

The Fraternal

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THE WIDER CIRCLE

OF INTEREST TO YOU

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

AS befits a new Chairman, I have been thinking about the aims of the Fellowship.

1. To contribute to the intellectual and spiritual life of its members by promoting summer schools and a lending library.

2. To minister, so far as financial resources allow, to brethren in need.

3. To encourage a Sunday morning ministry of intercession.

How far are we achieving them, and should we think of expanding them to meet the new needs of our time?

The Fellowship has already done a notable work through its Oxford Summer School; not only through the School itself, where men from all over England and Scotland have been brought together, but also by stimulating the growth of summer schools and retreats for ministers, which now have a place in the programmes of most of our Associations.

If, as we hope, it proves possible in future to plan such a school specially for the guidance and encouragement of our probationer ministers, the Fellowship will enter upon a new and important field of service to our ministry. All this work has, of course, been made possible by the generous financial partnership of the Baptist Union.

The lending library has grown into a considerable service through the energy of our Librarian, A. J. Westlake, and generous help from the Particular Baptist Fund. Do all our fraternal and individual ministers realise that a splendid selection of new theological and other books and periodicals is constantly flowing into our library, and that they are for the service of our ministry?

The ministry in Great Britain is facing a new situation of severe economic stringency, and the help given to individual brethren from our Benevolent Fund can obviously be no more than a token of our ministerial brotherhood. As I see it, the Fellowship can render valuable service to our denomination at this time by constructive thinking about the future of ministerial service among us, and the best use of our ministerial resources in the service of the Churches. I should like to see our fraternal discussing the subject.

The Editorial Board has no difficulty in securing articles for *The Fraternal*, which now has a circulation of 2,800 copies. The difficulty is to find room for those which are made available. We are, however, eager to make our magazine of maximum interest and value to our ministers, and it may be that some of its space could be profitably used for the discussion of the future of ministerial service. At any rate, we are ready to consider articles on this important theme.

Some hundreds of copies of *The Fraternal* are sent overseas, and we greet our brethren in many lands. They are engaged with us in a common task, that of making real by word and life the Good News of the Gospel. The conditions of our service vary from country to country, but the need of men is the same everywhere.

Finally, there is the ministry of intercession on Sunday morning—our most important service to one another. Apart from the Fellowship thought of as a whole, the men of our own fraternal or district, and brethren whom we know to be facing difficulties have a special claim on our prayers.

It is for each of us so to take our part in the Fellowship that it is able increasingly to achieve its aims, and to be a blessing to our ministry and to the Churches.

JOHN O. BARRETT.

THE FRATERNAL

The present issue contains two articles on Eschatology, one from the pen of a distinguished German theologian, Dr. Ethelbert Stauffer, and the other an equally distinguished English writer, Dr. H. G. Wood. Dr. G. R. Beasley-Murray was good enough to arrange this series, and the concluding article, written by himself, will appear in our next issue.

The experiment described by Penry Davies wherein Norwich, St. Mary's, maintains and deepens the link with its daughter church, offers a suggestion worth considering.

In view of the issues involved, we publish, in full, the Ceylon Church Union proposals as supplied by R. C. Cowling. The Scheme merits prayerful and unprejudiced attention. Local Fraternalists should study this winter the Scottish Report on Baptism and make it available to every member. Such study will be helped by the outline here supplied by A. Gilmore, to whom—thanks.

The articles on Television by E. H. Robertson, also the account of Congo up-to-date, written by W. D. Reynolds, should add to the value of the present number, together with that by V. Greenwood.

Our readers will unite with the Editorial Board in their pleasure that Dr. Morris West, of Regent's Park College, has consented to become a colleague.

This issue completes another volume of the Magazine. We acknowledge the support of our advertisers and earnestly remind our members who are in default that their subscription for 1955 should be at once remitted to the Treasurer: Charles Bullock. Subscriptions for 1956 are now due; minimum, 4s.

We acknowledge, gratefully, a message of appreciation received from the Secretary of the Southern Division, N.B.A.

CHRIST AND HISTORY

THE association of faith with history is vital to Christianity. It determines the nature of revelation. Theology has been dominated by the idea of revelation as the communication of truth in the form of precept or dogma, and though the revelation of God recorded in the Old and New Testaments was never primarily or exclusively a communication of truth in words but much more a disclosure of character and purpose in creative and redemptive acts, the full significance of this has been appreciated only in comparatively recent times. The process, if that is the right word to use, which gives full meaning to human history is neither the evolution of class-struggles nor the progress of technology, but the history of salvation. For salvation is bound up with a continuous temporal happening, which embraces past, present and future, and a historical event which cannot be repeated forms the centre of this temporal happening. The scope and character of the redemption of mankind has been and is being disclosed in a succession of judgments and deliverances, in the achievement and endurances of the heroes of faith, in the prophet's word and the people's liberty. The historical event which forms the centre of the history of salvation is the coming of Christ. How is the unique event of the Coming of Christ related to all that went before and to all that has happened since?

First let us consider how it is related to what went before, and particularly to the history and hope of Israel. It is important to remember that Israel came to know God as acting in history on their behalf before they were aware of Him as creator of the universe.

The work of the prophets is two-fold, to establish the unity of the sacred with the ethical and the personal, and to prevent Jahweh, the Lord of history, being identified with Baal, a nature-God, the life-force or the spirit of natural fertility. So the faith of Israel turns on outstanding occasions where the prophets trace the hand of God in their national history. There is the call of Abraham and God's promise to the patriarch. There is the Exodus accomplished under the leadership of Moses, and the institution of the Covenant whereby Jahweh becomes their God and they become his people. Associated with the Covenant are the Laws in which God's will is made known to them, and the religious forms in which prayer, praise and worship are to be expressed. This is really the subject of a long development, but in principle it is traced back to Moses. The Throne of David and the Temple of Solomon add other features to the faith and hope of Israel. The captivity is the supreme trial of the national faith, and through the insight and the inspiration of the prophets, faith in the justice, the power and wisdom of God does not succumb to the national disaster. The return from captivity but half fulfils the glowing anticipations of Psalmist and prophet, and as the Jews became the people of the book—the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings—the expectation of a final more triumphant

deliverance still animates the faith. All nations will be glad to learn from Israel and to serve the chosen people. Israel will be a kind of royal priesthood, representing all peoples in the sight of God. But if the pre-eminence of Israel is assumed, the greater prophets took seriously the promise that in the seed of Abraham all the families of the earth should be blessed.

As the teaching of the prophets developed, the truth of God's absolute sovereignty became ever clearer. Their God is the only God. The gods of the heathen are nothing. The Law which forbade the Jews to make any graven image compelled them to think of God as transcending all natural objects and forces. He is the creator of the world, but He is no *anima mundi*. His tender mercies are over all His works, and they are His works. Creation is the background of redemption and God's creative acts the preface to the accompaniment of His redemptive acts. In affirming the absolute sovereignty of God, the prophets were also reminding Israel that they had not chosen God, but God had chosen them, and chosen them not for any merit in them but of His free favour. They depend on Him, and He does not depend on them. But He is the living and true God, the God on whom they can depend in unfaltering trust and the God who acts in history to fulfil His promises.

