go and spend time with the Lord on your own over specific issues, but I find these were not daily occurrences in the life of Jesus. It is recorded that he got up early and went away to a lonely place to be alone with his Father because this was unusual for him. Normally he just carried on living enjoying the fulness of the Holy Spirit in the company of his disciples.

Lastly, this unreality produces legalism. Recently at a meeting I ministered on the practical out-working of the new covenant. I carefully destroyed many misconceptions that we hold as Christians, one of which concerns the daily quiet time. I made it quite clear that if a person wished to read his Bible every day and pray then of course he was quite free to do so, but God wasn't demanding this of all of us.

One of the leaders of the church stopped me and said, 'I think you ought to read the Bible every day, indeed every morning. If you don't read it every day where are you going to get your food from? Where are you going to get the sustenance for the day?' and so he went on. When he had finished, his wife turned to him and said rather loudly, 'If you think we ought to read the Bible every day, why don't you?' There was a mixture of stunned silence and laughter.

He was a middle-aged man with strong convictions for which in many cases he would have been applauded. But he was living in gross unreality. He didn't read the Bible every day, but was laying the law on the Church. He made no confession that he didn't read it, neither did he ask for any help in order that he might. He led us to believe he was doing something that he wasn't. Untruthfulness like this has no part in God's kingdom.

Graham Kendrick, in one of his songs, wrote words to the effect that being himself was not nearly as bad as he thought it might be. Let us take encouragement from that. If we insist on living in unreality then the only thing God can do is convict us of unreality. But if we determine to be ourselves then he can really meet us. He may bring adjustment or encouragement but either way we shall be refreshed and the Church will grow into maturity all the quicker. So let's be real.



joie de vivre

by George Tarleton

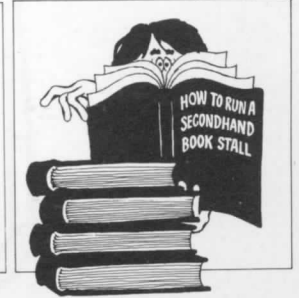
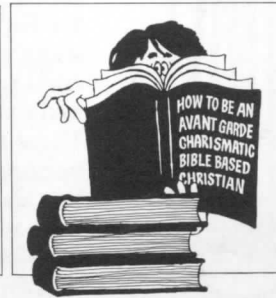
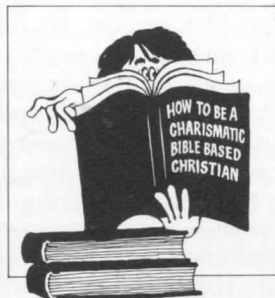
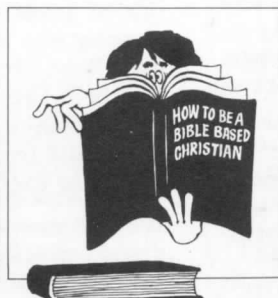
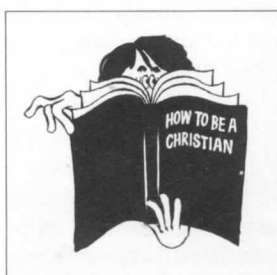
Jesus enjoyed living—he really did. Having majored on him being a man of sorrows, which was one of the many facets of his character, we have ended up with a caricature of him. Kids do not respond to a gloomy personality, but they were spontaneously drawn to him. That's because the truly spiritual man is a walking paradox, for he can be 'sorrowful yet always rejoicing'.

Jesus was a therapeutic personality, it was good just being in his company. 'In him was life,' said the man who knew him more intimately than most. Life wasn't a chore to the Lord, he loved living. While others were content to exist, he lived life to the full. One of his stated purposes for coming was that we may have and enjoy life, have it in abundance—to the full, 'till it overflows'. Eternal life is not only to be thought of in terms of quantity, the quality is also of vital importance.

The picture many have of Jesus is that he was a modified, more gracious version of John the Baptist. Yet the contrast between the two is remarkable. John began his ministry in the lonely wilderness of Judea,

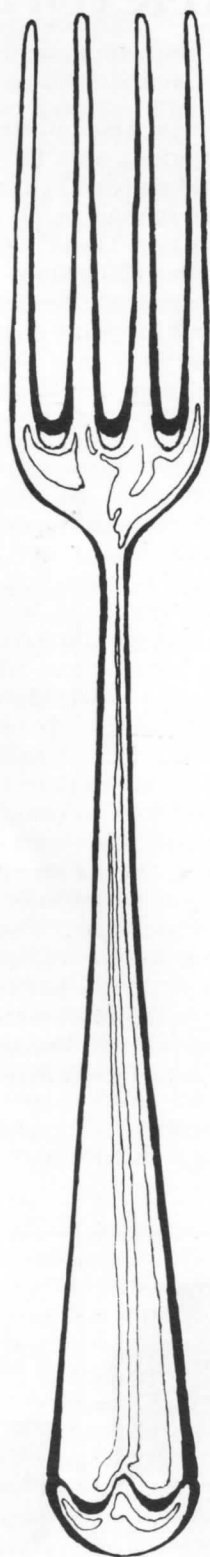
whereas Jesus started in a more gregarious way. He went to the wedding feast in Cana. When the wine ran out many of us would have said 'Good'! Yet Jesus made a further 150 gallons of the best vintage wine. Some folk, embarrassed by Jesus changing the water into wine, have been trying to change it into grape juice ever since!

