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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance—

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Though for the Week: "Where there is no vision, the people perish".

- Proverbs 29 - 18

A CHRISTMAS VISION. By Eric D. Butler.

"I am the light of the world", said the Founder of Christianity. That light has been the beacon of hope and inspiration for millions as they have sought to express through the personal and social lives a way of life based upon a concept of the value of each individual unknown before the coming of Christ. Yes, God's truths existed before Christ, and where those truths were applied in society, even partially, great Civilisation's were evolved. But Christianity gave the old truths a new significance, shed a blinding light on the reality of power, and taught a new meaning of love. Christian Civilisation was the result of a new vision of reality. The central aspect of that Vision was the uniqueness of every single individual. That uniqueness could not only express itself where there was not only genuine freedom of choice, but acceptance of personal responsibility for the choices made.

Christmas originated as a joyful celebration of the birth of Christ, of the beginning of Christianity. The babe in the manger is a reminder of the beginning of a new growth in human history. The early Christians had a vision. They looked out on a dark and pagan world and set out to conquer that darkness with the light of Truth. Their position was similar to that of the Christians of today, who are also a minority. At a time when Christmas is being idealised and commercialised, it is important to recall that Christ was not born into a world of tinsel glamour. It was a world of the Herods and other brutal tyrants. It was a world in which the Roman Civilisation was rotting and collapsing from within. The new movement of Christianity was a regenerating force sustained by the faith of those who had glimpsed the new vision. The Christian Faith was not blind and irrational. Christianity is a religion of realism, of truth, not one of superficial idealism.

Christ taught that faith without works results in death. However, without sufficient faith no works are likely to be undertaken. Faith concerns the reality of that spirit which Christ said could move mountains. But it is not faith itself which gouges away the earth and rocks as a road or tunnel is built; it is the correct application of that faith, the utilisation of the principles of technology which man has progressively added to over the centuries as part of his cultural heritage. It is a manifestation of the realism of the Doctrine of the Incarnation, of the word becoming flesh.

Christian Civilisation did not "just happen". It was not the product of the "will of history". That Civilisation was created by individuals fired by the Christian faith and vision of how men and women should live together, of how both their personal and social activities should be governed. That faith and vision

was passed from generation to generation. Western political systems, legal systems, social systems, and economic activities were seen by Christians as means to the end of serving the individual. Karl Marx attacked the underlying concept of representative government, pointing out that it was based upon the Christian stress on the value of each individual. The communist philosophy insists that the individual has no value except as a part of a group; it is the antithesis of the Christian philosophy which insists that the group exists primarily to serve and to help the individual. "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." Christ left no detailed political, social and economic blueprints for man. But He clearly stressed the Truth upon which all of man's activities should be based. His teaching on the vital question of power and proper authority inspired Christians to insist that centralised power corrupted, that all power should be decentralised to the maximum, and that a Christian society must be built up from the individual and not down from the State.

The state of the world is such that while many of the manifestations of Christianity still exist, they are but the shadow of a substance which has been eroded and subverted over many years. The tourists pour through the great Cathedrals of Europe, marvelling at the architectural beauty and technical achievements, stand gazing at the great works of art produced by the famous artists like Michelangelo, and wonder how it was all possible. The truth is that the faith and vision which produced such a blaze of creative activity has been progressively weakened. Parliaments still assemble, the outward form is what it was years ago, but modern Governments no longer feel themselves bound by any moral and spiritual restraining influences. They are totalitarian and anti-Christian, progressively robbing the individual of the few remaining rights and freedoms he possesses. The regeneration of a dying Civilisation will not start by renovating historic buildings, presenting them as no more than interesting museums. What is required is the regeneration of the spirit, a regeneration of the vision and faith which moved large numbers of mankind over those long years when the best and more inspiring features of Western Civilisation were being established. Christmas is that Season of the year when we should ponder on these matters.

It is fortunately true that in spite of the gross commercialisation, many still feel, even if unconsciously, that Christmas is a time for family re-union. The family unit is the basic foundation upon which a civilised society rests.

The family association exists to help the individual members of that association. The children are seen as evidence of the concrete continuity of life and history, and for this reason are always a major feature of the Christian tradition. But what is being passed to the children? What vision are they being given for their future? How can they be given a vision if their elders lack one themselves? The Christian Season should be a time for quiet contemplation about these matters, of a browsing on the meaning and lessons of events, of discussion with one's family and friends. What is the purpose of living? The Christian immediately answers, "To know, love and serve God". But this requires choices. Self-development takes place not only through activity, but also through contemplation. Let us therefore contemplate briefly on where we as members of the Australian society are heading. And we can in our mind's eye look forward to what we can do to avert the growing disasters threatening the extinction of Civilisation, and to produce a new Civilisation reflecting those truths which Christ said would make men free.

