

# The Fraternal

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## EDITORIAL

### OUR BAPTIST FAMILY

LOOKING, in imagination, from the platform of the Royal Albert Hall on the thousands gathered at a Jubilee Congress Session an impression is gained of the diversity and the unity of our far-spread Baptist family. As for diversity, what a mixed bag, so to speak, we are. There are differences of Race and Colour, the flowing robes of the East mingled with the prosaic garments of the West; of social standing where masters in Industrial or Professional life gather with the clerk and the artisan. Intellectually endowed, some are of meagre learning, in other cases of scholarship outstanding. Theologically the conservative in doctrine are present together with those responsive to the light of discovery and research. There are differences of view regarding the Lord's Supper, many observing the Ordinance monthly, others every Sunday, or even after every service. Some would welcome to the Table all Christian believers, others only those baptised by Immersion, and a similar variety of view obtains regarding Church membership. Again, some church buildings are cruciform in construction, with side pulpit and cross and candles much in evidence. Alternatively there is the square-built Sanctuary with central pulpit and pews so arranged as to set forth, as far as possible, the idea of the Community "Gathered" around the Word of God. In Church government there is a variety of custom regulating the election and duties of officers. In the vast audience assembled there exist opinions and practices as varied as the colours of the rainbow.

Happily the converse is also true, and the caption displayed in the Keswick Tent equally applies to that Baptist gathering in the Albert Hall—"All one in Christ Jesus". In love and loyalty to Him we also all are one, as we are in fidelity to the Evangelical as against the Sacerdotal interpretation of the Gospel. What is more important, so far as the Baptist World Alliance is concerned, is our unswerving allegiance to Believer's Baptism, with all its implications of the Church as spiritual Society governed neither by State nor Bishop—a Church honouring the crown rights of Him Who is the Head over all God's redeemed children.

No colour bar is here, no social distinction, no narrow theological exclusiveness, but, as we hope, "In things Essential, Unity; in things Doubtful, Liberty; in all things, Charity". One in heart and spirit where honest differences inhere in a greater spiritual unity, just as the varied colours of the rainbow blend in one harmonious arc of beautiful light. Inspiring also is the realisation that this great Baptist family constitutes, with the single exception of the Roman, the largest section of the Universal Church.

We meet in daily Session for prayer, for consultation, for social intercourse, to gather vision and inspiration for further service. We conclude with the great Assembly at the Stadium; not to witness a sporting contest, but to proclaim our Lord and Master as the only Saviour of the world.

Through this issue of *The Fraternal*, the journal of our Baptist Ministers' Fellowship, whose membership extends throughout the world, we give a warm invitation to others to join us, and we offer a heartfelt prayer that God may keep the Baptist family loyal to its heritage and traditions and enable us all, humbly but confidently, to continue our distinctive and vital witness to the whole Christian Society—the Holy Catholic Church.

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### “ I MAGNIFY MINE OFFICE ”

Principal Gwenyth Hubble replies to Dr. J. W. Bottoms

I WILL gladly allow Dr. Bottoms to hurl an ink-pot at me (provided, of course, the ink is of the variety that washes out) if, when he has thus given vent to his feelings, he will sit down quietly and read with care what my article actually said. I wrote nothing which suggested that I did not believe that, for Dr. Bottoms, being a doctor and going to Chandraghona under the B.M.S. was involved in the call to mission (a much bigger concept than “ missionary activities ” or “ Christian service ”, which terms I did not use). I believe it did indeed involve that for him, but I maintain that all other Christians are called to share in the missionary task of the whole Church, and for the majority that means staying in their own country and doing so-called secular jobs. My purpose is not to “ down-grade ” the foreign missionary, but to “ up-grade ” the ordinary Church member so that *all* of us, wherever we are placed in Christ's Church, recognize that “ the call to be Christian is a call to the total commitment of life to the Church's whole missionary task ”. That is from the Willingen report, and I quote it unashamedly as I believe it to be based on the Bible, and I would like to point out to Dr. Bottoms that almost half my article was dealing with Biblical material. I don't, however, seem to have handled it in a way that fits in with his individualistic view of life, so I suppose he will say that, in that also, I represent the one who can proverbially quote Scripture to his own ends!

Dr. Bottoms' magnificent personal testimony does not answer my main contention, and while he can legitimately speak of his own experience he must have patience to listen to, and seek to understand the significance of, the experience of, others whom God has led and is using differently.

## WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT WORK

IT is sometimes said that the Bible teaches that work is a curse laid upon the human race as a punishment for disobedience: "in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread". If this statement were true, it might be claimed that this is the only biblical insight with which the unregenerate working man agrees at seven o'clock on a Monday morning. But it is not true. The Book of Genesis does not teach that work is a curse. In the stories or parables of the Creation man is put into the world to be a worker; *before* he has fallen from grace, he is placed in the Garden "to dress it and to keep it". But the Bible does, of course, teach that the whole sphere of man's work, like every other aspect of his life, stands under the curse of sin. That for which man was created has become a burden. Work has become drudgery. What should have been a joyous co-operation of man with man for the benefit of all creation has become the sphere of bitter struggle and fratricidal rivalry. Man is expelled from the Garden, and the ground is full of thorns and thistles. Cain slays Abel, and our brother's blood cries from the ground for vengeance.

Nevertheless, though work has lost its original joyous character, it remains a divine ordinance for human life. This is assumed in every part of the Bible. It appears in the Decalogue, not so much as a positive command, but as a statement of the inevitable order of things: "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work". We need not understand these words in a woodenly literalistic way as a condemnation of "the five-day week". Their intention is clear enough: an honest week's work is the God-ordained duty of every man. Alike in the Old Testament and in the New, the duty of work is taken for granted. St. Paul rebukes the Thessalonians who considered that now that the New Age had arrived the old dispensation no longer applied: "he that will not work, neither shall he eat". God's intention in the Creation must still be fulfilled, even though now because of sin men do not work from pure delight in obeying the will of God. They must work, even though now they do so only under the sanctions of hunger or coercion or from motives of profit or prestige.

Because the men of the Bible think of work as the will of God, they never regard it as degrading. The Hebrew view is totally at variance with the Greek conception of work as beneath the dignity of gentlemen and fit only for slaves. Nor does the Bible romanticise work, as some modern writers have done. It nowhere speaks of work as "creative", nor does it represent the divine image in man as consisting in man's creative capacity. The Bible does not refer at all to what we nowadays often call "creative work"—the work of artists, craftsmen, writers, scientists, and so on. When the Bible speaks of work it means ordinary everyday humdrum work, the work that never comes to an end, such as ploughing fields, cooking

food and sweeping rooms. It is this work which is regarded as honourable and not beneath the dignity of man. The later editors did not think it necessary to delete the story of Saul's ploughing with his oxen in order to enhance his royal dignity.

The Gospels show no special interest in the fact that the Lord Jesus lived the life of a working man. It seems to occasion little surprise and they draw no theological or sociological conclusions from it. After all, every Jewish rabbi was a working man, not allowed to take payment for professional work. The fact that Jesus was an artisan, possibly carpenter, is mentioned quite incidentally; the word occurs only as a disparaging remark on the lips of the unwelcoming villagers of Jesus's home-country. No conclusions are drawn concerning the dignity of labour, and the Lord's example as a craftsman is nowhere commended to Christian workers as a pattern to be imitated. In the Epistles Christian slaves are bidden to follow the example of the patient suffering of the Messiah, but they are not told to copy the virtues of the Good Carpenter. This, of course, is no reason why we should fail to see the deep significance of the fact that God, when he most wonderfully and humbly chose to be made man, was incarnate in the person not of a king, philosopher or priest, but in that of a village workman. Such a truth cannot be without significance for Christian faith and life. But the N.T. writers take no notice of it. They pass over in complete silence the years during which our Lord worked as an artisan. For them *the* work of Jesus is not his work as craftsman, but his work as the Redeemer of the world. The work which God had given him to do was the work of the world's salvation and which was accomplished on the Cross with the cry *tetelestai* ("It is finished").

Similarly, the N.T. writers are not so much interested in the work by which Christian believers earn their daily bread as in the work which they do for the Gospel's sake. In fact, the word "work" is used metaphorically in the majority of instances. It refers to the "work" of Christians as labourers in God's harvest of the world, their work as sowers of the word, as planters, husbandmen and reapers. In this all Christians are expected to engage as "fellow-workers with God". Thus the proper "work" of Christians is not for those writers their secular employment, but their service in the furtherance of the Gospel; the word "work" is almost always used in a technical-theological sense and not in its literal meaning. As Christ's proper work was not his work as a carpenter, so also the proper work of Christians is not their secular employment. Paul and Aquila and Priscilla might continue to earn their livelihood as tent-makers, but their Christian work is not the task of earning their daily bread. The Christian disciple must be ready to forsake his earthly employment for the work of the kingdom of God, like those original apostles who left their nets and followed Christ.

Hence, as we might expect, the word "vocation" in its biblical sense never refers to a man's earthly calling, or occupation: it means God's call to repentance and faith and to the life of service within the redeemed community. We cannot with propriety speak of God's calling a man to be a doctor or a schoolmaster or an engineer. God's call is to fellowship with himself in Christ's body the Church. This vocation or calling comes to every Christian, and thus he became a *layman*, or member of the *laos* (people) of God. This basic truth has been sadly obscured by the common practice of speaking of God's call to the ministry as if the Church consisted of clergy and "ministers" only. In the N.T. vocation means God's call to membership of the laity, the *laos* of God; and it means nothing else. God calls men (laymen) into membership of his Church, and therefore to a life of *ministry*, and every layman or member of the *laos* is endowed with a special gift (*charisma*) of the Holy Spirit which enables him to perform his allotted ministry in the total ministry of Christ's body. The division of the Church or *laos* of God into "professional" Christians, called clergy or ministers, and non-professional Christians, called "laymen", is one of the most serious distortions of N.T. teaching which has ever appeared in Christian history. And it is almost universal throughout the Christian world. A layman in the apostolic Church was one who had responded to God's call (vocation) and who had been baptised into Christ's body, being thereby duly commissioned to undertake his appointed ministry in the work of furthering the Gospel. A layman today is all-too-frequently one who takes little active part in the furtherance of the Gospel beyond subscribing to Church funds and thus maintaining a professional ministry which relieves him of the duty of actively ministering the Gospel, whereas *all* members of Christ's Church are laymen, including apostles, bishops, presbyters and deacons, and all must exercise their ministry as the different organs or members of the one body. There is, of course, difference of function within the total ministry of the Church, but there can be no division along the lines of "professional" and "amateur".