To say Jesus is the Christ is to say that in Jesus God has fulfilled His promises. St. Paul, moreover, had the faith to believe that it was in the fulness of time, when the world was ready for it, that God sent His Son. And we can see how the establishment of the Roman Empire was the needed setting for the new universal faith. It is fitting that the Christ should be born at a time when Cæsar Augustus decreed a census of the Roman world. And while on one side we can trace the deep needs of that world, its moral failure as set forth in Romans i, and see how fitting it was that Christ should come when all was sin and shame, it is also true that all that was best in the world was crying out for a Saviour. Saint Beuve might well say: "To one who has read Virgil there is nothing surprising in the coming of Christ". His coming is related to the aspirations and needs of the ancient Græco-Roman world. But Christianity is not, as Guignebert suggests, just a new phase in the history of Greek religion. Christ's fulfilment of the aspirations and satisfying of needs of the ancient world were neither expected nor were immediately welcomed.

If the coming of Jesus was the fulfilment of the calling and hope of Israel, how is it related to subsequent history?

Perhaps the most important point to realise is that, as Cullmann says, the future is related to the centre as Victory-day to the decisive battle of the war. The decisive battle has been fought and won. That is what the death and resurrection mean. And confidence inspired by the recognition of the death and resurrection of Jesus as the centre of history both quickened the expectation of a speedy culmination of history, and prevented disillusionment when the culmination was delayed.

The thoroughgoing eschatologists would make Christianity a purely Jewish sect, accepting the Jewish time-scheme. For the Jew, the great decision is still to come. He is in the pre-millennial age. With Messiah comes millennium. If the coming of the kingdom had been for Jesus and the first disciples an entirely future event, a matter of hope only and not of present realisation, then Christianity would have been simply a Jewish sect which claimed to know the identity of the coming Messiah. "But the Parousia, the Second Advent, was never the centre of history for the early Christians. For all the New Testament and for Jesus Himself, the centre of history is His historical activity. The Jewish eschatological hope is affirmed and affirmed even more intensely, but it is no longer the centre. For the primitive community after the death of Jesus, the most important factor is the crown of His activity by the resurrection. No other point of time in the whole happening, neither in the past nor in the future, can have such a central importance as this for men who are convinced that Jesus Christ has been raised bodily as the firstborn among the dead." The Church lives in the interval between the resurrection and the Parousia, as it were between the decisive battle and Victory-day. This tension is vital to an understanding of the New Testament, a tension not between this world and the next, not between time and eternity, but between present and future, between this age and the age to come. And the powers of the age to come are already at work in this age. Christ already reigns and He must reign until he hath put all things in subjection to him. That Jesus and the early Church reckoned the interval in decades rather than in centuries is no doubt an error in perspective. But such an interval was expected, and during it the task of the Church is to proclaim the gospel to mankind. Cullmann suggests that *To Katexon* in 2 Thess. ii, 6, may refer not to the Roman Empire, but to the uncompleted mission of the Church. The gospel must first be preached to all nations. Then, but not till then, the end will come.

From this tension of present and future, Cullmann would explain the primitive Christian attitude to the world. The alternative, world-affirming or world-denying, is untenable for the Christian faith. The New Testament situation is not so simple. The tension involves both positive and negative attitudes towards the world. The believer lives in a world of which he knows that it will pass away, but which, as the framework of the history of salvation, is God-designed and Christ-ruled. In so far as he knows it as passing away, he denies it; in so far as he knows it is the God-given framework of the present history of salvation, he affirms it.

We may conceive the history of salvation centring on Christ, as a hope which narrows down to Christ and then expands again from him. We may think of mankind as failing in Adam, and the hope of salvation then centres on the elect nation. When the nation fails a remnant remains faithful, and at last all depends on the

Christ, the Son of Man who realises in Himself our true humanity, the suffering servant who realises all that Israel was meant to be. The history of salvation as it were narrows down to Christ, is concentrated in him. But from the moment of Christ's triumph, the tide of salvation turns. It passes from the little group in the upper-room to the ever-growing Church, the body of Christ on earth. It permeates society like a leaven, and it shall yet embrace mankind.

It is manifest that the New Testament conception of time, of the relation of history to nature, of redemption to creation, is set in the framework of pre-Copernican astronomy. Both the time perspective and the cosmology of the Bible need radical interpretation. Clearly the writers of the New Testament had no conception of the vast ages through which this mysterious universe has been in process of creation. They had no conception of the length of time life has existed on this planet and man has been present here. The true relation of the earth to the sun and the world of stars was concealed from them. Of the earth itself, of its history, of its geography, of its inhabitants they knew very little. The time-space setting of human history is very different from the world as New Testament writers conceived it. How is the history of salvation related to the wider world disclosed to us by modern knowledge?

In considering the relation of Christ's coming to all that preceded it we naturally concentrate on Israel and the Old Testament. But we have to take into consideration the experiences, the discoveries, the aspirations of other peoples. How is Christ's coming related to all these? That the history of salvation implies a special vocation for Israel still remains true. God hath not dealt so with any nation. But in diverse ways God has been dealing with other peoples.

It seems as if between the 8th and 4th centuries B.C. there was a flowering of spiritual life in the great civilisations. Alongside the prophets of Israel you have Laotze and Confucius in China, religious philosophers and the Buddha in India, Zoroaster in Persia, the great dramatists and the philosophers Socrates, Plato and Aristotle in Greece. It is as if to every great people was granted some insight in that great age into the moral and religious foundations of human society. Take, for example, the comment of L. T. Hobhouse on the teaching of Laotze, who pushed the doctrines of humility, of universal charity and of forgiveness to their furthest point. After summarising the Chinese sage's account of Tao, the Way, Hobhouse says: "Such is the first recorded expression of the full doctrine of non-resistance—a doctrine which, however one-sided and inapplicable to the affairs of men, enshrines the profound truth that moral influence is distinct from and superior to physical compulsion: that force, however necessary in the immediate exigencies, settles nothing in the end, but is a menace to the moral balance of the society and of the individual that employ it: that men are capable of being influenced not only by retaliation, but also, and more

profoundly, by the deliberate refusal to retaliate. The system of quietism gave extreme expression to these truths. The world will always reject its ideas and will always be haunted by them until the time comes when, disregarding the extravagancies of form in which they are uttered, it begins to ask itself in sober earnest what truth they contain." It may be that time has now come, but in any case is there not in this teaching of Laotze something akin to the spirit of Christianity? Admittedly, a closer comparison discloses profound differences of approach and understanding, but there remain real coincidences in ethical conclusions.

Whitehead argues that the relation of Christianity to Platonism is even closer, and Plato has rightly been hailed as the great forerunner. Plato reached "the final conviction towards the end of his life, that the divine element in the world is to be conceived as a persuasive agency and not a coercive agency. This doctrine should be looked upon as one of the greatest intellectual discoveries in the history of religion. Plato's intellectual discovery leads up to the supreme moment in religious history, according to the Christian religion. The essence of the Christian religion is the appeal to the life of Christ as a revelation of the nature of God and of his agency in the world. The record is fragmentary . . . but there can be no doubt as to what elements in the record have evoked a response from all that is best in human nature. The Mother, the Child, and the bare manger; the lowly man, homeless and self-forgetful, with his message of peace, love and sympathy; the suffering, the agony, the tender words as life ebbed, the final despair; the whole with the authority of final victory . . . can there be any doubt that the power of Christianity lies in its revelation in act of that which Plato divined in theory?"

It would seem then that the history of salvation is not just the single line through the call of Israel, vital though that is. Many aspirations and many discoveries of spiritual truth point to the same centre—the revelation in act.