Since the beginning of World War I the first great disaster which shook Western Christendom, at the very moment when man appeared to be about to enter a new and more creative era, the forces of the anti-Christ have progressively driven mankind from one convulsion to even greater convulsions. Those

forces have consistently sought to drive a despairing mankind into bigger and more highly centralised groups. An economic system which has the potential to provide man with a type of freedom never previously known in history, has been perverted to enslave the individual. Those exercising power through a perverted financial system, elevating the policy of Mammon over the policy of God, have through inflation progressively eroded a sense of stability and continuity in society. They clearly intend to exert if possible, an unfettered power on a world scale. Irrespective of the label under which they operate, with Communism being only one of these, these power-lusters are driven on by the vision of a centrally-planned and centrally-controlled world. They see themselves as an enlightened elite who know what is best for their fellows. Their evil vision is as old as man. Technocracy has made that vision a potential reality as never before in history.

If the vision were completely realised, the final result would be a world-wide frozen Hell similar to that established in the Soviet Union. But we can take heart from the reality of truth which the Communist power men have not been able to destroy. Just as the winter snows cannot kill the life beneath them, life which in the Spring bursts upwards into new growth, neither has the grey blanket of oppressive centralism in the Soviet Union been able to suppress permanently the life of the human spirit. Surely one of the most inspiring miracles of an age when the individual is told that he does not count, and can do nothing, is the challenging voice of the Soviet Christians and intellectuals, calling to us across the prison walls of the Soviet Union. In spite of the brutal oppression, they manfully bear witness to the strength of their faith. They hold fast to a vision of a time when their prison walls will crumble. Their Christmas Season will be rather different from ours. Will our celebrations be as meaningful? It is a question we can ponder upon with great profit. Those no longer capable of being moved by the moral courage of the few who dare to face the threats of the modern Caesars, are already devoid of spiritual life.

Christianity has been described as a "manly religion." It challenges individuals to be just that - real men and women, not synthetic creatures moulded to be the passive raw material of someone else's policies. The great figures of that most Christian of artists, Shakespeare, are depicted as individual characters, not as mere members of some group. Upon the stage of life every character has his individual role to play. Because Christianity is a religion of realism, does not mean that it is a religion of despair. It is the idealist who produces despair, because his ideals are unreal and unattainable. But truth is obtainable. Truth is the gateway to real freedom.

The League of Rights states in its first objective that, in essence, practical Christianity is the only hope for a better future for mankind. The League challenges individuals to accept their personal responsibilities, to defend freedom and the rights of the individual. The League has been criticised by some because it persistently draws attention to the growing manifestations of evil in the world; that is "negative and depressing." But man cannot know good without knowing evil. Light and shade are but different aspects of one reality. The role of the prophets throughout history has been to attempt to warn man of what he would suffer if he continued to adopt wrong policies. The great Cicero warned his fellow Romans of their certain fate if they did not halt certain policies. Most of those policies, including inflation, are the same policies undermining Civilisation today.

But the League does hold up a vision of what the world could be like, a world in which realistic, financial and economic policies would remove the artificial friction which drives one group against other groups internally, while also bringing nations into conflict one with the other. The answer to one of man's most

basic and urgent problems, inflation, has been known for 50 years, and was partially applied through the consumer subsidy system, with success, in all English-speaking countries during the Second World War. Resistance to a relatively simple change in national financing comes from an unholy alliance of power-lusters using inflation to destroy the free society, economic "experts" who lack the humility to admit that events have proved them wrong during all the economic disasters of this century, and those so brain-washed that they believe that a man-made financial figure system, an abstraction, is more important than reality.

The League does not believe that new parties as such, or more "great leaders", are the answer to the crisis confronting Civilisation. League supporters hold fast to the faith that when sufficient individuals accept their personal responsibilities, equip themselves with knowledge, and associate in a realistic manner they will be able to force their political representatives and the policy makers to change present policies of disaster. Real leadership comes only from those who accept Christ's truth that those who would be the greatest must be the servants of all.

The League does not believe that a correction of inflation and other policies will immediately result in a completely changed society. Much damage has been done. There has been corruption and misdirection of the young, all too often deprived in their formative years of that proper discipline so essential to fit individuals to become responsible. But once corrections have been made, then a regeneration of the best features of Western Christendom will start to take place. Healthy growth will progressively replace the rot of today. Let us visualise during this coming Christmas Season this new growth taking place within the next few years, with Australia setting an example to the rest of the world. By the end of the present century a vision would have become a reality. We can visualise the Christmas Season being celebrated in a much more meaningful manner, and children listening wide-eyed with excitement as they are told stories of the few who through what had come to be known as The Terrible Dark Age from 1914 until the 1970's, never lost their faith in the ultimate victory of Truth, who held the line against organised evil when all seemed lost, who ultimately inspired their fellows to throw off the yoke of error and tyranny, pioneering what was termed The Second Great Renaissance.

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* MAY ALL READERS AND THEIR FAMILIES ENJOY *
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* A CHRISTIAN CHRISTMAS *
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