Thus a man's secular occupation is a matter of secondary importance; likewise from the Church's point of view it should be a matter of merely secondary importance whether a man is a doctor or a bricklayer: it matters little whether a Church member is a ruler, a tent-maker, a silversmith or a seller of purple, provided that his occupation is not inconsistent with his Christian profession. A silversmith after his conversion could no longer enrich himself by making images of Diana of the Ephesians, but most of the occupations in which Christians engaged would not thus conflict with the profession of the name of Christ. As a matter of fact, we may infer from the Epistles that a high proportion of the members of the apostolic Church were *douloi*. This word is usually translated "servants", "bond-servants" or "slaves" in the English versions.

But the fact is that there is no exact modern equivalent of it because the social system of the first century A.D. has long ago disappeared. The translation "slave" suggests to modern ears something much too harsh and cruel, and in any case the *douloi* or household slaves of the Epistles were not the criminal slaves of the mines and galleys. They were the "workers" who performed the daily toil of the household, farm and workshop. But they were not necessarily depressed, nor depersonalised as modern industrial workers often are. A slave might rise to a position of high responsibility in his master's household, and he was often treated with respect and affection as a member of the family.

Several of the Epistles contain exhortations to Christian *douloi* concerning their duties as workers. They must obey those who are their masters (*kurioi*), not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but as working as for their Master in heaven. They are to commend Christian doctrine by the blamelessness of their lives. If they have Christian masters, they must not try to take undue advantage of the fact. If they are treated harshly, they must suffer gladly, remembering the example of Christ's passion. Their daily work, rendered faithfully as unto Christ, will thus become "an adornment of the doctrine of God our Saviour". Though advice is thus given to slaves, who form the majority in the local congregations, masters are not forgotten. They are enjoined to render what is just and equal, remembering that they also have a Master in heaven, with whom there is no respect of persons. Thus the earthly master becomes the "type" of the Master in heaven, and we find that the language, drawn from ancient social institutions, of the master-servant relationship, is used very frequently to express the relationship between Christians and their Lord.

Such teaching would be unacceptable to most workers in our modern industrial society. It is not possible to transfer the ethical advice relevant to a situation long past and apply it in the changed conditions of today. It would sound like the "opium" which the "bosses" dole out to the workers to keep them contented with their lot. It speaks of duties and not of "rights". We must find new forms in which to express the Christian attitude towards daily work. Nevertheless the early Christian workers' catechism, as we find it preserved in the Epistles, embodies permanent truth concerning the Christian attitude towards work. It remains true that the Christian, like other men, must work because work is a divine ordinance for human life; he too must work in order to earn his daily bread. But he now works from a higher motive and under a different pressure from those pressures of hunger and greed which are the incentives of other men. He works because of a new attitude implanted in him. He works not as unto man, but as unto his Master in heaven, and thus he finds in work well done the satisfaction which cannot be derived from earthly rewards or diminished by earthly hardships. Here lies the redemption of work: the significance

of our work on earth lies not in its earthly rewards, but in its character of service rendered to our Lord in heaven, who will pronounce upon it the final verdict: "Well done, thou good and faithful *doulos*; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord". It is the final, the heavenly goal which invests our earthly labour with ultimate meaning and worth. This is a truth which the non-Christian can never know; and thus the biblical doctrine of work is relevant only to Christians. It cannot be handed out to the masses or the classes as a solution of all our problems of industry and labour. It is the Christian hope which alone renders possible the Christian attitude towards work.

There is in the Bible a close connexion between work and worship. The Decalogue sets the ordinance "Six days shalt thou labour" within the framework of the commandment to keep holy the seventh day. It is implied that though work may occupy six-sevenths of a man's life, it is nevertheless not the whole of it or the highest part of it. What happens on the seventh day, the worship of God in His holy place, is man's highest activity here below, the anticipation of that heavenly rest which remains unto the people of God. In the N.T. we find the conception of work well done as a service that is rendered to our Master in heaven, who thus becomes the Lord of all our work, our ultimate "employer". There is thus a sense in which it may be said that *laborare est orare* (or *adorare*), that work and worship are alike forms of offering which Christian folk present to God. Man offers to God his whole life in every part, including his worship and his work. Not, of course, that man can in virtue of his own merits or skill offer anything that is worthy to the all-holy God. From the standpoint of God's absolute demand men must always confess that they are "unprofitable". But now in Christ, God has opened for men a way to Himself, and men who are in Christ, though sinners, can nevertheless bring their offerings to God, including all the labours of their hands. No longer are they called *douloi*; they are called "friends". This profound mystery, the deepest truth about the New Testament doctrine of work, is given sacramental expression in the Church's central act of worship, the "breaking of bread" or Eucharist. In this service are brought and offered the fruits of the labours of men's hands, the bread and the wine, symbols of all our work. Here in the Church's offering God gives back to us the gifts that we have brought to Him, but now they are made sacraments of His grace, the very life of God Himself, the sacred body and blood of Christ. Here in the Eucharist is enshrined the whole mystery of man's labour as well as the whole drama of man's redemption. Here is the perfect symbol of the wholeness of the Christian life, the unity of work and worship, the strange unbreakable link that exists between the bread that is won in the sweat of man's face and the bread of life that is bought without money and without price.

ALAN RICHARDSON.



## WHAT IS THE CHRISTIAN FRONTIER?

IT has become usual to speak of "the Christian Frontier" and to say that Christians live, or ought to live, in a "frontier situation". But what does that mean? It is not easy to answer the question, because the idea of the Christian Frontier is one of those life-giving conceptions which are hard to tie down with words. Its meaning is learnt in experience. When you have lived for a short time with frontier-minded Christians you know just what is meant by the phrase, but that does not make it any easier to pass the idea on. Indeed, I often doubt whether the word "frontier" is the best word to express this idea; to me a frontier suggests primarily a line that keeps you in, but the Christian frontier is more like the frontier in America in the old days, a region that draws you on to exploration and achievement.

The Christian Frontier is not the boundary between the sacred and the secular or between the Church and the World; indeed, to live in a frontier situation is to question the reality of those traditional divisions. The Christian Frontier movement is first of all a declaration that Christianity is not just for Sunday, not just a question of going to church and saying one's prayers, that to be a Christian it is not enough to be honest and faithful and pious. Indeed, pietism is the opposite of the frontier spirit; it is a conviction that we are not meant to shut ourselves in a narrow pietistic world, however much we may be attracted by a fugitive and cloistered virtue. We are to go out into the world and establish the kingship of Christ in all domains as we go about our daily business or, better still, *in* our daily business. Dietrich Bonhoeffer expressed the same basic idea by saying "God is the 'beyond' in the midst of our life. The Church stands not where human powers give out, on the borders, but in the centre of the village". In one sense, then, it might be more accurate to speak of the "Christian centre", rather than the Christian frontier. But all spacial metaphors break down if you push them too hard. To spread the Kingdom throughout life is the same thing as to put it at the centre.

The Reformation was an attempt to bring Christianity into areas of life which had been little touched by the Church. So in one sense the frontier movement is a completion of the work of the reformers, bringing the Reformation to its logical conclusion. But at the same time the Christian Frontier movement has a strong attraction for Roman Catholics, with their feeling for the organic unity of society. So the Christian Frontier movement is a place where both find themselves doing the same thing together and for the same Lord; they learn from each other as they do this and after that their differences do not look the same as they did before.

The frontier movement is not *directly* concerned with man's "personal and private relation to God" or with his relation to his Church, though it is of course greatly concerned with the indirect

consequences of these relations. Its immediate concern is with "man's duty to obey God and serve the neighbour in all the social groups and natural relationships in which, by God's ordinance and the necessities of historical existence, he finds himself".

The Christian Frontier movement is concerned with what it means to be a Christian in the fullest sense in industry, in trade, in commerce, in science, in journalism or in any other secular occupation. There is no one answer to such questions. The answers applicable to every concrete situation come as you try to live out your Christianity in the situation in which you are placed. In every job, in every situation there are human problems; human problems are always moral problems and therefore religious problems.

What this means in practice can be discovered only by taking a number of examples. For instance, the price of rubber may seem an abstract, inhuman thing, but a change in the price of rubber may mean hunger or plenty, happiness or unhappiness to hundreds of thousands of families in Malaya and the East Indies. The price of tea affects not only British housewives, but peasants in India and Ceylon. The price of cocoa affects millions of lives in West Africa. So those whose actions affect the price and supply of tea or cocoa or rubber (or of anything else) ought to take into account the human consequences of what they do. These consequences are often very complicated, and it may not be easy to find where right lies, but that does not excuse us from searching for it. A civil servant who works out a new routine involving forms in triplicate can easily make life hard for people who have to fill in the forms; simple people may often fail to get their rights and sometimes be made very unhappy just because some piece of administrative machinery has not been thought out to the end in human terms.

■ The Christian who lives on the frontier must use his imagination all the time, he must see the human implications of what he does or refrains from doing in his ordinary life. But whatever he does, he can never escape from his duty to obey God and serve his neighbour *where he is*. There is a Christian vocation in every job, but to find it means using your imagination, looking on every single person as a unique human being, never as just a case or a number or an example of a class. And it is not always possible for one man to find his way through the tangle by himself. That is where Christian fellowship comes in.

The Christian Frontier Council is a fellowship that exists for the purpose of helping its members to find their Christian vocation where they are, and its organ, the *Christian News-Letter*, tries to help a wider circle of people by passing on to them some of the experience of the Christian Frontier Council and of the frontier movement in the broad sense. The Council itself consists of men and women drawn from all Churches (including both Quakers and Roman Catholics). All take a responsible part in some secular occupation; some of them are already at the top of the tree, others

are on the way up. The Financial and the Economic Secretary to the Treasury in the last two Governments are both members. Another is the head of a Government department; another, Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge; others are scientists, businessmen, and so on. There is one clergyman on the Council, Dr. Alec Vidler, the editor of *Theology*, who is the Secretary. The Council is jealous of its lay character, but clergy of all Churches come to its meetings by invitation when they have relevant specialist knowledge.

The Council has the approval of the leaders of the Church of England, the Free Churches and the Church of Scotland, and it reports periodically to the British Council of Churches.

The subjects dealt with at its meetings are varied. As I write, meetings are already planned on Dock Labour, on the Human Implications of Automatic Factories and on World Population. When a member has some difficult problem in his own work, he may ask the Council to meet and discuss it. The Council hopes shortly to meet with one of its members who has the task of organising a new centre for the training of young technicians in southern Asia.