In marked contrast to the austere life-style of the Baptist, 'the Son of Man came eating and drinking'. This is also glossed over, especially as it earned him the title of a glutton and a drunkard. We reproduce what we are: the disciples of John prayed and fasted often. Whereas the disciples of the Master were accused of spending their time 'wining and dining'. This accusation can hardly be laid at the door of much of what passes for Christianity in our day. The attitude seems to be—if you like it, then it cannot be of God. Or as someone said to a friend of mine recently, 'You're enjoying life too much for a Christian'. What utter rubbish. Let's recapture our spiritual joie de vivre and, like the Lord himself, become masters in the art of good living.



Wholefoods

by Trevor Martin



And God said, 'Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.'

Frankly, and I say it reverently, even God would be hard put to describe the general contents of your high-street supermarket as being 'good'. Proliferation of modern convenience foods is responsible for a high proportion of industrialised man's health problems. 'Ready-mix' products are notoriously low in goodness, most of it has been chemically processed out.

Public enemy number one is white sugar, a refined menace lurking in sweets, chocolates, cakes, fizzy-drinks, beer, canned fruit, etc. It is known to cause overweight which in turn leads to heart disease.

Our partiality for bland, smooth, highly processed foods (white flour is enemy number two here) was linked by an eminent cancer specialist back in 1972 with cancer of the colon. He observed that in countries such as Africa, where the natural roughage of foods is not removed, this form of cancer is practically unknown, as also are diseases like appendicitis, polyps and ulcerative colitis. The removal of properly indigestible fibre from food is believed to be a cause of cancer of the colon.

Here's a suggestive piece of nutritional investigation carried out by Sir Robert McCarrison. He fed some rats with white bread, sweetened tea, margarine, boiled potatoes and cabbage, tinned meat and jam. These unfortunate creatures soon became not only badly proportioned but also their coats lacked gloss, they were nervous and apt to bite their attendants and they lived unhappily together. By the sixth

day of the experiment they began to kill and eat the weaker ones amongst them. When the experiment was stopped after six months, many of the surviving animals were suffering from lung and gastrointestinal troubles. Rats fed on wholemeal bread exhibited none of these symptoms and enjoyed excellent health.

Maybe this experiment leaves something to be desired scientifically, but it is an accurate enough parable of the universal dietary ignorance of the industrialised nations—which necessarily includes the redeemed of God's holy nation as well! The fact is that we are all gobbling up mountains of food products which have been significantly changed by applied technology in terms of food value. Whilst recognising that this technology has brought us many advantages, it needs to be realised that it has also served us up with three very certain disadvantages as far as sound health is concerned.

1. The impoverishment of the natural elements in foodstuffs: vitamins, minerals, cereal fibres, etc.
2. The over-emphasis on starch and sugar.
3. The addition of a wide range of chemicals for flavouring, prolonging of shelf life, colouring, etc.

What is the Christian to make of this bad news about modern foodstuffs? Do we go along with the Biblical affirmation that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit and do we acknowledge that one of Jesus' declared reasons for coming was that we might not only have life, but 'have it abundantly'? Then I believe we should be motivated to think sensibly about the food and drink we consume each day.

It's a shame that food faddists and dietary crackpots have turned most of us off giving any serious thought

to our food intake and its effect upon us. Because of them we find it much harder to accept the need for a responsible attitude in this area. Ultimately, however, the choice is ours.

In the same way that followers of Jesus have no intention of sinning deliberately that the grace of God's forgiveness might abound, so it seems rather pointless to continue to eat and drink things which are detrimental to our health so that divine healing may abound. God doesn't pay out on health insurances based on blasé attitudes to eating and drinking.

Some may be thinking, 'What relation does divine healing have to eating?' As I see it, divine healing can be regarded as the way God initiates us into kingdom health through the Holy Spirit's working of miracles and gifts of healing. And even within kingdom health there may be occasion to resort to these powerful charismata of the Spirit, for God has covenanted himself to us as our divine healer.

However, I believe we need to think hard about an area within kingdom health which most of us have missed or avoided—doubtless because of the measure of personal responsibility involved. I speak of health maintenance. Whilst divine healing is up to God, maintaining our health is up to us.

There are three key factors in personal health maintenance: how we relate, how we eat, how we exercise. The last matter is dealt with elsewhere in this issue. Let's briefly look at health and relationships.

There is a divine condition for sustained health and strength, and it concerns our relationships. If we withdrew our love from the brethren we make ourselves candidates for physical weakness, illness and even early death. The lack of agape love amongst the saints is as important

in God's reckoning as that. This is a measure of how seriously he takes his love and our sharing of it.

Now let's return to eating. As far as your body is concerned there is a lot of truth in the statement that you are what you eat. First and foremost let's be committed to the concept of wholefoods, by which I mean foods that haven't been mechanically tampered with, processed beyond repair or chemically adulterated. In simple terms, foods that are natural. I believe a new orientation to the wholefood lifestyle will bring the rediscovery of a big slice of God's provision for us.

Here are some practical suggestions based on the principle of wholefoods.

1. Use foods in their natural state as far as possible. For example 100% wholemeal bread—be creative: bake your own to our recipe.

Wholemeal flour—start with what is called 81% wholemeal flour, it cooks lighter than 100%. At least twenty-three factors are depleted in the processing of white flour, and at best, some six are restored by the flour industry. In whole-wheat, Vitamin B6 is four times as rich as white flour. In the latter, Vitamin E is virtually wiped out. Brown rice—short grain for rice puddings, long grain for savoury dishes. Brown sugar—as dark as you can take it. De-caffeinated coffee—bet you can't tell the difference from ordinary caffeine-packed coffee—but your kidneys will. They'll be far less irritated. Did you know that caffeine, public enemy number three, zips you up right enough—but the net result produces greater fatigue? Ordinary coffee is highly recommended for taking power out of your energy-bank.

