“Render Unto God . . . .”

“And still when mob or monarch lays
Too rude a hand on English ways,
To whisper wakes, the shudder plays,
“Across the reeds at Runnymede,
And Thames, that knows the moods of kings,
And crowds and priests and such like things,
Rolls deep and dreadful as he brings
Their warning down from Runnymede! ”

(Kipling.)

In another column of this paper is an invitation to the Church. This is the third issue of Voice in which it has appeared. Although by now we estimate that this invitation has been brought to the notice of thousands of clergymen, to the best of our knowledge not one has replied.

The invitation states that “we, ourselves, have for long felt that it should not have fallen to laymen to take up a task which obviously belongs to the Spiritual Authority, and we know that in an earlier age it would not have been necessary.”

Because we know this to be true, and because we are so convinced that only an effective intervention by Spiritual Authority can avert a catastrophe which will plunge the world into untold misery and suffering for hundreds of years, we propose to substantiate this statement. It so happened that when the need to substantiate it became apparent to us at just that time the book of the eminent historian, Dr. Arthur Bryant, under the title The Story of England, came into our hands. From this book we have taken the liberty to quote extensively.

Twenty years ago we met a doctor, honoured in his profession, and, partly because he was a friend of a Prime Minister, we made a considerable effort to enlighten his darkness on economic matters. We might as well have talked to a stone wall. But the doctor was at pains to convince us that heart and soul he was concerned with the amelioration of human suffering. Well, that doctor is now near the top rung of his profession and the Prime Minister is boss of other Prime Ministers. In the interval between then and meeting the doctor again the other day, human suffering has multiplied, and has every sign of multiplying still more. When we again discussed the world’s problems, the doctor said that he was quite indifferent to the probability of the world being plunged into a thousand years of misery.

This little incident is recounted because it illustrates a point which goes to the heart of our present problems: that a kind heart, mercy, and humanity are indeed noble attributes of a Christian gentleman, but they are not a substitute for obedience to God’s Law, which runs through time: “and the sins of the father shall be visited unto the third and fourth generation.” Bracton said: “The king is under no man, but he is under God and the Law.” But it is not only kings who are under God and the Law.

At the time that the Spiritual Authority of Christ was first manifest in the world, Rome defined despotic power. Christ’s message was heard by individuals, but Caesar did not render unto God the things which are God’s. In the words of Arthur Bryant:

“Those in authority were not responsible to the moral feeling and wishes of those they governed; their sway, while it lasted, was uncontrolled. An all-pervading bureaucracy, incredibly wasteful and pettily-minded, represented omnipotence at every level. The cost of that immense army of officials plunged society into ever deeper debt and taxation, and, a millstone round the neck of production and trade, destroyed all private independence and initiative. Little by little it reduced the population of every city in the Empire to a mob.

“Rome had grown out of greatness of individual character. It became a community in which individual character counted for nothing compared with an abstraction which proved, in the hour of testing, capable of nothing. By sacrificing the individual to the State the rulers of the Roman world undermined the real virtues which sustained it. They turned active and self-respecting citizens into inert and selfish ones.”

The consequence of those who exercised Power ignoring Authority in the Universe was six centuries of misery, known as the Dark Ages. But the Christian message survived in the keeping of small groups of men; and it was at the beginning of the Middle Ages that this voice of Authority began to influence society, its behaviour and laws.

Further: — “Appointed in the days of Athelstan to lead the fyrd and enforce royal law in a single shire, the calderman by the eleventh century, with his accumulation of shires and hereditary claim to office, had grown beyond the control of any ordinary ruler. His was the disintegrating force of power without responsibility. He was neither a chiefthan bound by tribal ties nor a consecrated king with obligations to his people. He was merely an inflated landowner with proprietary rights in the human beings who lived on his estates. His rivalries and family feuds cut across the growing sense of nationhood and tore the realm to pieces.

“The future of European society lay with whoever could discipline and enable feudalism. The Church took the lead by trying to limit the ravages of private war. It set aside days and seasons for a ‘truce of God’ when war was forbidden on penalty of expulsion from its communion. By the middle of the century it had succeeded in prohibiting private fighting—at least in theory—from Thursday till Monday morning. It sought also, by an appeal to conscience, to present knightly power as a trust. It tried to make knight errantry a Christian pursuit; to turn the aggressive, acquisitive freebooter, armed cap-a-pie, into the Christian champion, driving back the heathen, defending Holy Church and punishing iniquity. In chivalry, as it
became called, it offered the military class a code of honour. It devised an elaborate ceremony at which the young knight, before being invested with arms, knelt all night in solitary prayer before the altar and, like the king at his crowning, took the Sacrament, swearing to use the power entrusted to him in righteousness and the defence of the helpless. And, for the sake of society, it invested the oath of fealty with mystery and sanctity. It was an offence against God, the Church taught, for a vassal to be false to his liege-lord.