The Council claims no monopoly in the frontier idea; indeed, it would stress the importance of the frontier work which is being done under other names. The value of its work depends upon its being a smallish group of people who know each other well. It has been described as "an experiment in the possibilities of friendship in which through free intercourse minds stimulate, quicken and enrich each other". Surely an experiment well worth while!

JOHN LAWRENCE.

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### SERMONS IN SERIES

**S**OONER or later most ministers discover the value of planning sermons in series occasionally. To the congregation the value is chiefly that of getting consecutive teaching. If the series is not too prolonged, interest is quickened and people will not want to miss any of the series. It was an unusual experience for me when a lady asked if I would preach a certain sermon (from a series) again as she had been away one Sunday and so missed that week's thrilling instalment!

There is a deeper reason for sometimes planning a series. A minister can, indeed should be, his own evangelist. And just as the leader of an evangelistic campaign will plan his sermons to lead to the climax when he will, on the last one or two evenings, make his great appeal, so a minister can prepare a series for himself with the same end in view. The series will steadily build up an inescapable challenge and the final sermon will have all the more forcefulness because it does not come as an isolated appeal.

The preacher himself will benefit from a series because it will set him a definite course of study and preparation and he will be delivered from the weakness of desultory preaching and from scraping for a theme simply because he has to produce something by 11 and 6.30 on Sunday. His own study and mind will be enriched. This is especially true of a Biblical and Doctrinal series, whether he follows a book of the Bible or some of the great doctrines like Man, Sin and Grace; the Atonement; Faith; Sacrifice. Further, the preacher is delivered from the danger of trying to crowd too much into one sermon, a fault to which beginners are particularly prone. A friend of mine once said that he preached a sermon that failed. When he analysed it he found it contained too much for his people to take in at one sitting. A few months later he preached it again, but this time as a series of four sermons. This time he succeeded and his congregation understood and were inspired.

Most of us have preached the more obvious series like the Lord's Prayer, the Beatitudes, the Ten Commandments, the Seven Words from the Cross, or similar ready-made series. We need to remember that they are worth repeating after three or four years. The fifteen-year-olds who heard them three years ago are now eighteen and will profit more by them.

The ideal length is four or six, or perhaps eight, sermons. People get tired after that. "We had *Revelation* for three months—and were we fed up with it!" a deacon once told me. Occasionally we can go to ten or twelve, but a shorter series is more effective. It can be as few as two, like the Easter series on *The Service Thomas Missed* and *The Service Thomas Attended*.

Not every series need be announced as such. The more intelligent members of the congregation may spot it after the third sermon as a series and they will be so pleased with their discovery that they will make sure of being present to hear the rest to prove themselves right. Announced or unannounced, the series will do its own work in its own way.

Besides the ready-made series like the Beatitudes and the Letters to the Seven Churches, there are many other Biblical series which can be followed up. For instance, on Prayer: The Prayers of Jesus; Paul's Great Prayers; the Benedictions of the N.T. letters. Then, too, the N.T. is full of little words with big meanings: Grace, Love, Joy, Peace, Sin, Life, Light, Faith. Or one can trace through the Bible the development of great themes like *Covenant*; *Righteousness*; *Salvation*. (Dr. H. H. Rowley's book, *The Unity of the Bible*, is rich in this kind of material.)

Christian Doctrine will always form a necessary part of the preacher's planning. Dr. Dale used to go over his sermons several times in a year to make sure that in the course of the year he covered all the main themes of Christian Doctrine. I once found that a series on the Apostles' Creed, which I had planned particularly to help students who attended morning worship, was appreciated as

much if not more by the non-academic members of the congregation. Great doctrines like Justification by Faith, Sanctification, the Cross and the Atonement, the Life Everlasting, Judgment, the Holy Spirit, all call for regular and clear exposition and will generally awake more interest than the moral uplift talks in which shallower minds and spirits sometimes indulge. Our theological reading will sometimes provide us with material all ready. Here, for instance, are two outlines on the Holy Spirit found in the first few pages of the late Dr. Wheeler Robinson's book. *Characteristics of the Holy Spirit*: 1, Vitality. 2, Personality. 3, Fellowship. 4, Loving Service. *The Works of the Spirit*: 1, Creation. 2, Revelation. 3, Redemption. 4, Sanctification. The late Dr. L. H. Marshall's book on *The Challenge of New Testament Ethics* provides abundant material for more than one series (e.g., Chapter viii, *Paul's Idea of Salvation*—Justification, Redemption, Reconciliation, Sonship, Sanctification, Life, A New Creation). There are others in later chapters.

A series which must have been preached by many concerns our Churchmanship: Why Christian? Why Protestant? Why Free Church? Why Baptist?—though I think it is incomplete both as a series, and even more in its conception of the Church and the Communion of Saints, if it does not have a last sermon on Why Ecumenical? But once we start on the Church the sermons and themes for series are endless. Take Paul's pictures of the Church, for instance: The Body of Christ, A Building of Living Stones, A Family, The New Israel, A Colony of Heaven—and so on.

Paradoxes in Christian teaching can be dealt with as a series: Faith and Works; Love and Judgment; God's Sufficient Grace and Man's Necessary Response; Predestination and Free Will; The Victory Won once for all and The Victory still to be Won; The Present Lord ("Lo, I am with you") and the Lord Who Comes Again. The danger here is to leave the hearers with unresolved paradoxes. The whole aim should be to show that finally in God there is no paradox, but complementary truth.

To quote the late Dr. Wheeler Robinson again, he once said to me that every man early in his ministry ought to wrestle with a series on the great Benediction: The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit. If a man would do that, one sermon on each, and honestly think out these great themes, he would go far towards settling his own thinking on the great truths of the Gospel.

In this day when people are looking for teaching on the application of the Gospel to modern life a series on the teaching of the New Testament on Race Relations (Jew and Gentile), Masters and Men, Man and Woman, the Christian Family, Money and Stewardship, Daily Work, the State and the Church, will generally be welcomed by our hearers. Some of them, of course, want us to do their thinking for them, but there are others who are seriously

trying to think things out, and have to face problems in their own work and families and they will be grateful to have the main principles set before them.

Missionary work will always tempt preachers to plan a series. *The Acts of the Apostles* is there to start anyone off. Not, of course, Paul's missionary journeys, but the great missionary tasks and problems which the Church faces in all ages and the way to meet them. Carey's *Enquiry* is a quarry for themes if anyone wants an *Apologia* for Missions. And if a man possesses Fuller's works then he is well away. A study of the great ecumenical conferences and their themes and subjects will help our members to keep their thinking strong and will help the man in the pew to see that the Church is really facing the great problems in the light of the Gospel. It will come as a welcome surprise to some of our people that all the thinking is not being left to the politicians, the economists and the newspaper editors. We can help our people to see what the Bible has to say and that the faith of the Church is relevant to the world in which they live.

Enough has been given, I hope, to suggest that sermons in series can be a great stimulus to preaching. It must not be overdone. But it must not be underdone. Above all, it should deal with big themes. Canon Smyth, in *The Art of Preaching*, warns against thin themes and quotes a series of sermons advertised some years ago—outside a Cathedral. They were advertised as Holiday Sermons and the theme was *Family Life*. July 16, As Father sees it. July 23, The Daughter's Point of View. August 6, The Son's Point of View. August 13, What Mother Thinks. "Surely", adds Canon Smyth. "this is very shoddy stuff, even for 'Holiday Sermons'". We must never allow ourselves to forget that we preach as "dying men to dying men" and that our chief business is to break the Bread of Life to hungry and perishing souls. They need it—and so do we! In one of many books I have read about prisoners of war escaping one writer told how after hiding under a hedge for hours with German tanks and lorries rolling by he ventured nearer to a farm. Suddenly a woman appeared with a pail and went to draw water from a well. It seemed to him to symbolise the eternal things. Armies roll back and forth, victories are won and lost and dictators and rulers rise and fall. But always the woman goes to the well to draw water to wash things clean and to give life to her children and her flocks. So it is with us. Empires rise and fall, fashions come and go, religion is now despised or now in favour, war and peace alternate, birth and death are busy—but always we have to be going to the Well of the Water of Life and pouring it out for thirsty souls to drink. We are dealing with the eternal things and they cannot be dealt with in a small way.

W. W. BOTTOMS.

## THE CHURCHES' BLIND SPOT

THE onlooker sees most of the game. He misses the delight of vigorous action and the thrill of personal effort, but he sees the game as a whole and in its setting. So is it when a minister must perforce step out of the centre of a Church's life and stand at its fringe. How much he misses. Yet how much more he sees.

One thing he realises with increasing clarity is that most Churches have a blind spot. They have most excellent bi-focal glasses. They see clearly their own life, and the life of the Church Overseas, about which they hear and read and for which they give and pray. But for the most part they are blind to the challenge of their immediate neighbourhood. They need tri-focal lenses that they may see clearly, with understanding and love, the mission field at their doors.

The onlooker stands on his watch-tower and looks out over the roof-tops. Here and there he sees churches, each with its own community life. To them the members come at certain hours for worship and work, finding refreshment to soul and mind and gathering children and youth into their organisations. He sees also other buildings. There are cinemas, dance-halls, business premises and factories, each having a community life of its own. He knows that there are a great variety of social groups who meet for cultural and recreational purposes. Above all, he sees the roofs of innumerable houses, each one the centre of a small and vital social group.

Only a small proportion of these various groups come into the life of the Church. The rest have no desire to do so. "If some people like to go to Church, good luck to them. It's not my affair. I'm content to stay in my home or garden and to find my social life in the local pub or in one of the town's community centres." The Church is simply ignored. To them, a doubtless well-meaning group of people who have nothing to say to them, nothing to do for them, nothing to demand of them.

The tragedy of this separation of the life and interests of the general community from the life of the Church is increased when it is accepted not only by the mass of citizens but also by the Church itself. It may be accepted with regret as an unhappy sign of the times, but often the Church appears content to be an enclave amid the teeming life around it. It is content to build up its own life, to add to its numbers, to enrich its own spiritual understanding and experience. Our very isolation from the life our fellows live tends to make us more and more self-centred.

One rejoices in every effort that is made to draw others into the Christian fellowship provided—and this is the important point, that we are as eager to send men out as we are to bring them in. The Christian Church is by its nature and calling a witnessing Church. If it ceases to witness it ceases to be a Christian Church. Christ called His sheep into the peace and security of the fold.