2. Think again about salads, fruit and vegetables. Eat plenty of them



raw, since raw foods always retain more vitamins than cooked foods.

3. When cooking, be conservative. Don't soak vegetables beforehand as this incurs vitamin loss. Aim to have very little liquid left after cooking. This way you will keep all the goodness instead of pouring it down the sink. Retain any liquid for gravy, sauce or soup.

4. Be ruthless with white sugar: cut it out altogether. The old saying about sugar giving you energy is only partly true. Ironically, through a complex process involving your body metabolism, over-intake of sugar is now known to be a cause of fatigue. White sugar in particular, though refining, provides not one milligram of vitamins or minerals and no nutrients for the body at all. Cut down the use of sugar generally. Start with the amount you have in tea and coffee. Wean yourself off over a period of time. You'll get the real taste of both back again. Honey, by the way, is the most pure and delectable of natural sweeteners.

5. Study food-stuff labels. Use only foods with the least amount of chemical additives.

6. British is definitely not best when it's chips with everything. Cut down on regular fry-ups and using the chip-pan. The body cannot cope with saturated fats. It may be good for a laugh to say that many wives are killing their husbands with the frying pan, but it could be nearer to the truth than we think. However, don't come under condemnation if you have the odd fry-up. Occasional 'bad eating' won't kill you.

7. Consider the idea of taking a regular vitamin and mineral supplement. 'VM' capsules are fine for the younger generation, 'GEV-E-TABS' for older folk.

8. Discover your local health-food store. Enjoy exploring it—you'll find it a gastronomic Aladdin's cave of new things. Search out the basic foods first—100% and 81% wholemeal flour, brown rice, brown sugar, pure honey, bran, brown spaghetti, de-cafeinated coffee, etc. The assistants will generally answer your queries and give advice where necessary.

Of course, there's a price to be paid for all good things and wholefoods are no exception. But what price can be put on good health? You may be worried about having to increase your budget to

purchase wholefoods. But with costly convenience foods dispensed with and the fact that wholefoods are more filling, which means a reduction in overall quantity, you could well break even.

One other thing. To be committed to the idea of wholefood doesn't make you a crank. You don't have to get hung-up analysing every mouthful or be finnickier when you eat out. 'Eat whatever is set before you' is a Biblical dictum that saves us from extremism.

Your wholefood experience will not only give a treat to your tastebuds, but physically and emotionally you'll also become a

more wholesome saint into the bargain. So, good eating and good health.

For further reading:

Books, available at your local library, that give an in-depth study of wholefoods, dietetics and nutrition:

Eating right for you, by Carlton Fredericks.

Let's eat right to keep fit, Let's cook it right, Let's have healthy children, Let's get well, all by Adelle Davis.

Magazines that can be bought at your local health-food store: *Health for All, Here's Health*.

Wholefood RECIPE

Recipe for 100% wholemeal bread
(to make four loaves)

Ingredients:

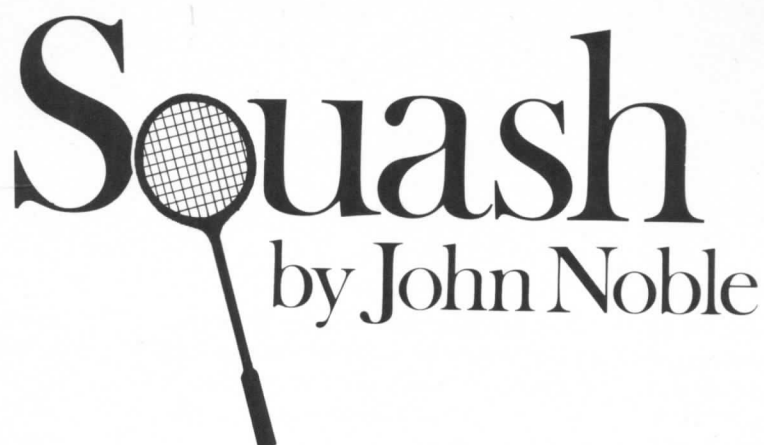
3 lb. 100% plain wholemeal flour
1 teaspoon brown sugar
1½ pints warm water
1 oz. Allinson dried yeast
1 tablespoon corn oil
2 teaspoons salt

Method:

1. Place the flour and salt in a large mixing bowl in a warm place.
2. Whisk the dried yeast and sugar into ½ pint of warm water. Stand the mixture in a warm place until it is frothy (about 10 minutes).
3. Put the remaining 1 pint of warm water, oil and frothy yeast all together into the flour and mix thoroughly.
4. Knead for approximately 10 minutes until the dough is no longer sticky.
5. Divide the dough and place it into warm, greased loaf tins.
6. Stand them in a warm place for 30 minutes until the dough is risen.
7. Bake the bread at gas mark 8 or 450°F for approximately 35 minutes. Turn the loaves out of their tins to cool on a wire rack and cover them with a clean tea-towel.

Squash

by John Noble



No, it's not a soft drink, or a Christian youth meeting. It is the fastest growing sport in the UK at the moment. This could, of course, be the result of serious promotion by certain ministries who shall remain nameless!