To another aspect of the theme I can make only a passing allusion. How is Christ's coming, how is Christ's Kingdom related to what we sometimes regard as our secular interests, particularly to art and science? We shall, I think, all feel at times that in the world of Biblical thought, art and science are inadequately prized. Perhaps this is even truer of the New Testament than of the Old Testament because the this-worldly emphasis of the Old Testament is lost for the New Testament in the nearer prospect of the opening heavens. Perhaps the Christian Church has allowed the wonder of redemption to overshadow the wonder of creation too deeply. There is a good paragraph on this in the report of the Churches' Commission on the era of atomic power. "The Church has been so preoccupied with its message of sin and redemption that it has given far too little thought to the place of man's creative activity in God's purpose for the world. We need a wholly fresh interpretation of

the doctrine of creation and of man's co-operation in God's creative work. Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr has maintained in his Gifford Lectures that the humanist movement which began with the Renaissance has had a profounder insight into the inexhaustible potentialities of human existence than either Roman Catholicism or Protestantism, and that what is now required is a synthesis between those insights and the Christian view of the world. We need a clearer pattern of the vocation of the characteristically Christian scientist, for whom his devotion to his scientific calling is re-defined and illuminated by his Christian faith. That man seems now to have the power to prolong or to bring to an end the existence of the human race on earth gives a new urgency to a proper understanding of that fateful freedom in the light of Christian faith."

In a measure, this revelation of the values of both science and art depends on the change in our time-perspective. If the early Church thought of the interval between the resurrection and the Parousia in decades rather than in centuries, we may have to think in millennia rather than in centuries. It cannot but affect the manner in which we estimate the importance and possibilities of life here and now. The completion of man's domination over nature may be a condition precedent to the culmination of history, just as the completion of the Church's task to evangelise the world may be.

H. G. WOOD.

THEOLOGY AND ESCHATOLOGY

I

A CENTURY ago Johann von Hofmann wrote his two great works: *Weissagung und Erfullung* (1841) and *Der Schriftbeweis* (1852). Here, for the first time since Augustine,* eschatology is taken as a basic principle of all biblical thought, and is systematically and carefully worked out. The result is the fundamental reshaping of Christian dogmatics as historical theology.

Hofmann was much listened to and much praised. But nobody has really grasped the revolutionary range of his conception of the history of redemption. His followers have engaged themselves with his teaching on regeneration and the certainty of faith. His opponents have struck at the mechanical biblicism of his treatment of prophetic proofs.

II

Because of this there now began a new epoch in biblical studies which Hofmann had never suspected—research into the history of religions. It opened the way to an absolutely new appreciation of biblical eschatology. The pioneer work of the "history of religions" school was Gunkel's *Creation and Chaos in the Beginning and the End*. The title itself betrays the fundamental idea of the book—

* *De Civitate Del.*

that biblical eschatology is no isolated complex of images, but rather an integrating element in an historical over-all view of truth, which includes at once both Beginning and End of time. Where must one look for the beginning of this thought? That was the question in this field of study. Gunkel thought primarily of the Babylonian texts, which were then only of recent discovery. Others turned to Iranian sources. Thus for the first time one learned to appreciate biblical thought in contact with, and contrast to, the great religions of antiquity. Now, for the first time, it was understood that, basically, there were in ancient times only two religions which took time and history seriously into account and which therefore had a genuine eschatology. They were the Iranian and the biblical religions.

Meanwhile, Albert Schweitzer discovered the decisive part played by the eschatological element in the synoptics. Others carried his thoughts further and recognised the importance of eschatology in the Christology of the early Church: Jesus Himself appears here as the eschatological event, as the fulfilment of the Old Testament promises, as the realisation of the pre-Christian hope of the future, the ancient certainty of salvation in general. Thus the early Church's Gospel of Christ entered into open competition with, and opposition to, the Advent-message of the contemporary Emperor-religion. Who is it who should come? The Emperor or the Christ? In what lay the hope of the world? In the Gospel or in the political religion?

Paul also appeared in a new light. The old questions about his conception of the future and the stages of development in his expectation of the Parousia withdrew before new and more fundamental questioning. Paul's conclusions were examined and it was recognised that here a teleological concept is at work. This permeates all problems concerning the theology of creation, legalistic theories, Christology, the relation between God and evil, and reaches its consequence and completion in Pauline eschatology.

A new appreciation of late-Jewish and early Christian apocalyptic appeared. Apocalyptic had once been looked upon as a mixture of speculation and over-heated futuristic phantasies. Now it was recognised that, in this seeming jumble of strange views, a hidden logic appeared. Behind and above all stood a theological world-picture in which not only Beginning and End had a firm place, but also God and Anti-God, Heaven and Earth, World Ruler and Final Redeemer. The three chief forms of the expectation of the End at the time of Jesus Christ were noted: the political messianic hope in the Son of David; the priestly theological hope in the Anointed One of the house of Aaron; the transcendent hope of the future in the Son of Man, who would appear with the power of God and renew all creation. Here, in apocalyptic, is the ascendancy of biblical thought, of the temporal, historical understanding of the world—and this in spite of all the oriental foreign matter which was absorbed and thoroughly assimilated.

III

Biblical-theological study has formulated the consequences of the results of the research into the history of religions.

There have always been N.T. manuals which have traced the progress of Christian theology from Jesus, through the early Christian community and Paul to the unfolding of the Johannine theology. We have such manuals today, and it is only to be desired that, in the light of new researches, the different phases of development, the evidences of apostasy and backsliding in the history of early Christian theology will be worked out more clearly than has been done hitherto.

It may well be asked whether another question needs to be faced in New Testament theology, viz., what theological link, involved in this presentation, binds together New Testament thought. The need to think this through is real, and New Testament scholarship owes this service both to theology proper and to the practical work of preaching and teaching.

In this way the decisive place and function of eschatology in the New Testament comes clearly to light. The ideas concerning the specific time and duration of the last events are admittedly varied in the different groups and periods of the early Church. But there is in the New Testament a very significant agreement concerning two truths:

1. All pre-Christian history is preparatory history for the Christ-event.
2. All history since then is preparatory history for the parousia of Jesus Christ.

IV

The Holy Scriptures are the regulative standard of our theological thought and also for our eschatological thought. Hence the work of New Testament scholarship cannot be without interest for the dogmatic work of Protestant churches. No one would expect systematic theology to accept the more or less positive results of work in New Testament research without criticism and alteration. The work of New Testament theology must be purely a question in Dogmatics—nothing more and certainly nothing less.

The times of a complete union in one person of the work of both the New Testament and the Dogmatics scholar are gone. Today nobody asks New Testament scholarship to make proposals to Dogmatics for the renewal of New Testament eschatology and historical theology. However, at one point at least both spheres of study make very promising contact with each other—in their common effort for the clarification and new appreciation of linear thought. Greek thought is circular thought. At best, it yields only a “salvation event”, but never a “salvation history”. Biblical thought is linear thought. It gives genuine historical theology. Here and here alone is authentic eschatology. *Scriptura Regina!*

What can we begin to do with the eschatological message of the New Testament in the practical work of our churches and the crisis of our century?

Three books on the theme seem to me to be symptomatic of the spiritual situation of our day: C. H. Dodd's *Parables of the Kingdom*; Julius Fucik's *Report from the Gallows*, which originated in 1943 and appeared, after the war, in some twelve languages; Samuel Beckett's drama, *Waiting for Godot*, which has been produced many hundreds of times.