Then we read that "He calleth His own sheep by name and leadeth them out". "He called unto Him His twelve disciples" is followed by "these twelve Jesus sent forth", and His summons to meet Him in Galilee by the commandment "Go, and teach all nations". This two-way traffic is an essential element in Christian discipleship. The way to the Church is never a one-way street. The Church is not a storage tank of static water. It is a channel whereby living water can be brought to other lives. It is like a harbour. Vessels come into it to be refitted and refuelled, but they do not make the harbour their permanent abiding place. Soon, with new supplies of food and fuel, they are venturing into the unsheltered seas, carrying their precious cargo into every part of the world. The Church does not exist for its own comfort, but that it may be "to the praise of His glory", so exalting its Lord and His Kingdom that men may learn to praise the glory of His saving presence.

Our field of work is not only overseas. It is our immediate neighbourhood. To make Christ glorious here calls for personal witness. "He calleth His own sheep by name", i.e., individually. It is not enough to give money that others may do the witnessing, whether at home or abroad. Our need is for a witnessing community. "Every Church member a witness" is the vision we must hold, and the whole world, including the streets where our church stands, is our mission field.

The minister in the home pastorate does well to look at his Church as the missionary looks at the group of believers under his care. He sees them set in the midst of a heathenism which presses unceasingly upon their life. He sees them not only as a gathered community, but as men and women in whose heart a torch of truth has been kindled that they may carry it into the darkness around them. Moreover, he sees that his main task is to equip them for witness. The paganism around us is not so obvious perhaps, but it is equally real, and men's need is equally great. The gods worshipped by these people about us, kindly and decent as most of them are, are not our God, and our task is not to make a small company safe for heaven but to equip them to bring others into Eternal Life.

With this in view let us examine the Church we know best, and ask ourselves a few questions. Is it a missionary Church, one that is missionary in its outlook to all life around it? Is the central purpose of its organisations to carry the Gospel, or to equip its members for carrying the Gospel, to those at their doors? Is conversion the overriding aim of our S.S. work and our youth societies? And when young people are converted, what then? Do we sit back thankfully and feel we have come to the end of our labours for them, as men relax when the harvest is gathered in, or do we realise that we are only at the beginning, that our task now is to encourage and train them as witnesses? How much of our



time is spent in keeping the wheels of the Church's life running smoothly and how much in creating missionary outlook and service?

Towards the end of the war an ardent young Communist was converted through the ministry of a Baptist chaplain. When he returned home he asked the local Baptist minister if he could join the Baptist Church, and after preparation he was baptised and received into membership. He had experienced a deep spiritual change. He was convinced that Christ alone was the Bread to satisfy the world's hunger and was as eager to spread the Gospel as he had been to spread Communism. He knew little of Church life until he became a member, and he joined eagerly in its life. But it was not long before he became troubled by what seemed to him the deadness and apathy of many of his fellow-members. "They wouldn't last a month in the Communist Party. We should have fired them out. We had no use for members who were not prepared to do anything and sacrifice anything for the cause." By the end of a year he had left the Baptist Church and wandered from one Church to another, seeking a group who shared his single-minded desire to make Christ known. Of course, he was awkward and difficult, unable to realise the effectiveness of quiet, consistent Christian living. Yet is it to be wondered at that his minister felt ashamed that a man should leave the Church not because its standards were too high but because they were too low, ashamed that there were not at least a small group of men, more experienced and with more understanding, who shared this young man's single-minded acceptance of the claims of Christ to an unceasing and sacrificial witness? How would he have fared in my Church?

What then should we be doing to arouse our Church to its missionary calling? It will not greatly help to arrange an evangelical mission. With all the good this may do it will probably leave the Church much where it was before. In fact, it may confirm the members in their idea that witnessing is something you get other people to do, the S.S. teacher, the Club leader, the minister, or anybody except themselves. In these days one sometimes hears "What a wonderful man Billy Graham is. If only our minister were more like him." Does any one ever say "What a wonderful man Billy Graham is. I wish I could be as out-and-out a witness as he is"?

There are certain things we can do.

We can examine ourselves, our own eagerness to witness which so easily may grow dull in the routine of Church life. We can scrutinise our work. Most ministers work hard. We are busy from morning to night. But what are we busy about? Or are we too busy to think and pray about the purpose of all our busy-ness? How much of our energy is given to building up a witnessing community? We can review our organisations to see if they are

organisations to which the Church should rightly be giving its strength. We can look steadily at our immediate neighbourhood, seeking to view our neighbours with the eyes and heart of our Lord. We can share our thinking on these matters with some at least of our Church members.

We can begin with a small group. A change in the outlook of a Church will not be brought about in a moment, and usually it comes through a small number of like-minded members. We can begin perhaps with some of our young converts, meeting them in continuation classes after baptism. The question of "time" is a difficulty, but if we are prepared to reorganise the use of our own time we shall find that others are prepared to do the same. It is almost useless to exhort our members to witness and do nothing to show them how. Many would like to do so, but do not know how they can set about it. To witness effectively calls for a convinced understanding of what the Faith is, and a growing experience of the power of that faith in our own lives. Inevitably this demands that the minister shall give time to teaching, time to think and pray together with those members, however few, who are led by God to share his concern and his vision.

We can encourage a wider conception of the "content" of Christian witness. Christ sent out His disciples to preach the Gospel and to cast out devils and to heal the sick. It is good, nay, it is essential, that we help those of our young people who have a gift for speaking to witness with their lips. But there are others who through their Christian friendship can cast out the devils of loneliness and fear, and by their prayers and active sympathy bring light and healing to the sick in body and soul. One of our Churches has a band of over fifty members, mostly young, who give up a night a week to visiting those confined to their homes by infirmity, reading the Scriptures to them, offering a simple prayer, taking thought for them in a number of ways. Their work is all part of the missionary Church's activity in bringing the love of Christ to those that are without.

We can encourage a wider conception of the "sphere" of Christian witness. One of our London Churches has encouraged members to open their homes twice a month to the neighbours who live in their street. Talks and discussions are arranged, not always on specifically religious subjects, but closing with brief family prayers, conducted by themselves and occasionally by the minister. This effort has been gratefully welcomed by many who missed the wartime comradeship of wardens and fire-watchers, and it has brought many into the life of the Church.

It is worth considering also whether we ought not to encourage our members to enter more fully into the social activities of the community. Our tendency is to run our own organisations that we may hold people within the life of the Church. Ought we not

rather to encourage them to take an active part in the town youth and sports clubs, in the Women's Institutes, the W.V.S., the Old Folks' Clubs, and in the various local societies, committees and councils, and to do this as part of their witness to the grace of Christ? There is risk in this. It is not unknown that we send a member out and he does not come back. Yet it is a risk worth taking, and can be guarded against if we are continually alive to the truth that Christian discipleship is always a coming as well as a going. We go out from the Church that we may serve. We return to the Church to find in worship and prayer the wisdom and power our tasks demand.

We can enlist the prayers of our older members for those who are outside, not seeking vague, unintelligent prayer, but bringing to them specific and definite subjects for intercession.

We can strengthen our ties with those with whom we already have contacts, the parents of our S.S. children and of the infants we dedicate, the families of those we bury, the sick folk we meet in hospital.

We can keep our eyes open for news of the ventures which other Churches are making, reported in the *Baptist Times* and elsewhere. There are carefully planned methods being carried through by the Church of Scotland for training members in the practice of witnessing, or experiments now being made by some Churches of our own communion in Yorkshire. We can read books like *Adventures in Fellowship*, by Canon Roger Lloyd, and notably the Bishop of Stepney's *The Parish in Action*. It is an account of his attempts to build up a witnessing Church when he was the incumbent at Harrow.

Yes, there is much that can be done, and much more that could be written. No mention has been made of the powerful witness of a fellowship which is truly Christian in its own corporate life, nor of the training of the minister's own mind and heart for the task. That would perhaps be presumptuous. In fact, the writer has a feeling that there is an element of that quality in all that he has written here, for he is aware, somewhat ruefully, how easy it is to sit in the grandstand and tell the players exactly how the game should be played, and equally aware that he can write it only in penitence for energies misplaced, and tasks undone. It is written not in condemnation, but in the hope that some of the younger brethren may see now what he wishes he had seen more clearly from the beginning of his ministry and give themselves to creating a Church which shall receive power from the Holy Ghost to be witnesses unto Christ not only unto the uttermost part of the earth but in their own Jerusalems, Judaeas and Samarias.

FRANK BUFFARD.

## EXPERIMENT IN EVANGELISM

**S**ATURDAY afternoon in this industrial and market town finds the Sports Stadium patronised by crowds of men (and a few women!) watching their professional soccer team, Banbury Spencer, playing in the Birmingham and S. Warwickshire League. Immediately after the "half-time" whistle the Manager makes a few announcements over the loudspeaker system. He is then heard to say: "We are glad to have the Sportsmen's Padre with us again this afternoon to answer your questions. Here is the question received this week for the Padre. 'You said, "People who believe in Christianity will not be destroyed but have a full life". Isn't this rather appealing to fear? Anyway, most people do believe in Christianity'".

Speaking from the busy Canteen over the effective loudspeaker system the Christian Gospel goes out for the next eight minutes. The talk, spoken in everyday language, seeks to be relevant to the contemporary situation; it usually begins with a very short humorous story and embodies one or two "modern parables".

After the answer the Manager asks for questions to be sent next week, the whistle is blown (is this the only place where a sermon is limited by the whistle?), the game moves on, thoroughly enjoyed by the Padre, who stands with the Committee members and afterwards usually goes into the dressing room for a word of congratulation to the men.

This method of evangelism regularly reaches thousands of people not associated with the Church, but it tends to be rather impersonal. The speaker is not visible, the voice is heard over the loudspeakers, there is little opportunity to make personal contact with the spectators. It is difficult to assess the results, but Christians in the crowd have heard appreciative comments, and some caustic remarks! (Fortunately, the team has won every game when the Padre has been speaking, so they think there is some value in having him!) It may seem rather unnatural and forced talking about our Faith to a big crowd who are there to see football, and who needs must stay as the Talk is at "half-time". In this the Padre consoles himself in the fact he was invited by the committee and is always given a warm welcome by the directors and officials. You may like to know how this developed to enable the idea to be suggested in other towns.

We are all very much aware that the vast majority of the working-class people are outside the organised Church, and accordingly we are constantly exercised in prayer about this, that opportunities may be given to present "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God" to the multitudes of people for whom Christ died. To do this in a very small way I had an open-air pulpit made with three attractive posters on it and an invitation to the local Baptist Church. From 5-6 p.m. daily this was set up where the main thoroughfares meet

and hundreds of people homeward bound were challenged with the Good News and its eternal issues. It seemed impossible to persuade more than a few people to stand and listen. (The site has now been moved to the bus terminus, where of necessity we have a large "congregation".)