Squash is something I've really come to bless God for in recent years. Not so very long ago I found myself in real physical difficulties as a result of separating the spiritual realm from the secular. I had adopted a superior attitude to such scriptures as 'bodily exercise profiteth little' and therefore I did none, with the result that I came near to collapse through overwork. Had I continued as I was, I wonder if I would be here now to do the things that are 'profitable in every way'. It occurred to me that some men of God, who have received so much credit for burning themselves out at an early age, may have to face the fact that had they taken more care of their bodies they may have lived longer and accomplished even more. After all is said and done, the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and it pays to look after it for him.

By now you'll have gathered that I have eased myself into a low-key programme of physical exercise which has blessed me no end. Of course it's not wise to suddenly thrash yourself on the squash court—the result could be even more disastrous than burning yourself out the other way! As I have gently moved in to take up sport again (I hadn't really been involved since National Service days) I have found that I have benefited in every way. My mind is clearer, my body responds

much more readily, I feel less tired and, what's more, I enjoy myself. I won't necessarily live longer but already my days are happier and more efficient.

At one time I had aspirations of becoming a reasonable player, but the graph of my improvement levelled out quickly. I think I tried much too hard to win and was quite discouraged with my results. In fact at one time I even entertained the thought of writing a book entitled 'God's loser'. However, all that is behind me now. I suppose I still lose as much but I've given up the idea of writing a book on the subject. I'll stick to magazine articles and remain a very average player, praying like made for angelic assistance—only permissible, of course, when playing other Christians.

For those who have been inspired and are being tempted, in the best sense of the word, to do some physical exercise, a squash court provides the ideal setting. You don't need to do hours of boring jerks on your own. A good knock about once or twice a week gives you all the exercise you need. It never rains in a squash court and there's no mud—footballers, joggers, etc., take note. There's not much room for spectators, so your humblings are kept fairly secret—squash has all the advantages! I'd like to give you a few simple tips to better your game by up to 50%.

You may ask what qualifies a mediocre player like myself to give advice on a fairly technical game? Well it's like this. I am not on the court for more than a few minutes before my opponent starts making suggestions as to how I

could improve my game. Thus over a period of time I have acquired quite a store of information which unfortunately I have not managed to put into practice. I must do something with it, so here I am passing it on to you.

1. Keep your eye on the ball

Don't worry about hitting it, just keep your eye on the ball.

2. Return to the 'T' after each shot

After an hour or so crawl to the 'T' after each shot.

3. Play the ball away from centre

I like this one, if you get this you can really make your partner sweat—tough on you if you don't!

4. Play the ball early if possible

This rule is beyond me as I seldom get to bed before midnight.

5. Hold your racket up at all times

New players with weak arms may need practice before starting.

6. Don't go for a winning stroke too early

This is great providing you have a winning stroke. I just redouble my prayer effort.

Well, I hope that all this has been of value to some, that life will become a little fuller, and that we'll be more able to run and jump and dance before the Lord. Bless you all!

Maurice Smith

PRESSURE

We in the Western world can easily be misled into thinking that there are no real pressures here and life should be a walk-over. If we lived under communist suppression then we'd really have it tough, so we reason. Whilst it must be true that we have much to learn of suffering from our brothers behind the iron curtain, there exists here much mental and emotional pressure caused by the false standards of the artificial culture we have created. Without disrespect for all who have sought to improve our material lot, we must face up to the fact that our fixation with a veneer of material well-being, our struggle

to make good and be acceptable in today's society, is filling the mental hospitals and has the nation queuing at every surgery in the country for tranquillisers. We have not solved the problem of the fragmented inner man.

Thankfully, all this is forcing us to get answers from God and to learn how to live triumphantly whilst all around us the social system is collapsing. David says in Psalm 4, 'in pressure you have enlarged me,' so not all pressure is wrong. It can in fact be the making of us. It is what we do when the heat is on that determines our walk with God

or away from him. It is not the things that happen to us, but rather our reactions that form our progress. The same principles apply now as they did way back in David's day and age.

Writing on this subject I feel like the man who was consulted by someone trying desperately to give up smoking. The seeker explained that he had come to this counsellor because he had given up smoking more times than anyone he knew and therefore must be very experienced by now! Happily, as far as smoking goes, I can say it died an instant death 21 years ago on the day I surrendered my life

to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Unhappily, I cannot say the same for living under pressure! In fact the truth is that I have lived in more stress during recent years than I would ever have imagined possible.

Much of the problem arose soon after—and no doubt as a direct result of—a fresh encounter with God the Holy Spirit. After ten years of salvation the path had become familiar and somewhat boring with little to cheer me except the distant hope of the day when I'd finally put on immortality. Then came the happening that has happened to so many in recent years. All that I had gathered around me as a religious protection was shaken.

Very often a man is a roaring lion externally, but inside there is a small boy with great needs and fears. Contact with the Holy Spirit of truth can mean a re-opening of these long closed areas and this can surprise a man who suddenly realises that he is not all that he thought he was, walking in his nice safe rut. So often we come to believe that the image of ourselves which the world has been shown for so long is the real us.

Current Christian thinking may well hinder us in our struggle to find our true identity, laced as it is with innumerable arbitrary standards. One is constantly urged to conform to the 'Christian' image formulated by tradition. For instance, how often do we hear an exhortation on the validity of righteous anger. Yet by word or implication we are pressurised into being Christian goody-goodies who press down our anger and become sickly sweet to cover it up. Internal damage is being caused by such untruthful activity. Someone may get a nasty shock one day when the nice guy suddenly erupts into ungodly anger and his pent-up emotions explode for little or no

apparent reason. Can you see the harm that this type of unreality is causing us? The result in many is physical or mental illness.