Dodd opened the way to the acknowledgement that for Jesus Himself the decisive thing was not the future but rather the present—His present epiphany—the fulfilled promise and the richly-promising fulfilment.

The Czech Communist leader, Julius Fucik, was arrested in April, 1942. In the Spring of 1943 he wrote his private diary in the Gestapo prison in Prague. He was executed in September, 1943. In May, 1945, his wife, Gusta Fucik, was released from the Ravensbrück concentration camp, discovered her husband's diary and arranged for its publication—a profoundly gripping testimony to political eschatology—written in prison, unrevoked in the torture chamber, sealed on the gallows by death.

The Irishman, Samuel Beckett, has lived for many years in Paris and appears in the drama of *Godot* as the spokesman for all those who, with complete illusions of the future, have broken away from yesterday and today, from left and from right. Monsieur Godot is the mysterious stranger who is always on the point of coming, but who never does come. Already they have waited long enough, but still they only ask themselves whether they should give up today or wait until tomorrow.

Once again, what has the Church of Christ to say to the men of this generation after the eschatological self-deliberation of the last hundred years? Three things, I think.

First: the world-event is not an irremediable *Circulus Vitiosus*, but rather an historical motion with line, direction and goal, happening but once, irrevocable, irresistible and full of promise.

Second: the decisive event in this movement is the revelation, in history and message of Jesus Christ, of a humanity which is not of this world, and which, moreover, beyond itself points to a kingdom which is not of this world.

Third: the historical appearance of Jesus Christ is the starting point of all history of the End. The Church of Christ does not know what will come. It does know and does proclaim Who will come. And she is sure that, in all the dialectic of illusions of the future and hopelessness, in all the struggle of the *Civitas Dei* against the *Civitas Diaboli*, in all the history of the revelation of God and the antagonism to God, humanity and inhumanity, Jesus Christ is already coming. The crises and catastrophes of history are the apocalyptic travail of the Messiah. For Jesus Christ is not only the One Who will come.

He is, indeed, the One Who is coming. Time is on His side. Because the very humanity which has revealed itself in Him is, in the end, the only historical reality, having both promise and future.

ETHELBERT STAUFFER.

THE SCOTTISH REPORT ON BAPTISM

SO much has been said and written about the Scottish Report on Baptism that the majority of us must have had our curiosity sufficiently aroused to buy a copy. Since this is as serious an attack on believers' baptism as has ever been made, we ought to be sufficiently concerned to study it. The challenge is thrown out on the second page, where we read: "If anyone can show from Holy Scripture that anything erroneous is contained herein, they promise them that they will either prove from Holy Scripture that the criticism is itself erroneous or amend what is amiss to bring it into conformity with the Word of God".

In order to help and encourage a detailed study of what this Report has to say, the Editorial Board has asked for a Study Outline. The purpose of the notes which follow, therefore, is to pin-point some of the more important matters raised in these pages, and to draw attention to some of the places where relevant material may be found.

I. BACKGROUND

A certain amount of background is essential to a full appreciation of this approach to baptism, and would-be students should first acquaint themselves with the arguments in the following works: W. F. Flemington, *The New Testament Doctrine of Baptism*, 1948; H. G. Marsh, *The Origin and Significance of New Testament Baptism*, 1941; K. Barth, *The Teaching of the Church Regarding Baptism*, 1948; O. Cullmann, *Baptism in the New Testament*, 1950. Of these, the most unusual approach, so far as Baptists is concerned, is that of Cullmann, and helpful comments on his work are to be found in H. H. Rowley, "Recent Foreign Theology", in *The Expository Times*, lxi, (1949-50), pp. 29 f., and in E. A. Payne, "Professor Oscar Cullman on Baptism", in *The Baptist Quarterly*, xiv, (1951-52), pp. 59 ff. Two useful summaries of the present position in baptismal theology are to be found in J. R. Nelson, *The Realm of Redemption*, 1951, pp. 120-141, and H. H. Rowley, *The Unity of the Bible*, 1953, pp. 149-190, both of which are well documented for the guidance of those who wish to explore certain specific avenues of thought. Books and articles referred to subsequently are intended to supplement these mentioned here and are not alternatives.

II. THE RELEVANCE OF THE BIBLE (pp. 1-5)

(a) In pp. 1-5 of the Report it is claimed that its conclusions are based on an exposition of the New Testament, as modern scholars are now able to read it, but this assumption needs careful examination in the light of some examples of exegesis to which we are treated;

e.g., Acts ii, 38 (p. 20); Matt. xviii, 6 (pp. 22 f.); Matt. xviii, 3, and parallel passages (p. 25).

(b) Two other points also arise:

- (i) Granting that there is today a new emphasis on the unity of the Bible, does this Report give sufficient place to the diversity which exists within that unity? Cf. Ilico's suggestion that the New Testament has been sieved through the tidy minds of Scottish theologians. (*The British Weekly*, 3rd November, 1955.) See also H. H. Rowley, *The Unity of the Bible*, pp. 1-29.
- (ii) How far can the issue concerning baptism be settled by reference to the Bible alone, and how far must the question of tradition be brought in? See F. W. Dillistone, *Scripture and Tradition*, 1955, and O. Cullmann, *The Early Church*, 1956, pp. 59-99.

III. THE INSTITUTION OF BAPTISM (pp. 5-10)

(a) Baptists do not easily associate baptism and Pentecost. How far would we agree, therefore, with the view that Christ's injunction to baptise is to be understood in the light of Pentecost? Or with the suggestion that the corporate baptism of the Church stands behind the baptism of every individual, as a result of which a man's baptism is his new birth? (p. 32). If we accept this view, what do we then make of the sentence: "After the baptism of Christ that is the norm for all baptism, so that baptism into Christ is also baptism which involves the coming of the Spirit from the Father in the name of the Son" (p. 6).

See J. R. Nelson, *The Realm of Redemption*, pp. 37-66; F. C. Syngé, "The Holy Spirit and the Sacraments", in *The Scottish Journal of Theology*, 6, (1953), pp. 65-76; P. W. Evans, "The Baptismal Commission in Matthew xxviii, 19", in *The Baptist Quarterly*, xv, (1953-54), pp. 19-28; J. M. Ross, "The Theology of Baptism in Baptist History", in *The Baptist Quarterly*, xv, (1953-54), pp. 100-112; E. A. Payne, "Baptists and the Laying on of Hands", in *The Baptist Quarterly*, xv, (1953-54), pp. 203-215; A. Gilmore, "Some Recent Trends in the Theology of Baptism", in *The Baptist Quarterly*, xvi, (1955-56), pp. 2-9.

(b) We need also to determine the meaning of the baptism of Jesus in Jordan, and on the Cross. What is the relationship between these acts and our baptism?

See F. E. Lownds, "The Baptism of our Lord", in *The Expository Times*, lxii, (1950-51), pp. 274-275; C. E. B. Cranfield, "The Baptism of Our Lord—a Study of St. Mark i, 9-11", in *The Scottish Journal of Theology*, 8, (1955), pp. 53-63.

IV. BAPTISM IN THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH (pp. 10-18)

(a) "The One Spirit operates in history through the One Body which is the Church" (p. 10). We must determine how exclusive this statement is intended to be, and how far we agree with it. Does the One Spirit work *only* through the One Body, or does He sometimes work independently? If the Spirit works *only* through the One Body, how are we to interpret that "One Body"?