Tiring of preaching without an audience, I remembered going to a football match with some young people and during half-time looking at the thousands of men with nothing to do. With this in mind I called to see the Manager of the local team, asking him if the Committee would welcome an invitation to a Sportsmen's Service at the beginning of the season, similar to a special service last year. Also would it be possible for the Church or its Pastor to be of service on more than an annual occasion, e.g., a talk during half-time. While the Manager was recovering from mild surprise, it was pointed out that he would probably be the first, as a keen sportsman, to go out to sick people if he had a cure for their trouble; in the Christian Message we have an answer to the deep-seated spiritual maladies of our age, therefore would he be willing to make it possible for men who do not normally go near a church to hear about Christ? The idea appealed to him and he would like to see it tried out—it would be good for the Club to be the first to do such a thing. We waited while the matter went on to the agenda. The Committee welcomed the idea of another Sportsmen's Service and agreed to try the scheme of a Christian Comment during half-time. The service was a great success when most of the Clubs were represented with some members assisting with stewarding, reading lessons, etc. Each Club was invited to bring articles of equipment to decorate the church, and this provided a "homely" setting for people not accustomed to the church. The Football Programme for the following week gave notes of the sermon and appreciative thanks for the service. This gave a good start and I was readily received as the "Sportsmen's Padre".

After the first talk I thought we should try to avoid any impression of preaching, or appearing to be pious or "holier than thou", which people resent. We therefore adopted the "Question and Answer" strategy, as it takes matters into their sphere and creates more interest, dealing with what they want. (We can begin with what they want and conclude with what they need!) The following are three of the questions received:—

"Is the Church in favour of militarism of any sort, or do they denounce it? Can we have a direct answer and no more of the stuff we have had from Church leaders?"

"What is the special attraction of Billy Graham?"

"Say something about the subject dealt with in the newspaper, 'If Christ came back?'"

Each week the official programme, which has a wide circulation, gives a paragraph with a good boost to our scheme. Here is an extract from the first one. "During half-time we invite our sup-

porters to join in some mental exercise with 'Question Time'. Will you hand in your questions at the turnstiles, then we can think together about this Game of Life, or Human Contest in which we are all involved? Our Padre is an all-round sportsman and a keen Spencer supporter. We understand he played soccer at college and was a member and secretary of the University Boxing Club. He says: 'Fitness wins'—but real fitness is physical and spiritual, and that is where we all come in.

"Our Padre is prepared to visit the homes of those who are 'out of action' for one reason or another. Addresses to be handed in at the gate, please. The question this week is: 'Why bring religion to a Sports Stadium?'"\*.

I am deeply grateful for the faithful prayer support of many Church members. Prayerful concern for people "without God and without hope in the world" will result in doors of opportunity being opened, but it is vital to have the evangelistic interest of Church members who should be ready to welcome people who become attracted to our Lord.

It would be constructive to exchange news about similar experiments in evangelism, e.g., is anyone acting as Chaplain to trade-union groups, having a regular entrée to a local cinema, to give an epilogue or speak at children's matinees? I recently spoke at a trade-union meeting and this promoted much greater interest in our factory chaplaincy work.

During the last two summers we have organised a Tent Centre on a new estate with daily meetings and organised games. Does anyone have a daily Bible Club for children during the summer holidays?

The writer will be more than pleased if these few ideas result in colleagues gaining an entrance for similar experiments elsewhere.

MAURICE C. LEE.

### BAPTIST UNITY AND BELIEF

**B**APTIST Unity is an ecclesiastical wonder. Nearly every scheme for church union is based on the acceptance of a creed and an "ordered ministry"—by which is usually meant an episcopally ordained ministry. Baptists have neither. We have no formal creed handed down from the remote past to give us unity. In *The Fellowship of Believers*, Ernest Payne attributes this absence of creeds to our diverse origin. Because we come from no one branch of the Reformation it is, he says, "difficult as well as dangerous to generalise or dogmatise about Baptist Beliefs". Arnold Ohren, in his foreword to the report of the Cleveland Congress, says on the same subject: "Baptists possess no central authority

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\* Some requests for visiting sick people have been forthcoming. The answer starts people talking and gives Christians in the crowd an opportunity for discussion. More direct contacts have not been numerous.

that can spare the individual from the responsibility and risk of using his private judgment. Each possesses the duty and privilege under God of thinking for himself. In exercising this right he should be humble enough to wish to profit from the thinking of his fellow-believers. Not even the resolutions adopted by Congress are authoritative expressions of Baptist positions. They represent an overwhelming consensus of Baptist opinion as understood by those who adopted them. They are binding on no single Baptist Union or Convention. But they are indicative of the trends of thought among Baptists around the world”.

The diverse origin of Baptists and the absence of anything approaching a College of Cardinals authorised to formulate creeds and regularise a ministry have not meant Baptists lack unity. We have that inner unity which Oman contrasts so vividly with the unity of peas in a pod characteristic of the Jesuits. That inner unity is, we believe, to be traced to the working of the Holy Spirit in each generation. It is the operation of the same Holy Spirit that has given to these groups from such diverse backgrounds their unity. That unity has become visible in the various statements of belief issued from time to time. Underlying the differences in these Baptist “Confessions”—which were never intended to bind the consciences of succeeding generations, but to set forth what their writers believed—there is a fundamental unity. The Holy Spirit has led Baptists in each generation to accept two cardinal beliefs.

#### THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST

The Particular Confession of 1677 says: “The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, in Whom by the appointment of the Father, all power for the calling, institution, or government of the Church, is invested in a supreme and sovereign manner, neither can the Pope of Rome in any sense be Head thereof but is that Anti-Christ, that Man of Sin, and Son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the Church against Christ, and all that is called God whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of His Coming”. With the possible toning down, in this more gentle age, of the fierce denunciation of the Pope, modern Baptists would agree wholeheartedly with that statement.

They would agree further with the statement that the Lord Jesus in the execution of His power “calleth out of the world unto Himself, through the ministry of the Word, by His Holy Spirit those that are given unto Him by the Father”. These called ones are to live holy lives and are “commanded to walk together in particular societies, for their mutual edification”. Such societies are equipped through His Divine Spirit for the carrying on of worship and for exercising of discipline. The officers, by which is meant the minister and deacons, are to be elected by the “common suffrage of the church itself”.

This is quoted here to show the close link there is between the Lordship of Christ and our doctrine of the Church. The Church is the result of His Divine Initiative and is one sphere of His present activity. This belief in the Lordship of Christ undergirds our practice of believers' Baptism. Since Christ alone is Head of the Church no human authority has any right to set aside what He has commanded.

The belief in the Lordship of Christ leads directly to our belief in religious freedom. Since Christ is Lord no one is to come between Him and His people. The Church and each individual believer is to be free from all outside dictation so that the commands of the Divine Head may be obeyed. No man must be coerced into disobeying His Lord. Equally, since a forced obedience is worthless, no man must be compelled to obey what others think is the mind of the Lord. Each must be fully persuaded in his own mind and then eager to obey. As a corrective against a false subjectivism there was the emphasis on the authority of Scripture.

#### THE SUPREMACY OF SCRIPTURE

When John Smyth and those of his followers who wished to join the Mennonites put forth their "Short Confession of Faith" they began it with the words: "We believe, through the power and instruction of the Holy Scriptures . . ." That was the ground of their faith. Anyone who looks even casually at the early Baptist Confessions will notice how liberally they are sprinkled with Scripture quotations. The Bible was their authority. It was to the Bible they appealed against the authority of the Church. It was the touchstone by which they tested the beliefs of other Christians. A later generation was to make an appeal to the same source against the extravagances of those who appealed to the inner light—a circumstance not without significance for those in our own day who are faced with the excesses of Pentecostalism and suchlike.

John Bunyan put the matter very vividly in his *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*. When Mr. Cobb, the clerk of the court, urged him to accept the doctrine of the Church of England, Bunyan claimed he had a "gift from God which could be proved from Scripture". Lawyer-like, Cobb suggested two independent persons as a tribunal. Let John Bunyan now tell the story: "I said, 'Are they infallible?' He said, 'No'. 'Then', said I, 'it is possible my judgment may be as good as theirs; but yet will I pass by either, and in this matter be judged by the Scriptures; I am sure that is infallible and cannot err'. 'But', said he, 'who shall judge between you; for you take the Scripture one way and they another?' I said, 'The Scripture should; and that by comparing one Scripture with another; for that will open itself if rightly compared'. All of which is as good an illustration of what Baptists mean by the supremacy of Scripture as will be found in a day's march.



## HERE IS UNITY

This devotion to the Lordship of Christ and the supremacy of Scripture, Baptists share with other Protestants. We differ from them only in the radical application of these doctrines. It is this that marks us out as "Protestants of the Protestants". It is this radical application that gives us our unity in Christ. It has produced in groups from different backgrounds, and those that had no contact with each other, a certain uniformity of doctrine and a similarity of life. It has given us such a common character that Church historians can say "these groups belong together—they are Baptist". More than that, it has produced a kinship that makes us say to each other, "we are brethren". One visible expression of that brotherhood is the Baptist World Alliance.

N. R. WOOD.

## REFLECTIONS OF A GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT

THE Editor has asked me for a few thoughts arising out of my thirteen years' service as General Superintendent of the Central Area of the Baptist Union. I have a good many, but whether they will be of wider interest I do not know.

One thing which perplexed me when asked to take this office was the nature of the work; what would be the target at which I should aim? It all seemed so vague after the definite and concrete work of the pastorate. The more so because my three pastorates had been in large cities, and now I was to extend myself over seven and a half counties, where there are some 250 churches and about 180 ministers. My doubts were quickly resolved, and the target took on a definite shape.

Following in the footsteps of a great man, both physically and spiritually, F. J. Walkey, I found myself in an Area which was responsive to any approach made by the Superintendent, and from ministers and churches alike I received the warmest of welcomes. The early feelings which one had, having lost the family life of a congregation of one's own, soon passed and I come to the close of the work with a real sense of regret at the severance of many friendships, at any rate in part.

The Central Area is largely rural. In six counties there are large and still growing towns, but mostly it is a region of small towns and villages. Our Denomination has owed much in the past to the village churches, and it ought to continue to do so in the future. But I come to the end of this work wondering whether it will be so? There are some bright spots, but there are many places where the Church seems to be slowly running down. The old stalwarts pass on, and so few there seem to be to take their places. Today the villages are coming into their own again, and people are learning afresh the joys of country life. The rural worker is no longer expected to live on a mere pittance. The amenities of town

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**A MESSAGE FROM MR. SEYMOUR J. PRICE TO THE  
MEMBERS OF THE BAPTIST MINISTERS' FELLOWSHIP**

My dear Friends,

For several years I was treasurer of our Church at Acton and therefore can appreciate the concern of any treasurer who sees the general expenses of his Church gradually rising. Nevertheless, I feel bound to mention that the necessity for Theft insurance becomes increasingly apparent. Vestry doors are left unlocked and coats disappear; ladies leave their handbags for a few minutes and the bags, with their multitudinous and mysterious contents, likewise disappear; and so I could continue. Here are some of the theft claims recently paid by the Baptist Insurance Company to Baptist Churches.