Of course not only Christians are prone to this 'niceness'. It is also rife in our society and was even more so a few years ago. But now there has inevitably come a violent reaction in favour of so-called reality. As usual the pendulum has swung from one extreme to the other and we have been inundated with horrific violence and sensuality as a result. So the world proceeds on its crazy course exchanging one bad thing for another in a forlorn attempt to run the system without God. Staggering from left to right it proceeds on a course of inevitable destruction.

Perhaps the great tragedy to many of us is that we Christians have been no different from the world when faced with the pressure of the last couple of decades. Why have so many of us not been able to cope?

Weak foundations

First of all let us realise that the shaking process has been necessary in our lives. We have not been the genuine article through and through and the Holy Spirit has been clearing the site for the right foundations to go in. Please don't baulk at that. We must face the fact that our foundations are weak, and that a few decades of evangelicalism with its trite answers and superficial solutions has left many of us so insecure that most ordinary citizens don't know how to relate to us; we are such funny people with our own language which even we sometimes don't really understand.

Often we are more easily offended than them. They only have to use a mouthful of 'bad language' and we are so embarrassed or self-righteous that we become the butt

of their humour and a source of entertainment. Of course we would call it 'bearing our cross,' or 'suffering for Christ,' or some other equally inane misuse of scripture. If the truth were known we have not learned to be friends with publicans and sinners and are covering that up with religious clothing. We have lost our peace, we are ill-at-ease and can't cope. Why does this happen?

Basic honesty

One reason is a lack of basic honesty. The failure to accept that we are just what we are means we are living a contradiction, and this brings tension into our lives. At the root of this lies a lack of humility: it's humbling to admit the whole truth about ourselves. Yet once we really get to the truth, once we find reality, it has a liberating effect. The truth sets us free.

For instance I often feel very nervous before I speak at a meeting. There may be several reasons why this is so and adjustments are no doubt needed, but this nervousness need be no great problem if I admit it freely. However, it's easier, so I kid myself, to try to cover it up, press it down, and try to be more spiritual. After all I am a minister of holy things, I tell myself, and have a reputation (that's dangerous for a start) for being able to minister life and blessing. For years I was in a church that demanded we minister a 'living' word. Before a gathering we used to meet to find out who had *the* word, *a* word was not good enough! So the pressure was on—will the message live tonight?

Be humble

Now if I'm nervous, I'm nervous. I only need to admit that openly, to humble myself, and already things are improving. Mind you, it can take real humility to do that

each time if the symptoms re-occur.

Jesus said that if we would take his yoke upon us and be meek and lowly of heart we would find rest to our souls. Surely that is what is required in all of today's mental and emotional turmoil. Rest to our souls. Just read that again: If we become meek and lowly we shall find rest to our souls. Ponder it once more—*we shall find rest.*

This lesson needs to be applied many times over in different areas of our life. We must be committed to learning the lesson of humbling ourselves to be really honest. Remember the parable of the sower? A lot of seed failed to produce much, but some seed fell in good and honest ground and it persisted and then brought forth much fruit. Now we know there is no good ground as such, for all our hearts are wicked and deceitful before conversion, but we can be 'good and honest'—or good because honest.

Confession

At a recent fraternal one minister remarked that, as chaplain of a mental hospital, he had noticed consistently over the years that the number of Roman Catholics who were admitted was by no means a pro rata representation of the local populace. He asked the local priest if he felt the confessional had anything to do with the statistics and the priest answered, 'Undoubtedly'. Confession it appears is good for our minds and emotions.

There is a clear link between honesty and confession. If we are not downright honest about the condition we are in, then we do not see the need to confess the condition.

Oh that the simplicity of it all would suddenly sweep over us. God is not the exacting task-master we so often represent him as. He really does see me exactly as I am and wholeheartedly receives me 'just as I am'. Stretching myself beyond

my true position can do nothing but render me vulnerable to feelings of insecurity. Trying to hide those feelings, or delve into their source can bring unbearable pressure into my life. May God grant us grace to recognise when we are being unreal and trying to be more, or less, than we really are.

Absolutely no condemnation

Let me share one other area of weakness which can lead to pressure—that of finance. Now this can really rock my boat. 'Don't know how to go without?' you ask. Not at all. Being abased doesn't present too great a problem to me now, but knowing how to abound, that's another story. How to spend money on myself and family without condemnation is a lesson I'm in the middle of, and my close friends will tell you I'm not doing very well.

Paul says 'I have learned in whatsoever state I am to be content. Whether I am abounding or being abased.' I wonder how he learned it? Well one thing is certain, the pressures of life would never have enlarged him, nor will they enlarge us, unless we stay clear of the unnecessary additional pressure of condemnation. By freely admitting where we are, we can stay afloat whilst the waves are rolling all around us. If we, for a moment, take our eyes off the Lord, and feel we ought to be much better at all this than we are, we will block the very means of grace that can lead us into the solution of our problems. We will soon have that sinking feeling!

It may well be that in many of our problems an axe needs to be laid to the root of a particular tree, but until this happens we have to keep on living. Until these men emerge who can be more specific with us, we had better learn to humble ourselves and admit where we are. This will pave the way for God

to reveal to us what we are in him—and when he speaks there is faith.