(b) Consideration should be given to the *relevance* of circumcision, proselyte baptism and John's baptism, plus the whole question of the Old Testament background and the Jewish antecedents. The modern tendency, illustrated by this Report, is to take too much for granted. The facts should be checked, and compared with some assumptions here made.

See F. Gavin, *The Jewish Antecedents of the Christian Sacraments*, 1928; H. H. Rowley, "The Origin and Meaning of Baptism", in *The Baptist Quarterly*, xi, (1942-45), pp. 309-320; H. Martin, "Baptism and Circumcision", in *The Baptist Quarterly*, xiv, (1951-52), pp. 213-221.

(c) Baptism is "an ordinance commanded by Christ in which He acts supernaturally by the power of His Spirit" (p. 17). To what extent do we believe that in baptism "something happens", and to what extent is faith a necessary condition of salvation? (p. 18).

This section should be compared with the Report's comments on Rom. vi, where it is stated that Rom. vi is "not a comparison between what happens in baptism symbolically and what happened to Christ in historical fact, but a comparison between what happened to Christ in fact and what in actual fact happens to us in baptism" (p. 37). If we say that baptism is more than an ordinance and a symbol (cf. H. W. Robinson, *Baptist Principles*, 1925, pp. 13 ff.; A. C. Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists*, 1947, pp. 268 ff.), we must go on to determine how much more.

V. CHILDREN IN BAPTISM (pp. 19-29)

(a) Distinguish carefully between a view of baptism which makes age the criterion, and one which puts all the emphasis on faith (p. 19). When we make repentance and faith the pre-conditions of baptism, we are then called upon to define our terms.

This problem should be related to what this Report says about "the response of faith" (p. 18), and the necessity of faith (pp. 49-50). Can we accept the idea of a faith which follows baptism rather than precedes it? If we cannot, do we then say that faith is given in the act of baptism, or do we say that faith precedes baptism? If the latter, is faith complete without baptism?

N.B. The danger of systematising the actions of Christ in baptism (referred to in the last sentence of p. 52, para. 3). Can this charge be justifiably brought against our understanding of the rite?

See H. Vogel, "The First Sacrament: Baptism", in *The Scottish Journal of Theology*, 7, (1954), pp. 41-58 (esp. pp. 51 ff.); A. Gilmore, "Some Recent Trends in the Theology of Baptism", in *The Baptist Quarterly*, xv, (1953-54), pp. 311-318, 338-345.

(b) What are we to make of the suggestion that the whole of the Early Church was unanimous about infant baptism for centuries, and the idea that believers' baptism exclusive of infants is entirely modern? (p. 20). This calls for investigation, and we must do our own thinking if we are to prove that it is wrong.

See A. H. Newman, *A History of Anti-paedobaptism*, 1897; H. W. Robinson, *Baptist Principles*, pp. 42 ff.; Wm. Robinson, *Infant Baptism Today*, 1948, pp. 7 ff.

(c) The section, "Children in the Gospels", ought to lead us to a further evaluation of these passages, as well as to a consideration of their relevance to our services of infant dedication (pp. 22-25). We might then examine the next section (pp. 25-29), with a view to determining the place of children in relation to God on our view of believers' baptism. (Cf. H. H. Rowley, "The Origin and Meaning of Baptism", in *The Baptist Quarterly*, xi, (1942-45), pp. 319-320.)

VI. APOSTOLIC INTERPRETATION (pp. 29-46)

(a) Most Baptists would agree with the general principle that baptism has to do with our incorporation into the Church (p. 33), but with what differences from the writers of this Report?

See C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, 1932, pp. 86-88; H. W. Robinson, *Baptist Principles*, p. 24; P. T. Forsyth, *The Church and the Sacraments*, 1917, pp. 187, 189-190; R. C. Walton, *The Gathered Community*, 1946, pp. 31, 167; L. G. Champion, *The Church of the New Testament*, 1951, p. 67.

(b) "Certainly it is total immersion that supplies the ordinance with its most vivid representation" (p. 46). This gladdens the Baptist eye, but the Report nevertheless declares that both immersion and affusion were practised in New Testament times. We ought therefore to face certain questions: How far is our present mode of baptism tied to our interpretation of baptism? On what grounds do we defend immersion? Can we accept the possibility of both immersion and affusion in our churches? (Cf. H. W. Robinson, *Baptist Principles*, pp. 14 ff.)

VII. DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM (pp. 46-54)

Most of the points in this section have already been dealt with. These pages, therefore, should now be viewed as a whole in the light of what has gone before.

VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

In addition to the books and articles referred to, the reader's attention is directed to D. R. Griffiths, "Baptism in the New Testament", in *The Fraternal*, October, 1953, pp. 21-28.

Since the Report has been followed by several reviews and articles, perhaps it would help if these were given in conclusion. They are: G. R. Beasley-Murray, "The Church of Scotland and Baptism", in *The Fraternal*, January, 1956, pp. 7-10; R. L. Child, "The Church of Scotland on Baptism", in *The Baptist Quarterly*, xvi, (1955-56), pp. 244-251; J. K. S. Reid, in *The Expository Times*, lxxvii, (1955-56), p. 202; E. A. Payne, "A Scottish Report on Baptism", in *The Baptist Times*, 20th October, 1955; R. Guy Ramsay, "Baptism and the Church of Scotland", in *The Baptist Times*, 14th June, 1956; Ilico, "The Sacrament of Baptism", in *The British Weekly*, 3rd and 10th November, 1955.

A. GILMORE.

MINISTERIAL SETTLEMENT

DURING the last thirty years ministerial settlement has evolved into a triangular relationship of Area Superintendents, Churches and Ministers. The introduction of men and Churches through the Superintendents is an accepted feature of settlement. Evidence, however, continues to show that in the process of ministers changing pastorates and churches settling new ministers there are still unsatisfactory factors that result in definite loss of spiritual power and vision of God's purpose. There are long interregnums, indefinite waiting periods for contact with churches, preaching with a view, disturbed fellowships, sudden decisions, drawn-out negotiations, and settlements that do not fulfil expectations of men or churches. Can we create a more effective method of ministerial settlement? What is the best way to approach a settlement of pastor and people?

Usually the church looks for a man, the right man, expecting all will be well after such a choice. The Superintendent may ask: "What kind of a man do you want?" The man looking at the church may assess it as friendly and co-operative. Supposing this initial point of view could be altered. And as a first practical change, instead of looking for a man or at the people, let all eyes be turned on the actual condition of the church. Instead of the question: "What sort of man do you want?", ask this one: "What sort of work needs doing in this church during the next few years, in order to fulfil God's intention for it?" No church is perfect, none is hopeless. Every church is in a definite spiritual and material condition, which can be understood in the light of God's purpose. Every church is in a condition of opportunity or need, which when clearly seen calls for a definite constructive piece of work, such as: Teacher Training, The Inner Life, Bible Knowledge, Leadership Training, Directed Evangelism, Youth Work, Extension Work, Service to the Neighbourhood, Ministry of Healing, Factory Witness, Relationships with other Churches, Administrative Changes. The "mind of Christ" can indicate that one or more of these conditions calls for the creative activity of the whole fellowship.