...When long afterwards, the kings of other lands brought the feudal jurisdictions under their control, the authoritarian maxims of Roman civil and canon law, deeply rooted in the minds of continental royal lawyers, often became instruments of despotism. In England where law-intelligible to man’s puny importunity was so entrenched that when Henry I tried to bring the Church under his control:

“...In trying to subject every part of the nation's life to the Law the great Plantagenet fell foul of the one Power which in that age no Prince could safely challenge. By doing so he suffered a defeat that impressed his contemporaries more than all his triumphs..."

“Non nobis, Domine!” they heard his priests chant, “Not unto us, O Lord, but unto Thee the power and the glory!” They acknowledged a Faith that proclaimed that whoever exalted himself should be humbled, bade the rich to give to the poor and all men be merciful and brothers to one another.

“Behind all this superstition lay a conception shared by rich and poor alike, educated and ignorant. It was that the universe, from its greatest to its minutest part, was governed by divine law. Everything that happened in the world—that had happened, was happening, or was going to happen—was part of the same majestic rule, only partly intelligible to man’s puny intellect. It was within his power, either at the instigation of the Devil to oppose that law or, with Christ's grace and the guidance and intercession of his Church, to further it. The Church existed to explain it, to help man obey it and, through Christ's love and sacrifice, to obtain forgiveness for him when he broke it.

“And that Church existed for everyone. Alone in a world of inequalities it opened its doors to all. It was not merely for certain families or tribes, for kings and landowners, for the successful or learned. It was for fools and failures, for the weak and sick, for women and children, for prisoners and paupers, for saints and sinners. Two things bound the whole of Christendom: belief in Christ and membership of his Church.

“It was this universal quality that made its appeal so overwhelming. It gave purpose and significance to every life...

“Wherever in western Europe man turned his eyes, he was confronted with the majesty of the Church. He could not read a book that churchmen had not written and copied by hand; unless he were a churchman trained by churchmen, he almost certainly could not read at all...."

“In his heyday in the Twelfth and Thirteenth centuries, it has been reckoned, one out of every thirty adult males in western Europe was cleric of some kind.”

Today the figure is estimated at one in a thousand.
Christian eyes government at all. It was their duty to enforce what Christian men, through long custom, had learned to regard as just. And whenever it became necessary to restate or extend the law, sovereigns, as bearers of the sword of justice, were under an obligation to consult with the leaders and wise men of the realm.

"The first of these were the leaders of the Church, for the Church was the medium through which God's law was communicated to men. Its political function was to remind kings of what justice was, and to impress on them its importance, and recall them to it when they strayed from it. 'Will you to your power cause law and justice, in mercy, to be executed in all your judgments?' the archbishop of Canterbury asked the king at his crowning."

"In all this the Charter, which consisted of more than sixty clauses, was a recital of the wrongs suffered by Englishmen under a tyrannical king. And as men of property—and above all, landed property—were the only subjects with legally enforceable rights, it confined itself in the main to setting out particulars of the redress granted them. It was a charter of 'liberties,' and to the medieval mind a liberty was a right to the enjoyment of a specific property. It was a freedom to do something with one's own without interference by the king or any other man.

"The charter enunciated no theories; it was nothing if not specific and practical. . . . "

"Magna Carta was a substitute for deposition; a legal expedient to enforce customary law that left the king on the throne and the sword of civil war undrawn. Government in England, though exercised by the king, was to be rooted in justice and based on law, or it was not to be accepted as government at all. This was Langton's supreme achievement, and England's. Magna Carta was the first great political act in the history of the nation-state—itself an institution of which the English had been pioneers."

We ask our readers to turn to the Pledge which we enclose in leaflet form in this issue. They will find there, too, that 'no theories' are enunciated; it is 'nothing if not specific and practical'—a charter of liberties. We ask them to go back to the Church, to all the clergy, to all Christians and to challenge them to do their duty by God—to render unto God the things that are God's, and not unto Caesar; or else they purchase unto themselves damnation.