	£	s.	d.
Two Bugles ... ..	7	10	0
Two Raincoats ... ..	12	12	0
Electric Drill ... ..	14	15	0
Handbag and Contents ... ..	16	8	0
German Camera and Raincoat ... ..	41	11	0
Overcoat ... ..	9	12	0
Carpet ... ..	30	14	10
Communion Wine and Lock Damage	10	2	6
Cutlery ... ..	36	9	9

Most policies restrict Church cover to Burglary and Housebreaking: our policy is not restricted and includes the risk of Theft. Have your deacons effected a policy?

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

SEYMOUR J. PRICE.

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life are all at his service. There is always a good deal going on in the village, and if there is not, then the bus can take him to the nearby town. I have sometimes been tempted to think that my brother minister in the village scarcely had enough to do, but the more one comes to know about it the more one discovers that he need seldom be unoccupied. If he is the man he ought to be, he will be a friend to everyone, and therefore at the call of all. People will use him, though they may not come to his services. One minister told me once: "They will do anything for me in this village—except come to church". But the minister has to keep on hoping and witnessing. Being a Christian man is a full-time job, and people will soon find out if you slip up, and the cause you represent will suffer. It is real hard going at times, and, though every prospect pleases, there is much spiritual destitution and apathy in many of our most beautiful villages.

In the larger towns we have strong and thriving Churches, and some notable companies of younger ministers are working together in places like Northampton, Kettering, Luton, Reading, and elsewhere. The Associations do a great work in fostering the spirit of fellowship among ministers, and even the man who happens to be the only Baptist minister in a town is conscious of that comradeship. I began my ministry at a time when the old era of isolation and extreme independency was beginning to pass away, and inevitably in those individualistic days there was a certain sense of competition among churches and ministers. Many men were living on low stipends, and there were great inequalities. Dr. Shakespeare aimed to arouse the conscience of the Denomination to its responsibilities to the ministry as a whole, and at the same time to raise the standard of ministerial effectiveness. Now, with the coming of the Home Work Fund, the Denomination is realising that the work is one, as the Church is one, and all must work together for the welfare of the whole. One wonders, in view of all that has happened these last forty years, just how it would have gone with us had there not been a Sustentation Fund, leading on, as it has, to our great family fund, as I like to call the H.W. Fund. True, the Fund has its critics and it may not have been all gain. Stipends can be equalised, but not so the work. I have observed men in the course of my Superintendency who have two or three times more work to do than others. but all receive the same remuneration. I am not surprised that some laymen have been impressed with the same fact. But the remedy is, in the nature of the case, almost impossible, and, anyhow, the man who is the busiest is usually the happiest.

The attempt to bring some law and order into the matter of ministerial settlements has often been the subject of criticism, as the Superintendents well know. But there has surely been some improvement. Things may move slowly, but they do move. In the thirteen years that I have held office only seven or eight men out of the 180 are still in the same churches as when I began. The

trouble is that we often have a number of equally good men, in equally good churches, who all begin to feel at the same time that it would be wise for them to have a change, but how to bring it about under our system of independency is a problem which presses heavily on the hearts of the Superintendents. Until the days come that our churches are willing to accept some sort of a stationing committee it will always be so. I do not expect to see that day.

I would pay tribute to the value of the Associations. They are the beating heart of the Denomination. We cannot be too grateful to the men and women who give time and thought to their activities. The problem of the village church is always on their minds. They have saved the situation more than once. In several counties there are calls for church extension. If only funds were available the Associations would be ready and willing to tackle many more new enterprises, for they have them always before their eyes. But much is being done, as far as resources allow. In my short period of office I have seen new churches spring into life, and many more are planned and will soon be in existence. We owe much to business and professional men who help us in the work of the Associations, and our prayer should be that their numbers may increase, for the need is great.

So I come to the end of this chapter of my life grateful for all I have learned these last years. There is much life and vigour in many of our churches in town and country alike. I have come to have a deep respect for our ministers and our people. The times are not propitious to our work. People's minds are preoccupied with the struggle to live, and burdened at times with fears for the future. There are extra-church movements which tend to drain away some of the resources and energies which I believe would be far better used in the service of the church. But the work goes on, and a host of unknown men and women are giving of their love and loyalty to our churches. Unknown did I say? Not to our Lord, for He knoweth them that are His, and they have His blessing resting always upon them.

W. R. MILLER.

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### FROM THE ROOF OF AFRICA

**W**HEN Christendom in Europe was threatened by the advancing hosts of Islam, hope revived in the rumour that help might come from Africa (or perhaps it was India) if an alliance could be made with the mighty Christian priest-king of the fabulous Ethiopian empire, the legendary Prester John. What might have resulted had such an alliance ever been effected remains one of the tantalising "ifs" of history. At any rate, there was this ancient Christian country, well placed to take Islam in the rear, and to this day a stronghold of the Orthodox faith, with a national Church now numerically stronger than at any former time; and

strong also in its influence upon the life of the people and the government of the nation.

Here, on the roof of Africa (our house in Addis Ababa stands at over 8,000 feet above sea level), it has been our privilege to live and work during the past four years, representing the British and Foreign Bible Society in that part of the continent. If it were not that our Baptist origins demonstrably go back to about A.D. 30 we might feel some sense of historical inferiority in contact with a Church the first known bishop of which was consecrated by no less a person than St. Athanasius. Indeed, if a tradition well-loved in the country is to be accepted, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church is scarcely less ancient than our own, for the eunuch of Acts viii (a believer baptized if ever there was one!) is claimed to have been the first Christian missionary to this African people.

Now, after all these centuries, how startling the present differences between Orthodox and Baptist ways and worship would seem if one were not already familiar with the agreeable fact of our rich Christian diversities! There could scarcely be a greater contrast than between Sunday morning service in a Baptist chapel and the celebration of the Mass in almost any Orthodox church. Once we were able to savour this contrast at its sharpest, for in one and the same Sunday morning we attended service at one of the cathedral churches in Addis Ababa (it lasted from 6.30 until 9.15 o'clock) and then went on to worship at the chapel of the American Baptist Mission: on the one hand, worship in its elaborate priestly remoteness; on the other, worship in its congregational simplicity and immediacy. Readers of *The Fraternal* will, of course, not fail to observe that the contrast is of substance as well as of form—that is so obviously true; yet it is not more true than that the unities of the faith are to be found here as elsewhere. Obscured though these unities may be by much extraneous accretion of the traditions of men, they remain essentials; and the very continuance of the Ethiopian Church is sufficient testimony to the supreme value that Church has set on the doctrine of the Incarnation and of the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus Christ. For this Church has known many vicissitudes through the centuries, making its own distinguished contribution to the noble roll of confessors and martyrs; and not the least of its trials has been prolonged periods of isolation from the rest of Christendom.

Now that this Church is moving out so boldly and hopefully into the main stream of Christian life and thought (the Ethiopian Church was represented both at Amsterdam and at Evanston), and is awaking to an awareness of that missionary task which she might, with unique fitness, undertake in Africa and Asia, we cannot but feel the keenest interest in her development. Indeed, our interest and sympathies are the more directly engaged because there are those among the leaders of the Church who believe in and are looking for spiritual revival and reformation within their communion; and

their faith is, that revival and reformation are most likely to come about through a return to the Bible in the vernacular.

Besides the Orthodox Church there are Protestant evangelical Churches, the fruit of the work of missions from overseas, from Europe and America. These Churches have grown up in areas of the country where the people were—as many still are—Moslem or pagan; and how they have grown, and are growing! I have had to get used to preaching with children not only sitting at my feet but actually sitting on them, for that is how crowded the evangelical Churches often are at service time; so crowded that the children, who behave with most exemplary patience through a long service which certainly has no children's address, have to be fitted into any odd or end of space there may be round the platform and into the pulpit. If there were any reader of this journal who had doubts about the worth of overseas missions, six months in Ethiopia would remove those doubts completely and for ever. The trouble would be, probably, to get him back to England again! A young Army doctor, near the end of his term of service, came on leave to Addis Ababa from one of the neighbouring British colonies. During this holiday he visited a couple of down-country mission stations where there was some medical work going on. Within twenty-four hours he was saying: "May I join your mission; and when can I start?" For us, to see missionaries at work and to share the life of mission stations has been an inexpressible thrill.

Indeed, it has been something of a revelation. We have all found in the exercise of our ministry that any experience that has happened to come our way will, sooner or later, be laid under contribution. If this is true of the minister at home it is even more true of the missionary abroad who, besides drawing on all his previous experience, must add skills he had never previously thought of acquiring, and must be apt in turning his hand to anything. To one of our favourite photographs we have given the caption: "Missionaries at work". The chief figure in the picture is, as it happens, a Baptist minister from the U.S.A., and there he is, not with the traditional Bible, hymn-book and umbrella, but, with hammer in hand and a mouthful of nails, helping to put the roof on a new school-house for his station. If education is a necessary concomitant of mission (as it must be in Ethiopia), the formula seems to be: "First build your school. . ." We sometimes think that if a missionary were to take all the training courses needed fully to equip him for all the calls that will be made upon him in the field he would never get to the field—he would still be taking courses when it came time for him to retire!

One of our chief common concerns with members of the missionary community is, of course, that of Scripture translation and revision. Here we come face to face with a near miracle too readily taken for granted by the body Christian. For it *is* taken for granted that the missionary will learn the language native to the

area in which he or she is stationed, and will learn it well enough to do all his or her work in it—teaching, preaching, personal evangelism, day-to-day business, and all the rest. Moreover, we expect to get from among them translators who will do for the indigenous Church something at least of what Tyndale and others did for those whose native tongue is English.