Ministers know they are committed to the preaching of the Word and the care of people. Generally they fulfil these offices as faithfully as possible, but besides having capacity and training for these essentials of their work most men, while not desiring to be specialists, have aptitudes and concern for some of the specific features of church work just mentioned. If a man knew that a church approaching him about the pastorate could state its need of specific policy, the initial mental attitude would be different. Possibilities in any church are not infinite. They are limited, specific, and inherent in the existing conditions of the fellowship and its immediate environment. Though preaching and pastoral work will always be the essentials of our ministry, it is by these definite acts of collective

creativeness that the church reveals the Kingdom of God to people around it. A clearly stated project of this kind could be evidence of the nature of God's guidance in changing pastorates.

If the deacons of a church are faced with this alternative question: "What do you want doing?", they may not easily grasp its import. But if explained in terms of trying to see clearly what God wants them to do for His Kingdom in their own church, they will, given a little time and prompting, be able to find a tentative answer along these lines, which are actual examples from experimental approaches: "We are losing the sense of church consciousness"; "Our young people are ready for intensive training for leadership"; "We are not touching the people round our church"; "Members of our church are now living a distance away, and we wonder whether we should think about moving the church".

When the deacons have seen what needs to be done they should take the question with the answer to the Church meeting. There, as the members see that among several real spiritual jobs to be done one or two will stand out clearly for priority, the church could come to the frame of mind where it was able to say: "it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us that we should begin this work". With such an outlook and decision the deacons could then say to the Superintendent: "We want a minister, and we want him to help us with this special work. . . . Can you put us in touch with someone suitable?" The Superintendents are already in a position to do this. Their introductory function would become more definite. The contact with a man need no longer be: "I have sent your name to the following church". Why not begin with an interview between a man and two representatives from the church? This is a second practical change to be commended. The approach could be: "The church at N.M. are needing a minister and have asked for someone who could undertake to do . . . would you be willing to meet representatives to look into the situation?" The first contact would be in relation to a definite task to be mutually considered, and one to which the church has already committed itself freely. In such a meeting, allowing time for an uncommitted friendly approach, it would become clear whether the matter could be taken further by mutual consent. If not, it ends there, with no remaining uncertainties.

It is worth noting how such a procedure has a different emotional content from that raised by our present methods. At each stage there is a conscious approach to a definite question. Relationships with the church become possible but the church remains undisturbed.

In our usual practice of "preaching with a view" the emotions of church and minister are disturbed irrationally, often strongly, sometimes conflictively, and without any awareness of the real situation of God's will in the process. The evocative cause of a decision may be something irrelevant, from a way of speaking, or the

lovely children's address, or an obscure urgency, not to miss this man. It is often like love at first sight. Man and church seem made for each other, but neither parties have seen each other in the situation where they will have to live and work together. It does not seem in keeping with the character of God that He should bring two parties together to serve His purpose and yet leave them unconscious of what it is He wants them to do. This suggested alternative approach begins and continues in a relationship consciously established on the basis of a mutual concern for some work which has already been accepted as God's will for His people. If the interviews end the approach, no harm has been done to the heart of the fellowship, and no element of rejection has affected minister or deacons.

As a third stage, where ministers and deacons have recognised a unity of purpose and mind, the deacons could now report to the church members, giving the substance of the conversations that have led them to commend N.M. for the church's consideration. This could take the form of the man meeting the members in fellowship on a Saturday evening, then worshipping under his leadership on the Sunday. There may be no way at present of effecting the settlement of ministers into new pastorates without this day of "Services with a view". If, however, the approach is along the lines suggested, the preaching of the Word falls into place as the expression of an already created fellowship with the minister. He is not on view, but has become the spokesman of God for the gathered community. He is not preaching to see if the church likes him, but as one already committed within the larger fellowship of the denomination to foster the conscious purpose of God within that church during that day. If the declared intention of the church is God's purpose, then the call is from Him to minister and people. The reason for the call has been present in the minds of all from the first contact. Preaching and pastoral work will fall within the area of a mutually accepted vision of work to be done together. Because of this looking together at the situation, the invitation will seem natural, yet truly to be of God's appointing. Even if something should arise which clearly hinders a final invitation of the church, or precludes further consideration of the pastorate by the minister, it could be faced in the same way as the other stages. The experience could be enriching and creative even if not consummated by a settlement. This would be an improvement on the unsettlement of men and churches through our present blinkered approach.

If a ministerial settlement ensues, the relations of church and minister will be governed by the vision of God's purpose which has led them to covenant together in His service. Out of this shared obedience the fellowship will be led from one enterprise to another. By the time the first agreed period of service is drawing to its close the Holy Spirit will make clear to church and minister either that they should continue together or that the work for which they covenanted with one another has been accomplished. The

latter situation needs further thought. The termination of a pastorate is as important as the settlement.

To sum up: How can minister, church and Baptist Union come to an open and conscious concord in this vital aspect of the Ministry, so that all can say: "This seems good to the Holy Spirit and to us?"

V. GREENWOOD.

THE WIDER CIRCLE

The *N.Z. Baptist* goes all out in support of the Tithing Campaign now being pressed upon the churches: a movement gaining much ground also in Australia. The Self-Denial effort which brought in £337 in 1916 when first launched, last year resulted in £20,000. N.Z. Baptists are a generous folk. D. C. Rogers, late of Southall, Middlesex, and L. W. Matthews of South Africa received a warm welcome to their churches.

The R.C. Church is using its vast influence to secure State aid for its day schools. Our Baptist friends are putting up stiff opposition.

The *S.A. Baptist* in a recent issue gives a most interesting picture of Rhodesia and a sketch of Baptist work in that vast area. Thanks to E. Loewy for a copy of his Address on "The Jewish People", delivered at the last Assembly.

J. L. Gartry, in sending a generous donation, tells of the continued and serious illness of Mrs. Gartry. Our friends have our warm sympathy. On completing their training at Spurgeon's Messrs. Kromberg and Winter are proceeding to South Africa.

The impending removal of Graham Swift of Gateshead means a loss to our home ministry but a corresponding gain to South Africa. He takes up the pastorate at Wale Street, Cape Town. We wish him and the two younger men every blessing.

We rejoice with Hugh Graham on the great success attending the 4th Anniversary of his ministry in Port Elizabeth. The appeal made at the evening gathering resulted in the magnificent sum of £11,000 towards the cost of a new church.

CONGO REVISITED

CONGO has attracted attention for many years. Its strategic importance, vast resources, remarkable development and the peaceful prosperity of its people make it a country of unusual interest.

A visitor arriving at the capital would be amazed to see the fine city he had entered. In Léopoldville there are twenty buildings of from ten to fourteen stories, and more are in the course of erection. Some are business premises, but most are apartment houses and luxury apartments at that. The city is ever extending its boundaries. Today the African population is 300,000: it is not expected to stabilise until the half-million mark is reached. New suburbs are being built

and more planned. Léopoldville, already the largest African city between Cairo and Johannesburg, is destined to become a great and important city in Africa and the world. The phenomenal developments are by no means confined to the capital: at Stanleyville and other urban centres, in fact all over the Colony, there is abounding activity. Everywhere one breathes an atmosphere of optimism, and the great public works in the construction of roads and bridges and large hydro-electric installations are ample evidence of the confidence of the authorities in the future.