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**CHRISTIAN CAMPAIGN FOR FREEDOM**

*Chairman: Dr. Basil L. Steele,*
*Penrhyn Lodge,*
*Gloucester Gate,*
*London, N.W.1.*

*Honorary Secretary: Mr. C. R. Preston.*

*Honorary Treasurer: Mrs. J. Hyatt.*

Funds for the Campaign are urgently needed.

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**Mass Medication**

The insolence of the Bureaucracy and the contempt which they have for the electorate is well illustrated in their plans for fluoridating the nation's water supply. The populations of three towns, Kilmarnock, Watford and Norwich, without consultation, have been chosen as guinea pigs for experiments in mass medication of their water with fluorides.

As Lord Douglas of Barloch said in reference to this matter: "The passion to regulate the lives of others is deep-seated and hard to root out. It is most dangerous and insidious when it arises not from motives of personal gain but the desire to inflict benefit upon others." If there has been any public demand for fluoridated water, we have not seen one tittle of evidence of it. And, if there had been, that would not have been a shadow of an excuse for denying the rights of a minority who strongly object to it.

We should like to have an explanation, the true one, why it has suddenly occurred to several governments, including Canada, New Zealand and Australia, to carry out this proposal. We understand that the sudden death of three sailors in New Zealand as a result of accidentally drinking fluoridated water, has awakened the vigilant part of the population of that country to the dangers involved in this proposal.

We have pleasure in publishing below a letter which has been sent to the Prime Minister by the Scottish Housewives' Association.

(Copy.)

Dear Sir,

The Rt. Hon. Sir Winston Churchill, M.P.,
Prime Minister,
10, Downing Street, London.

We question very much as to whether the Minister has attended to the Pledge which we have sent to the Prime Minister by the Scottish Housewives' Association.

Yours truly,

Signed Elizabeth M. Pattullo,
Secretary,
Scottish Housewives' Association.

A copy of the above letter was handed to the press at a Meeting in Perth and the contents broadcast over the 6 p.m. Scottish News.
Why Half-Measures?

"... But it would be idle to pretend that all is well. The first danger arises from the fact that the institution of the National Health Service has come, already, very near to the creation of a State monopoly in medicine. It is questionable whether a State monopoly is ever right, in any department of life. It is quite certainly wrong in any field where spiritual factors are involved, such as medicine or education. State control, by its very nature, involves a constant threat to the possibilities of individual initiative. But initiative and independence are of the very life blood of medical science.

"Private medical practice does still exist. Statistics suggest that between one and two million members of the public still prefer to consult the private practitioner. But it is not easy, in days of penal taxation, for most people to afford to pay their doctor and their surgeon and their chemist; however much they may wish to do so. Private medical practice deserves, and urgently needs, more encouragement. A natural form for such encouragement would be the remission of some part of the National Insurance stamp for people who prefer to commit themselves to private medicine, for at least a specified term.

"Another encouragement would be to alter the present regulations by which those who pay their doctor are prevented from obtaining medicines free of charge. Private medical practice is important as a bulwark against the risk of a complete State control of the medical profession. It also encourages a more responsible and intimate relationship between doctor and patient. Competition between State medicine and private medicine is of very great advantage to both.

"One bad result of the present system of the National Health Service is the decline in the status of the general practitioner. He used to be regarded by many of his patients as guide, philosopher and friend. Thanks to the present system (which is firmly based, not on the family doctor, but on the hospital), there is a growing danger of the public regarding the general practitioner as little more than a useful person who will sign forms."—(From The Church Times, April 30, 1954.)

Collective Farming Next?

Sir,—I have just read the latest pamphlet issued by the N.F.U., entitled “Regulating the Marketing of Fatstock.” I am concerned that the N.F.U. should attempt to try to persuade any government in office to pass legislation of this drastic nature. We may just as well go a stage further and have collective farming.

The only task left to the farmer is that of rearing his animals and filling in forms. He could no longer sell his stock freely, nor could he demand a price. He must be registered as a producer with the Marketing Board and as such he must conform to a series of strict rules. A disciplinary committee is to be formed to deal with the offenders (para. 77).

He must sell his livestock through the Board when directed or he is liable to a fine of £100, plus one-half the price of the stock wrongly sold. Naturally, the Board would (Continued in Column 2.)