'That which is not of faith is sin,' so let us not go beyond ourselves with big words as though we are spiritual giants. Neither let us under-estimate what God has done in our lives. Standing firm on the ground of what he has done for us, let us allow him to work in us through all the pressures of our 20th century.

Let us not be under pressure that we are under pressure! That's a vicious circle. Down because we are down. Do you understand? It's for folk that aren't very good at it that Jesus came. So relax, fall back, he'll catch you. Sit down and don't try so hard. You could find out that you are in 'heavenly places'!

Perfection only

For the past two and a half years we have had a young lady school-teacher living with us. If you were to ask Lynne she could tell you that I am nothing very special and that I have clay feet all right. You see, you can't keep up a pseudo-spiritual front once someone is living with you. Lynne is family and family know the truth about us. We all belong and that's it. We expect each other to change just one degree at a time and are not up tight because we haven't reached perfection yet.

There is only one standard, and that is absolute perfection as seen in Jesus. So we do not need any arbitrary standards to judge each other by. The pass mark being 100, we have all failed whether we are 30 per centers or 60 per centers. So we can accept each other, God has made up the balance in order to let us in and keep us in. But by being downright good-and-honest we can become 100-fold fruitful, so let us persist until the Lord has a really rich reward for his unmerited love toward us.

If you have a query arising from what has been written in past issues, or a problem that you feel could be aired on this page, please write to John MacLauchlan at 3 Cranborne Walk, Canterbury Kent

John MacLauchlan

Q. How are we to receive insight into the prophetic scriptures, and what is our attitude to them to be?

A. Much confusion has resulted from the misconception that every man is his own Bible interpreter. Indeed, many have become so disillusioned with conflicts of opinion in the area of bible prophecy that they have abandoned the field entirely! I believe there is a key to this muddle in 2 Pet 1:20-21: 'No prophecy of scripture is a matter of private interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.' The implication is that prophecy must be interpreted the same way it was given: by prophets, 'men moved by the Holy Spirit'. Basically, then, insights into the prophetic scriptures will come from prophets. We need a release of this vital ministry, and we need to give heed to it.

As we listen, we shall discover 'keys' to understanding. For example, the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple after the captivity is prophetic of the end-time restoration of the Church. Those given to study may now take such a 'key' and use it to unlock riches in the passages of scripture dealing with the second temple. But we must avoid seeking to build a prophetic system, and ask ourselves, 'What is God actually saying to the churches?'

According to 2 Pet 1:19, the prophetic scriptures are given to light our way through darkness until the day of God's consumma-

tion dawns. They point us to the goal, and so give us direction in the present. As the vision of our destination grips us, the practical steps we must take everyday become meaningful. Our behaviour is affected as we live in the light of our destiny. We are a people experiencing a foretaste of the coming kingdom glory (1 Pet 1:20-21; 2 Pet 3:14).

Q. Is it true to say that this generation will see the fulfilment of God's purposes?

A. I do not believe it is true to say we will see the fulfilment, but I am convinced it is true to say we can see it! To say that this generation must be the one to bring the King back is to imply a fixed prophetic time-scale, and I do not believe there is any such thing. For example, the prophecies of the consummation given in the New Testament are often said to be coming about 'shortly'. We are told 'the time is near' (Rev 1:1, 3). But nearly two millenia have elapsed since they were given. Far from being discouraged into saying that so many earlier generations hoped for fulfilment and were disappointed, I take great encouragement from this. The possibility of fulfilment was clearly put before earlier generations, so there can be no fixed, decreed time-scale. In previous generations, many principles of prophecy were fulfilled, but none of them 'closed the circle' and brought end-time fulfilment of prophecy. The way is wide open for this generation to respond to God and see the completion of his purposes.

In scripture there is a strong emphasis on the need for response to the prophetic word. Note the repeated exhortation in Rev 2 and 3: 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.' Note the call to overcome, sharing Jesus' victory.

This emphasis on response shows we can influence the course of events. Peter says we are to be 'looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God' (2 Pet 3:12).

The open-ended nature of fulfilment of prophecy is also shown by Daniel. He is concerned with 'the time of the end,' yet his prophecy of the seventy 'weeks' (which by its very nature and the numbers used points to the completion of God's purposes) leaves us a few years after Jesus' death at a very early point in the history of the Church. The implication is that the consummation can come at any time thereafter.

There are very encouraging signs in the Church. The world seems to be approaching the time of fulness of Babylon. In a sense the stage seems to be set. We can so respond to the God of glory, to our risen Lord, that not only will the principles of God's dealings be fulfilled in our generation, but also the 'goal will come'.



be it ever so humbl

by Nick Buttenworth aged 30

Some time ago my wife and I were invited by some friends to their home for a meal. Tricia is a good cook and Graham is a congenial host and we soon felt very much at home. After our meal we sat enjoying just being together in the lounge—a room of which Graham was justifiably proud having renovated and decorated it himself only recently. As we talked Graham began to tell me how he intended to finish the room.

'All the decorating's done,' he said,

'but it looks a bit bare at the moment. It needs something on the walls. I've seen some engravings on copper that I quite like—how do you think they'd look in here?'

This question started me thinking about the whole subject of our home environment. Is it important what we surround ourselves with? Ought we to call the place we live home? Is not heaven our home? Should we spend time and money on something temporal? And so on.

Since then I have found some

answers both in prayer, and by carrying the questions with me into living situations. In such situations I have encountered, in varying degrees, two different attitudes.