Congo is enormously rich in its natural resources: in the eastern half of the Colony there are minerals—gold, copper, diamonds, tin, cobalt, manganese and uranium ore; in the western half are vegetable products—palm oil, palm kernels, rubber, coffee, cocoa, seisal, etc. Production everywhere is high: exports are impressive and there is a large favourable trade balance of 12 million pounds sterling. The prosperity which has become so happy a feature of the economy of Congo bids fair to continue.

Socially the African population is on the up-grade. Inevitably the rapid drift from the village to the urban centre has created a grave housing problem. This is courageously faced by the authorities and much is being done to provide proper accommodation for the townfolk. Great efforts are being made to improve village life; housing and water supply are major concerns of the administration: in some areas wells have been sunk and electric pumps installed to supply villagers with clean water in abundance.

Social services are generous: medical service is provided for the entire population, though such service is not evenly distributed over the entire colony. Private employers are obliged to provide medical care for their employees. Government hospitals are to be found in the administrative posts and village dispensaries in charge of trained African personnel in the rural areas: some of the best are manned by Mission-trained Africans and supervised by the missionary doctor.

Recently large-scale Government education, primary and post-primary, has been established. Government schools on the pattern of the *écoles communales* in Belgium have been opened in large urban centres. The education in such schools is secular, but religious instruction figures in the official curriculum and R.C. priests and Protestant missionaries have right of entry during normal school hours to give these courses. In all post-primary Government schools such religious instruction must be given in French or Flemish, and for such service the Government pay a generous honorarium. Mission schools—R.C. and Protestant—are an important part of the educational system and it is highly probable these will continue to function at least for some years, although it is possible education on the higher levels will increasingly become governmental rather than missionary; always, however—provided the Belgium outlook remains what it is today—with provision for religious instruction by R.C. and Protestant missionaries.

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

My dear friends,

Correspondence arriving at the office of the Insurance Company indicates that, apart from exceptional cases, full-time Church caretakers are rapidly becoming extinct. Fifty years ago the deacons of the Church of which I was a member advertised for a caretaker at wages of 25s. per week and received over twenty applications. Today, living accommodation and very much more substantial wages would have to be provided. Not all Churches have the necessary financial resources.

These changed conditions have brought out the devotion of members, for I doubt if ever before was so much voluntary *domestic* help given. We cannot praise too highly the men and women who labour faithfully in their spare time that the Sanctuary may be prepared for worship.

Remembering this, I have been deeply grieved to read some correspondence which has been placed before me on my return from holiday. Two or three ladies were giving voluntary service in cleaning a Church hall when one of them fell and broke a bone. The accident was not due to anyone's negligence, and there was no defect in the premises. It was just a most unfortunate occurrence. The deacons enquired as to whether any payment could be made under the Public Liability Policy—but such a policy deals with *legal* liability and in this case there was not the slightest *legal* liability on the part of the Church.

It was to meet just such a case that four years ago we brought out the Voluntary Workers Policy and communicated with every Church which was insured with us for Public Liability. Had the Church in question effected a Policy, the lady would receive £3 per week during the period of her disability, but unfortunately *the deacons decided not to insure*. Now they are worried about their moral responsibility to their fellow member.

I would stress most urgently the necessity for all Churches to hold a Voluntary Workers Policy. Why not read this letter at your next deacons' meeting?

With all good wishes for the coming months,

Yours sincerely,

SEYMOUR J. PRICE.

Cultural, recreational and social centres for women and men are to be found in the large cities, also splendid sports grounds and swimming pools, at no charges for the African population.

Sometimes questions are asked concerning the political aspirations of the Africans in the Colony. Personally I have not seen anything which suggests unrest, though with the large number of Africans reading journals from the neighbouring French, British and Portuguese colonies, and the continual coming and going of Africans to and from Congo, it would be folly were the government in Congo to ignore the need of giving the Africans an increasing share in the councils and administration of their country. For years past the attitude of the authorities towards the African has been one of respect and of sincere willingness to serve his best interest. This attitude was once paternal, but for many years now paternalism has given place to co-operation. Africans are invited to official receptions; and nominated to the Governor-General's Council—a nominated parliament in miniature; Africans publish their own newsprints and are allowed considerable liberty to express their views, and, before the law, Africans are definitely the equal of the European. Many Africans hold important posts and draw handsome salaries, and for everybody, including villagers, there is a greater possibility of a higher standard of life than ever before. This is not to say that everyone is satisfied and that all is well. Congo is a vast country; the people are scattered all over the country, which makes it difficult to spread the blessing of prosperity evenly everywhere. There are still poor people and sick folk, and many are under-nourished, but there has been and still is a tremendous move upwards socially and economically, which might be even more marked were there also a move upwards morally and spiritually, which in my view is not so certain.

And what of the Church? Is progress keeping pace with the advance socially and economically? It was not possible to visit much of the B.M.S. field. The work for which I was sent to Congo began at Stanleyville and from there took me to the N.E. frontier near the Soudan, then southwards along the Uganda frontier, and thence along by the great lakes—also a ten-day visit to Ruanda Urundi.

Much the larger part of this immense field is occupied by American missions; there are also missions from Scandinavia, including a Danish Baptist mission which, although one of the smaller and by no means opulent, is doing the best work of any mission in that particular area.

The three British missions visited impressed one by the soundness and strength of their service. The Heart of Africa mission is doing a grand work. One saw, as was to be expected, a strong emphasis on Bible teaching along fundamentalist lines, and on prayer; in addition, the mission is giving useful education to the young people and doing excellent work in producing, printing and publishing literature. The Unevangelised Fields mission, the near neighbour

of our B.M.S. mission at Yakusu and Stanleyville, works on much the same lines as the H.A.M.

The visit to the Ruanda Urundi British mission—a branch of the C.M.S. and in the Kampala diocese—calls for a special word. Eight stations were visited, including the headquarters where the Bishop lives and where a theological school preparing candidates for the priesthood forms a major part of the missionary service. Each of these stations was a tiny piece of rural England, with grassland and woodland and simple cottage homes. The simplicity of the buildings, including the cathedral and hospital, was quite impressive, as also was the culture and evangelical fervour of the missionaries. The missionaries are determined to live close to the people. They have done a big work in the wide area, won a large following, translated the Bible, and have ordained a number of Africans to the priesthood. The Bible Society secretary and myself met the ordinands and had the privilege of addressing them in session. Some were quite elderly, having already rendered twenty-five years' service in various capacities, which fact indicates that so far ordination has been reserved to stable, well-tried Christian men whose Christian standing and character outmatched their academic preparation.

It was a new experience to be present and to take part in worship services at three Pentecostal mission stations. The days spent with the Assemblies of God mission were full of interest, but the excitement generated by hectic hymn-singing and the strangeness of having the whole congregation all praying audibly together and gesticulating as the tides of emotion rose raised some questions. What this adds up in terms of progress in the Church is difficult to say.

Throughout Congo there is a larger number of missions from America than from any other country. There was a time when the B.M.S. was the leading Society, that day is past and the initiative has passed to America. With their warm evangelical spirit and their vast resources in personnel and finance this was inevitable and in many ways augurs well for the future of all missionary service. Nevertheless there is need for watchful care. The growth of missionary educational institutions should not be allowed to get out of hand, nor the rapid increase in the Church to lower the standards of Church membership, nor the emphasis in Bible teaching to fall too heavily on "special" views of parts of the Scriptures, notably in the books of Daniel and Revelation. One other matter raises a somewhat delicate issue. Colleagues from the States are extraordinarily devoted, and free from ostentation or suggestion of colour prejudice. But the luxury of some American homes leaves a wide chasm between theirs and the homes of African church workers and teachers living on the same mission station. One asks whether this state of affairs can continue, and the answer is "not indefinitely". Some day our African friends will be more conscious of these differences: they may become envious and that will put a serious check on the influence

of the Gospel on their lives; even now the difference in the standard of living can tend to separate African from missionary; such separation can easily militate against the effectiveness of missionary service.