To have to do with missionary translators of the Bible is a humbling and a heartening experience. So much devotion, such single-minded, warm-hearted consecration, such patience, such application and good humour! And the work done not in sheltered leisure, with libraries of books at hand, but in the midst of a life full of every kind of distraction, including perennial heat, dust and flies, and with the nearest library thousands of miles and several years away. . . . William Carey had been one of my heroes ever since Pearce Carey's incomparable "Life" swam into my delighted ken, but his heroic proportions are better limned than ever for me now that I have been privileged to look over the shoulders of some of his successors and to share in some of their trials and perplexities. For perplexities there certainly are. The snares which beset the translator are aptly illustrated by the experience of a Swedish colleague who was revising a Church hymnal with the help of native informants. He came to one hymn which he knew to be a special favourite of the congregations, who would sing it with no end of gusto. The revisers went through the hymn word by word. Then the missionary asked his informants: "Now are you really sure you understand what each of the verses says?" "Understand?" they said, looking blank. "Yes: you like singing this hymn, I know"—nods of agreement from the informants—"but do people understand its meaning?" "Oh! Its meaning. . . . Why, does it have meaning as well?"

Yet there is no question but that God uses and blesses the often far-from-perfect versions of Scripture. Often enough, in situations where there is little or no opportunity for the Church to exercise its teaching ministry, we can see with almost startling clarity just how real, and how sufficient, the work of the Holy Spirit is. One has almost laboratory conditions: a gospel in the vernacular left behind in a village by a Bible Society agent; a man sitting down to read the at first quite unfamiliar story. . . . then, months or years later, word filters through to a mission station three or four days journey away that up in the hills there is a group of believing Christians waiting to be baptized. Well, this is written deep into our Baptist heritage: that the Holy Spirit and this reading man are to be trusted with the Bible.

Reference has been made to the Baptist General Conference of America Mission in Ethiopia. It has been at work in the country since the end of World War II. Its leader, the Rev. J. O. A. Luckman, is a notable and beloved figure in the evangelical community, and especially beloved of us because he is our pastor. At the

Mission's headquarters, conveniently situated in the main street of Addis Ababa, in what at one time was the Greek Legation, there is a beautiful and spacious chapel. Here, on Sunday mornings, sandwiched in among Amharic language services and Bible classes, room is made for a service in English and, with all possible respect to all other Christian communions, this is home! (If you yourself have lived abroad in one of the more out-of-the-way places you will the better appreciate what this means to us.) True, the hymnal used has much in it that was unfamiliar at first and the congregation is apt to be more cosmopolitan than is usual in England (we counted representatives of eleven nationalities among those present one Sunday morning), but in all essentials we have what we know and love in our Baptist churches at home. Physically, there is a gulf fixed between the Bible House and the Baptist Mission—a deep ravine, popularly known as the “Hyena Pit”, because it is a favourite route for hyenas coming into town to do their nightly stint of scavenging. A rough but picturesque footpath down and across the Hyena Pit affords us a short-cut to church, short—but strenuous. After the scramble up the steep far side of the ravine we need those five minutes quietly sitting in church before service begins and we are in any shape to sing the first hymn: such activity at that altitude is heart-testing and breath-taking. Now we look forward to being, in July, Ethiopia's first ever representatives at a Baptist World Alliance Congress. . . .

So out of these past four years recollections come thronging into one's mind: of audiences with H.I.M. Haile Selassie (descendant of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba), a gracious, most Christian ruler and statesman; of congregations of many different shades of complexion—most exotic of all, perhaps, a congregation of Malagasy and Senegalese Christians in French Somaliland who had been convened by a Greek merchant; of Mrs. Winquist in Eritrea, now in her ninety-second year, busy reading the proofs of the Bible in Tigrinya, a translation work she and her husband put in hand more than sixty years ago; of people sitting by the roadside, eagerly listening to the Gospel story, people who until then had not so much as heard the name of Jesus; of a Moslem Somali father pleading that the names of his two sons should be put down for places in a mission school even the site for which had not yet been settled; of journeys over plains and hills, through forests and in the wilderness. . . .

Well, it is all the same good service, with the best of Masters, wherever it may be—here or there. People ask us: “But if Ethiopia is Christian, how Christian are the Ethiopians really?” To which the only sensible answer seems to be: “How Christian are British people really?” David said (Psalm lxxviii, 31): “Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.” So she has: the prophecy has been and is being fulfilled; and last year Ethiopian Christians were fervently praying for the success of the Harringay meetings,



asking that England might soon stretch out *her* hands unto God. In other words, the Kingdom of God *is* one and indivisible, the only true international. One does not need to go to Africa to learn that, but for us at least Africa has given fresh point and force to the truism.

L. V. D. ASHLEY.

### THE DEVOTIONAL LIFE OF THE MINISTER

**W**HEN I sailed for China in 1924 my dear friend and Pastor, Thomas Phillips of Bloomsbury, wrote to me: "Keep in touch, and you will remain fresh to the end of the chapter. So many missionaries and ministers fail because they become stagnant ponds and not living streams gushing out of the fountain. Be always running water."

That is our problem—how to keep fresh spiritually. We know it is important; but how difficult to accomplish! The pressure of sermon preparation, the visitation of the flock, the round of meetings, and a hundred other things, leave us with little time for unhurried communion with God. Yet without earnest daily prayer and quiet meditation upon the Word of God health of soul and a fruitful ministry are impossible.

Why and when should we pray? It is sufficient for the servant of Jesus Christ to be as the Master. We know His daily practice: "In the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed".

The early morning, before the telephone bell rings and the work of the day has begun, is the best time for prayer. A French master in the art of prayer says: "Early rising is the secret of all spiritual force. Each morning between five and eight there is an opportunity which does not recur during the day. He who rises early is the master of his body, his day, his house, his life. Without discipline there is no energy. In our time little discipline, hence little energy, little character. Discipline is to energy what method is to science. . . . There are moments when it is better to work than to pray. Even prayer, when the hour for work has struck, is often a sort of conversation with oneself which withers and desolates. We may be losing time on our knees: "Lord! Lord!"

The Master who calls us to prayer gives us the Holy Spirit to help us to pray. This is a great encouragement. For to force ourselves to pray in our own strength is a wearisome business. Prayer is not a natural function of man like eating and drinking and sleeping. It is supernatural, the work of the Holy Spirit in us. "Praying in the Holy Ghost" gives tenderness, fervour, faith, and perseverance to prayer and makes the Living Christ a bright reality to us. Let us ask for and receive the Helper in prayer before we begin to pray.

What is the best method of prayer? Each must find the method best suited for his own soul. I have been asked to share a simple method which I mourn I have not kept more faithfully. It is based on the order of the Lord's Prayer—recollection, adoration and thanksgiving, confession, consecration, petition and intercession.

#### A RULE OF PRAYER

*Recollection:* On rising, say "Good-morning" to God and realise His Presence with a word of affirmation—"Thank you, Father, for the rest of the night and the gift of this new day. When I awake, I am still with Thee, Glory be to the Father", etc.

On dressing, put off dull sloth and "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ", and for the conflict "Put on the whole armour of God".

*Adoration and Thanksgiving:* Coming downstairs to the study, kneel before the throne of God. Ask the Father to give you afresh the Holy Spirit and receive Him by faith. Be still for a few moments as He leads you into the heavenly places to join the Church triumphant in worshipping the King in the beauty of holiness. Read a Psalm of Adoration and Thanksgiving and Praise, or Revelation iv-v, and continue with the Lord's Prayer.

*Meditation:* To prevent wandering thoughts, turn to the Bible and sit and study it under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy Law." One must be thorough and regular in Bible study, working with God is understanding His truth as it is revealed to us by the Spirit through the inspired Word of God. Each will have his own system, but the aim is the same—to hear God speak to us personally. "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." The truth revealed is to be practised, the command obeyed and the promise believed.

*Confession:* Meditation on the Word will convict us of sin and bring us to our knees before God in a prayer of penitence and confession of our manifold sins. A daily reading of the Beatitudes will show us the New Man in Christ, and our need for daily adjustment to that ideal. Once a week we should on our knees read through Christ's searching words for ministers in Matthew, chapter xxiii. But beware of introspection, of being weighed down by our sins instead of lifted up by our Saviour. "Behold, the Lamb of God. . . ."

*Consecration:* Receiving the cleansing forgiveness from Christ, let us make the daily surrender of our lives to Him. "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God. . . ." Consecrate your day also to Him. Go over the day's work together with the Master, telling Him what you have to do, and asking for His guidance and help in your daily task.

*Petition:* Make your requests known to God. Be anxious for nothing. Be prayerful about everything. Ask for God's blessing, as Christ did, for the members of our families, our friends, our

brother ministers, for our rulers, for all men, for our enemies. It will help us to have a book with a note of our requests and answers. This can be spread over each day of the week.

*Intercession:* This is an important part of our ministry and would require more space to explain. When Robert M. McCheyne, that saintly minister of Dundee, died it was said: "Perhaps the heaviest blow to his brethren, his people, his country, and the world, is the loss of his intercession." The minister will bear his people on his heart before God continually as their priest, remembering the weak, the sick and suffering, the aged and infirm, the little ones who require care and nourishment. This will require a Book for Intercessory Prayer, divided into days of the week, with different subjects—intercession for our Church members, for missionary work, for persons and for causes in the world.

Such a scheme could employ considerable time each day, or it could be reduced to thirty minutes each day. The main thing is to develop our own rule of prayer which will make it natural and regular, carrying us over the periods of dryness which come to us all.

What difference does prayer make? Let me answer by one example. One of the great thrills of my missionary life was to meet, during a long journey in North-west China, George Hunter, apostle of Turkestan. This tall and slightly bent veteran of eighty-three gave me a gracious smile of welcome to his small room on the edge of the Gobi Desert. What kind of man was he? His personality was neither dramatic nor glamorous. He did not impress by his efficiency or his ability. Those accustomed to external judgments would dismiss him as an old crank, but to the child of God with eyes to see here was spiritual greatness of the highest order. There was something grand and inspiring about him. One look at his white-bearded face revealed the purity and shining serenity of a man of God. Cheerfulness and gentleness radiated from him as he chatted. Gaiety sparkled from his eyes as he related some humorous incident. Here was a man who obviously enjoyed life, for to him to live was Christ, and daily communion with the Lord had kept him fresh and alert. His faculties were amazingly bright for a man of eighty-three, and how wide and varied were his interests. Like an athlete, he had cut out of his life all comforts and indulgences that he might endure hardness for the Kingdom of God. Here was non-conventional saint, self-consciously pious and unctuous, sweet and suave in manners. He was a rugged Scot from Aberdeen, with much of the granite of that highland city in his nature. He had served nobly the Cause of Christ in Central Asia for fifty years. What was the secret of his great ministry? It was in something he rarely talked about—his disciplined life of prayer. In the early morning and before we retired it was our custom to kneel beside his bed and pray to our Heavenly Father. Such a holy experience is too sacred for words. The amazing humility and boldness of this simple man before God, his childlike faith in asking for things, the wide

sweep of his intercessions, his oneness with the Father's will, and his single desire to seek first the Kingdom of God—these aspects of his prayer life were a rebuke and an inspiration to me as I lived with him for a month. He showed me more than he was aware. He taught me more than he knew; just this—that the man who will keep fresh to the end of the chapter is the man whose gaze is fixed on God, whose joy is in God's company, whose peace is in doing God's will and whose heart is pure in its love of God and of man.