The first says that considerations as to what I should hang on my walls are irrelevant to the kingdom of God. What matters is winning the lost, personal holiness, fellowship with God and with other Christians. This other stuff has a worldly smack about it.



People who hold that only 'spiritual' things are important may well be puzzled by certain questions. Why did God bother with colour? Could he not have created in black and white? If God is only interested in relationships in the spiritual realm why did he bother with the material creation at all? Why didn't he stop at the angels?

The second attitude affirms that such considerations are legitimate, but from a variety of motives. These range from a frantic justification of rank materialism to a true appreciation of physical reality. Clearly God deems his physical creation important because he made it. That, if no other reason, should be sufficient for us to stress its worth.

But if it is worth something to God, is it relevant to me and if so how? This is the heart of the matter. To answer this question we need to understand something of the nature of God. God is creative and since time began he has been giving physical, tangible expression to what he is. 'Let us make man in our image'; 'The heavens declare the glory of God'; 'For since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made.'

Creation is fallen, but those who are Christians have been redeemed, first-fruits of a new creation, citizens of a new kingdom. Now just as God expresses his invisible nature with greatest clarity amongst those who are under his authority, so it is our privilege to express our new nature in our own sphere of influence. One of the main areas where my authority extends is the place where I live. In short, my home is to be an outpost of the kingdom of God. It ought to be more clearly seen in my home that God is who he is than in the home of someone who doesn't know him.

This of course has profound implications for my attitudes and behaviour towards those I live with. But this aspect has been amply covered elsewhere.

It is the other aspect that I want to highlight here—that of creating an environment which, albeit in a low key, says something of who I am in God and therefore who he is.

Can you imagine a room in someone's house that makes you feel you are in the presence of God? What would it be like? Flashing lights, or a chilling sense of the supernatural? Heaven forbid! It would be a place where you begin to know who you are. A place where your humanness is counted important. A friendly sort of place—even without people in it.

There are flowers on the table. On the wall, next to a reproduction of a Rembrandt, is a child's drawing done in crayons. A cat (or is it a wardrobe?) by 'Karen aged 5.' The light in the room conveys a dozen different moods. There is lamplight, candlelight and simple firelight; light for reading and for eating, for working and relaxing. There is a handwoven rug in front of the hearth which neatly covers the burn mark made by a hot coal. There are books on the shelves—to study or to browse, and an arrangement of dried flowers in a stone pot as a book end.

But there's something else, indefinable in the abstract. The particular choice of furniture, the colours in the room, but it's even more personal than that. It's the unusual importance that has been attached to simple insignificant things. An old glass jar filled with pebbles collected from a Suffolk beach. A piece of driftwood. But no, it won't be captured with examples. In essence it will mean something different for each person because we have been made individually and we will express ourselves differently. Just bringing

together a child's drawing, a jar of pebbles and a dimmer switch will not automatically bring the glory of God.

But I do have an aspiration that anyone coming into our home might sense a different set of values than the world's. A friend who came to visit us recently said as he walked around, 'I really like coming to your house Nick—you're surrounded by so many weird things!' I took it as a compliment.

The point is this: that we should care about the place we live in. Even if at some future date we are forced to live in caves we will still paint on the walls.

It is not that we are trying to duplicate a spread from 'House and Garden'. I am not advocating the spending of great sums of money on new furniture, etc., although there are many who need to learn how to spend money on themselves and their homes.

Even if we could afford to spend large amounts of money to completely refurnish and redecorate, it would not necessarily be desirable. Homes which are totally conceived 'on the drawing board' leaving no allowance for additions at a later date, are sterile and static. A home needs time to develop, organically. A holiday in Wales, a weekend with gran in Oldham, a good day at nursery school—all these can find their way into the make-up of the home in a tangible way.

The concept of the perfect home conveyed by glossy magazines and advertisements is one which I would like to undermine. Illustrations of room settings often elevate a lie. Anybody coming into the room will, out of deference to the law of neatness, sit with hands in line with seams of trousers. Rooms like this exist only for the benefit of the camera, they have little to do with real life.

Sometimes practical and functional

aspects of making a home are set against aesthetic considerations. I have talked with women whose standard of cleanliness was such that you could eat off the floors, but who had little time for flower arrangements. The atmosphere is more like a hospital than a home. Others bring all kinds of beauty into their homes but fail to keep the bathroom clean.

There should be no dichotomy here. Those who are strong in practical matters and weak on the aesthetic side ought to be able to find covering from those who are stronger on the aesthetic side, and vice-versa. There is no arts versus science dilemma with God. He is the one who has ordered the universe to minute detail as well as the one who has put it together so beautifully.

So I said to Graham and Tricia, 'Before you go out and just buy some things to complete the ensemble, why not think what you could put on the walls as an expression of who you are?' I suggested that as Tricia had done art at teacher-training college, why not have a look through that folder that I suspected was hidden in a cupboard somewhere.

We talked about various other ideas I had seen carried out. A bachelor friend of mine covered a large area of wall in his flat with cork or soft-board. Then he absolutely covered it with odds and ends, all very personal to him and expressive of his character. There were photographs, jokes and cartoons, postcards, notes from friends, a ladies shoe containing pens and pencils and a calendar with important dates on it. It was possible to get a good idea of the kind of person he was just by looking at one wall!

Another friend framed an area of cork on which to pin the best of his children's drawings. This meant that he could give some importance

to his children's work without having to frame everything—children can be very prolific!

Someone else I know had a shelf filled with all sorts of different things. The only qualification for any object to be displayed was that it was bright red.

Once I was sharing with a group of Christians about the harmony that there should be between the practical and the aesthetic. A week later one girl testified how she had reaped a double benefit. In her kitchen the tiled floor was a striking black and white check—or should have been. In fact she wasn't in the habit of washing it as often as she might have done. This meant that the floor normally looked rather grey and when she did actually clean it, it was hard work. Now she had determined to keep it clean and as a result was living with a beautiful floor as well as a clean one. What was more, the task was made less arduous because she wasn't giving the floor a chance to get really dirty.

After speaking to another group, the leader's wife told us about her total failure to be able to keep any pot plants alive in the house. Her home was clean and neat as a new pin but she felt a real lack in this area. She dreaded any of her children giving her a potted plant for a present in case it died and they felt that she'd neglected their gift. I suggested that she tackle the problem as a venture of faith. She should begin simply with one or two robust specimens, with the help of someone more green-fingered to remind her to water them—or not to. It occurred to her then that her own daughter seemed to have a gift in this area and would fit the bill very well.

If the glory of the Lord is to fill the earth 'as the waters cover the sea', it needs to start somewhere. The glory of the Lord is not just some ethereal glow that will come

to earth when we are morally perfected. Rather, as I am changed into his likeness morally and creatively so there will be an observable effect on that part of the environment under my control. Francis Schaeffer tells the story of how two communities in America were founded on neighbouring hills. One was a Christian college, the other a hippy commune. The tragedy was that it was the hippy commune that planted trees and cultivated the environment whilst the Christian college stood like an ugly prison.

I know some will object that I am trying to bring about now what God has designated for the future. I believe that is fatalistic. In a real sense eternity starts now, and I believe that there is possible in the here and now a substantial healing of all that has been lost by the fall. People's spirits can come alive, their minds renewed, their emotions and bodies healed. Jesus demonstrated a right control over the earth not just as God but as our elder brother. He walked on water and bade Peter do the same. He turned water into wine. He cursed a fig tree and saw it wither. By his power Philip was transported in the spirit, unlimited by physical laws, in the same way that Jesus walked through locked doors after his resurrection. I do not believe that it is meaningless to pray over the runner beans in your garden any more than it is meaningless to pray for healing.

Open our eyes Lord to see that we are the first-fruits of a magnificent harvest, that we might glimpse the scale of what you're doing in the earth and what your ultimate purpose is.

As Christians we believe in the affirmation not the negation of life. We need like Paul to know how to abound as well as how to be abased. We need to be able to own things without them owning us.

And it starts, like charity, at home.



You are so extravagant Jesus

You are so extravagant, Jesus—unbelievably extravagant in everything you do.
To use the word 'economy' when it comes to describing you is insulting
and belittling.

For you made a superabundance of things that are of no use to anybody.
How many cast a second glance at sunrises and sunsets?
Yet both go flaunting around the skies like women parading their new dresses.
How many of us bother our heads about a field full of varnished buttercups?

We can't eat them!

Yet you find buttercups so cheap and fascinating to produce that golden
carpets flop around everywhere.

Then there's the huge, heaving seas. Why make so much water, Jesus?
We can't drink it!

And all those snowflakes endlessly parachuting to earth. Why send so many
and why each one a different pattern and shape?
Sheer extravagance!

No, Jesus. You are by no means economical.

Even the picnic on the hill resulted in twelve basketfuls of leftovers.

It wasn't six bottles of well water that you changed into wine but
six thirty-gallon stone jars full!
Once again, sheer extravagance!

Then there were those fishermen bobbing about in a boat all night without
catching so much as a sardine. You just spoke the word and their nets were
crammed to breaking point with flapping silver fish.

Just like you, Lord. Not content to give an average catch, it had to be an
extravagant one!

Mary of Bethany was extravagant in her worship of you and everyone
yelled, 'Economise!'

You replied: 'This women's extravagance will be praised and remembered for ever.'

'Good, my son. You are beginning to glimpse a hue in the rainbow of my
character.

Extravagance to a wild and careless degree is the characteristic of my father and me.
I was never precise, calculating and sensible when it came to giving life and love
for you on that dark hill.

When it came to loving you, I knew nothing of economy and
That is why I have the reputation (in heaven anyway!) of being the most
extravagant person ever to walk the dust paths of this planet.

Your common sense, my son, is all very well in the petty, paltry things,
But it can never be made the bedrock of life, for common sense usually
produces timidity and timidity tags along with economy.

You see, it's possible to be so economical that no risks are taken;
nothing ventured;
everything is speculated;

Consequently, faith is abandoned for common sense and my life is
robbed of all excitement and adventure.

I tell you, my son, not only has wealth been deified these days but also economy!
And when economy is enthroned, man will do nothing that has a vague
suggestion of extravagance.

You cannot hoard yourself up for a rainy day, son, and justify it in the
light of my teaching.

You must give yourself extravagantly for security in the wisdom of your own
Economic prowess is directly opposite to the extravagance of my father
who revels in feeding birds,
cultivating grass and
inventing flowers simply because . . .
because he enjoys doing it.'

No 1



QA with GC

Is the institutional church on the way out? Is the housechurch a viable alternative? Do apostles exist today? If so how does one recognise them? What about false apostles? How dangerous is the 'submission to authority' teaching? Is there not a danger of following men instead of Christ? What is the position of someone who is in a church that is unsympathetic to the present movement of the Spirit? Stay in or come out?

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