GEORGE YOUNG.

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### THE BAPTIST UNION SUPERANNUATION SCHEME

THE paragraphs that follow will be mainly of interest to British Baptists. They deal with the scheme for ministerial superannuation adopted by the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland in 1927 and are prompted by some recent developments in regard to ministerial service and by questions which have been raised in certain quarters.

The scheme adopted by the Assembly in 1927 superseded and incorporated an older denominational Annuity Fund and a number of county or Association Funds. It involved the raising of a capital fund of £300,000 to meet the new obligations undertaken in respect of older ministers and was so designed on an actuarial basis that the level of benefits depends primarily on the premiums paid. The assets of the fund belong to the members. The principle on which the scheme is based is payment according to stipend but equality of benefit. The denomination as a whole raised the initial capital required, and the Churches have almost without exception generously paid year by year half of the 5 per cent premium asked of all members. The basic structure of the scheme has remained unchanged during the past twenty-eight years and, though minor modifications have been introduced, this structure has been confirmed each time the rules have been revised. The latest revision took place only a few years ago, when after study by the Superannuation Fund Committee and the Baptist Union Council a revised and simplified scheme was presented to the Assembly of 1952 and adopted by the Assembly of 1953.

It has been customary for actuaries to "value" the fund every five years. In 1954 it was "valued" after an interval of only three years. Each valuation has enabled the benefits to be increased. The benefits offered—and in particular the cover provided for widows and fatherless children—could not be obtained elsewhere for the 2½ per cent of salary paid by ministers themselves, except in the case of the relatively small number of ministers in receipt of fairly large stipends. The fund as a whole has been a striking example of denominational and ministerial brotherhood; the Churches have loyally paid half the annual premiums and the

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ministers in receipt of large stipends have not withdrawn from the fund.

Questions have recently been asked about the way in which ministerial income is computed for the assessment of premiums. The basis has always been the stipend received by the contributor "in respect of his qualifying office", special adjustments being made in respect of manses and rates, together with "such proportion as the Council may from time to time determine of any remuneration receivable by the contributor for part-time chaplaincy service of any kind or for acting as Secretary of a Baptist Association of Churches". Occasional fees, literary earnings and National Insurance contributions, if paid by a Church, are exempt from inclusion.

Until recently part-time chaplaincy appointments with pay were rare. The Ministry of Health now, however, provides remuneration for all properly appointed hospital chaplains. The Free Churches agreed that the appointments should be made under the auspices of the Free Church Federal Council. All have felt that as these appointments involve ministerial status and denominational accrediting, as they vary greatly in financial return, can be held by only a few in each neighbourhood, and can be undertaken only with the goodwill of the local Churches, it is only fair that at least some proportion of the remuneration should be subject to assessment. Any increase in premiums that results will ultimately be shared by all, in the form of increased benefits. The Baptist Union Council decided to treat hospital chaplaincies in the same way as, for Home Work Fund grants, service chaplaincies are dealt with, namely, that the first £26 should be ignored and half—but only half—of the remainder be subject to assessment.

Few, if any, of the Churches have objected, when asked, to paying their share of the larger premiums that have resulted from the development of the chaplaincy service. Since the inception of the Superannuation Scheme the individual assessment returns have been countersigned by the treasurer of the local Church. When it was pointed out that treasurers have no means of knowing the amount of chaplaincy fees, the forms were so altered that the treasurer's signature applies only to the amount of the pastoral stipend and any Church endowments. The correct return of chaplaincy fees is left to the minister himself.

It has been suggested that these fees should be excluded or, alternatively, that other forms of income should be subject to assessment. Some men have private means. An increasing number of ministers' wives are now undertaking full- or part-time employment. Some ministers have secured part-time teaching appointments. Some are engaged gainfully in other activities in addition to their ministerial duties. Should not some or all of these other sources of income be included for the purposes of the scheme?

Economic necessity has unfortunately compelled a number of ministers to seek to supplement their incomes, for ministerial salaries generally have not kept pace with the rise in the cost of living. It would be a revolutionary procedure to attempt to inquire into ministers' private means or the earnings of their wives, and would, almost certainly, result in a considerable number of withdrawals from the fund. To attempt to base the assessment on other part-time earnings would be extremely difficult in practice, and would radically alter the nature of the scheme itself. It is a ministerial scheme based on the service rendered as a minister, that and that alone. That this involves certain individual hardships and anomalies is no doubt true. They are inevitable. Many ministers have no opportunity of securing chaplaincies. Many who have gifts that would enable them to earn substantial sums in the open market have church responsibilities that give them no time for this. Taking all things into consideration, it seems only right that remuneration for chaplaincy service, which is a direct extension of pastoral service, should be included in the stipend assessable under the scheme. The exact proportion that should be included must bear relation to the expenses involved and may be varied by the Baptist Union Council. The principle itself is hardly challengeable. Though the problems created by the increase in chaplaincy appointments are real, their magnitude should not be exaggerated. It is estimated that about one-quarter of the members of the fund are able to augment their Church stipends by chaplaincies of one kind or another. In view of the arrangement adopted by the Council, the amount of additional premium which has to be paid is small, except in the case of a few large and highly remunerative chaplaincies.

ERNEST A. PAYNE.

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## THE MINISTER AND THE APPLICANT FOR THE MINISTRY

**A** YOUNG man in the church of which you are the minister feels a call to the ministry. What will you do about it?

This is an important question. Important for the young man because he needs wise counsel and guidance. Often he is ignorant about the way in which he can fulfil his sense of call and prepare for the ministry; and is quite dependent upon others, and that usually means upon his minister, for advice. It is important for the churches because a man who is not truly called to the work can do much harm in the churches to which he ministers. Since the ministry is so influential in the life of our churches we need to accept the responsibility for guiding the right young men in their approaches to the ministry.

The first concern of the minister will be about the young man's sense of vocation. Not all who feel attracted to the work are really called of God. The experience of call must be probed and examined; it must be encouraged, but with judicious discernment and without

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B. M. S.

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haste. In addition to the inner call the possession of gifts necessary to the work of the ministry must be noticed and must be given opportunity for development.

Consequently it may be necessary to suggest a period of waiting in order to test the call and allow the experience to become more mature. It may be necessary also to find opportunities whereby personal gifts can be revealed and exercised. I would not say that a man who has never conducted a service cannot be called to the ministry, but it is clear that a man who feels a sense of call would do well to demonstrate that he possesses the necessary gifts by conducting services in a manner acceptable to Christian communities.

The first task of the minister then is to test the reality of the call by observing the evidence for it and by looking for the results and influences of any Christian service in which the young man is engaged.

His second concern will be about the preparation of the young man for some kind of training. Here I am not thinking of that inner training of character which is the result of a variety of spiritual experiences and which fundamentally derives from inner responses to the Spirit of God, for these are experiences which cannot be confined to any specific channels or produced by any set course of training. The free operations of the Holy Spirit and personal response to them are basic to the work of the ministry and are essential elements of the training. But it is generally agreed among us that preparation for the ministry should also include a period of study and reflection in which the mind may grow, knowledge be acquired and the personality be disciplined. The normal mode of training for the Baptist ministry in this sense is by means of the denominational Colleges, of which there are five in England, two in Wales and one in Scotland, in membership with the B.U.

It is here that the minister's advice can be so valuable. He can render good service in three ways:—

- (1) He can turn the mind of the young man towards the possibility of a College course;
- (2) he can obtain accurate information about the College course and the conditions of entry;
- (3) he can help the applicant in the preliminary work necessary for College.

These points raise certain matters about which there appears to be confusion; so I mention some of the questions likely to be asked and the kind of answer which the minister can give.

- (1) How can I afford a College course?

Where the call is genuine, financial difficulties can be overcome. Colleges cannot exist without an income, but it is still the magnificent record of the denominational Colleges that they will accept students on the basis of what each man is able to pay; a man's inability to pay does not prejudice his application. Of course, the man himself and his church should do what they can, and educational

grants are often available to meet College fees. But financial questions are usually considered after an applicant has been accepted.

(2) Have I to reach a certain educational standard?

A good school education is clearly an advantage; and a good record in the General Certificate of Education is helpful. But these are not made essential qualifications for entry into College. An applicant who has not reached this standard yet possesses a willingness and an aptitude for learning may be accepted.

(3) What age must I be?

The best age to begin a College course is probably about 20 or 21, but a somewhat younger man of reasonably mature experience may be accepted. Older men who feel called and are willing to undergo the discipline of study may also be accepted.

(4) What about National Service?

Here there is a certain variety of practice. Some Colleges like applicants to have had wider experience of life than that provided by the school; hence they expect applicants to have completed National Service or its equivalent. Furthermore, they do not desire future ministers to be free from the obligations and experiences which members of their generation have to accept; though these Colleges have no rule about this matter. Other Colleges attach less importance to this question of wider experience.

(5) Must I be single?

It is far better for a student to be single and to remain so throughout his course. All Colleges consider the application of a married man with particular care, but generally there is no rigid rule. It depends on the man, on his experience of call and on his personality. At the moment there are married men in several Colleges.

(6) What recommendations are required by the Colleges?

The Colleges expect an applicant to be recommended by his church and his minister. When the minister's letter is not just a eulogy of the young man, but a careful, discerning and factual judgment, it is a great help to the College Committee. It is a rule of the Baptist Union also that an applicant must be recommended by his Association.

(7) What shall I do if the College declines my application?

A refusal may mean that in the judgment of the College Committee the applicant is too immature in experience or gives insufficient evidence of possessing gifts for the ministry; then the applicant will engage in Christian service for another year—and apply again! Or the refusal may be on the ground that the applicant is not suited for the training given by that College; then the applicant may approach another College.

Whatever questions are raised they should be answered with accurate information. A useful leaflet about the Colleges is issued by the Baptist Union. The Colleges are always glad to answer enquiries and give exact information about their conditions of entry,

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finance, curricula, etc. Our young men have a right to expect that when they approach a minister regarding their sense of call to the ministry they will receive wise and accurate advice. It is our responsibility as ministers to make sure that we can give that advice and guide them properly in their important decisions. L. G. CHAMPION.

In our October issue we hope to publish information concerning the preparation of Non-Collegiate Candidates for the Ministry.

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