When all is said it is abundantly true that all missions have much to learn from one another. B.M.S. must strengthen its service in the cities and large centres. A strong evangelistic campaign carried through by missionaries and their African fellow-workers, and not by any special missionary, and a campaign to strengthen the inner life of the Church, are pressing needs of these times. To make this possible it is necessary to take most seriously the plea for increased missionary personnel on the ministerial level. Specialists in education and medicine are still in short supply, but even so the need for ministers is paramount. Were the writer a member of the Candidate Board at mission headquarters, in addition to the essential matters of Faith and Call to service, he would seek to require two qualifications for ministerial missionary service in Congo: Humility and Theology; humility, that will bring one into real sincere friendship with the people of Congo, and theology, that will guide one in teaching the essentials of Christian faith and N.T. Church order, things which are vital for the progress and welfare of the Church. The administration of the young Church and the teaching and training of Church workers of all grades is so important a task that the best theological preparation is not too much to require from ministerial missionary candidates for our Society.

W. D. REYNOLDS.

CHURCH UNION IN CEYLON

1. THE PRESENT POSITION

In Ceylon negotiations for the formation of a United Church have been in progress since 1934. The Churches taking part in the negotiations are the Anglicans, English Methodists, Presbyterians, English Baptists, and the Jaffna diocese of the Church of South India, which deals with the work developed by the American Congregationalists in the north of Ceylon. In 1955 a Scheme of Church Union was completed, and this has been referred to the governing bodies of the negotiating Churches. Proposals for minor alterations may be made, but no radical change is likely to be accepted.

Consideration by the constituent bodies is likely to be a long one. No definite answer can be given by the Anglicans until 1961, and in the meantime the Churches are seeking to get to know each other better by exchanges of pulpits, joint meetings of ministers, and Youth Camps. Synopses of the Scheme have been prepared in three languages, and will be distributed amongst the Church members, and the different denominations are preparing popular leaflets setting out the main points of the Scheme as it affects their own beliefs and practices.

2. SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE CEYLON SITUATION

It is over 450 years since the Portuguese landed in Ceylon. From the first they initiated a vigorous missionary policy. This was especially successful amongst the dwellers in the coastal areas. In spite of persecution when the Dutch defeated and expelled the Portuguese, the R.C. Church has remained strong, and today, of the 700,000 Christians in Ceylon, six out of every seven are Roman Catholics.

During the 150 years of Dutch occupation many political and social advantages rewarded those who brought their children to be baptised. As a result, when Dutch rule gave place to the British in 1794 the Dutch Reformed Church reported having 300,000 members. For some years the spiritual oversight of Protestant Christians was neglected, but from 1812 onwards Baptist, Wesleyan and Anglican (C.M.S.) missionaries were welcomed by the Governor and asked to develop educational work and to care for the Ceylonese Protestant community. But by that time, except for the small group of Dutch burghers, the Protestant Christian community had almost disappeared. Many had become Roman Catholics, and most others had lost their veneration of Christianity and had reverted to the blend of Buddhism and Animism that had been their real religion all along.

Having to start work anew, the missionaries of the three Societies early decided to work in close co-operation, not to overlap in their fields of work, and not to attempt to win over one another's adherents. This friendly spirit—so different from the state of affairs in some other mission fields—has gone on until the present day, and helps to explain the comparative ease with which Church Union negotiations in Ceylon have led to agreement.

One more aspect of the present situation in Ceylon is worthy of mention. Since the First World War a number of other denominations have started work in Ceylon. These include four Pentecostal groups, the Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Australian Tent Mission and the Brethren. None of these groups has joined the National Christian Council, and most seem more concerned with winning adherents from other Churches than with preaching to non-Christians. The Baptist Churches have suffered greatly from the depredations of these sheep stealers, and this has possibly caused them to draw closer to other Churches which observe the rules of œcumenicity, even though doctrinally they may be nearer to the position of the newcomers.

The multitude of different denominational labels is often a serious barrier to evangelistic work. For example, in Kandy, a town of 60,000 inhabitants, most of whom are not Christians, there are places of worship representing nine different denominations. It is not easy for a serious enquirer to choose between the rival claims of these different churches to his allegiance.

The Baptist Union Sunday School Adviser, Miss Dorothy J. Taylor, will be pleased to meet Sunday School leaders and teachers for week-end Conferences in local Churches and offer advice in any other way about children's and youth work.

If you would like to receive a regular bulletin containing articles, news items, book reviews and other material for leaders and teachers, please write for details to:—

*The Young People's Department,
The Baptist Church House, 4 Southampton Row, London, W.C.1*

Adventures in Christian Obedience

A HANDBOOK ON CITIZENSHIP

Edited by Clifford H. Cleal

Includes chapters on : The Christian Rule of Life
Work and Leisure
The Quest for Peace, etc.

Contributions by : Michael D. M. Franklin
Victor E. W. Hayward
John E. T. Hough
Edwin H. Robertson
H. Howard Williams

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*Further particulars of above from Christian Citizenship Department,
Baptist Church House, 4 Southampton Row, London, W.C.1*

THE SCHEME

The Scheme now completed owes much to the constitution of the Church of South India, but differs materially from it in two ways, as will be seen.

During the negotiations it was early decided that the basis of Union must be as wide as possible. Room must be left for each denomination to continue its own practices as regards worship and Church government as far as possible, even after entering the United Church. Unity rather than Uniformity was to be aimed at.

Before any sort of organic union could be accomplished, however, it was necessary to agree as to who would be recognised as full Church members, and how the Ministry could become acceptable to all the uniting bodies.

The Baptists had most difficulty over the first of these issues, the Anglicans over the second.

In England many of the Baptist Churches have open membership. The stress, in these Churches, is on a membership confined to those who by confession of faith in Christ and by the quality of their lives have demonstrated that they are living in the power of Christ. The rite of believer's baptism by immersion is not insisted on in such Churches, but is left to the personal decision of the members themselves.

This, however, had not been the tradition followed in most Baptist Churches in Ceylon. All except one have hitherto not given full membership to Christians transferred from other Churches, unless baptised as believers, and some had not even been prepared to admit Christians of other denominations to communion. This created an unpropitious atmosphere for negotiations with denominations practising infant baptism, but eventually it was agreed that subject to certain conscience clauses, Baptists would continue to practise the baptism of believers only within the new Church, and other denominations would continue with their old practice.

It has, however, been made clear that only those persons will receive full communicant membership in the new Church who have themselves confessed to their faith at a public service. The status of baptised infants is equated with that of those dedicated in infancy as those "whose nurture in the Christian way is a special care".

Although, in some ways, this position is similar to that in open membership Baptist Churches in England, in one important particular the position differs. In all Churches practising Baptist principles in the West there is the possibility of what other Churches would consider to be Anabaptism. That is, if the believer feels that the baptism given to him as an unconscious infant was inadequate, and not truly the rite in its New Testament significance, he is admitted to the ordinance of believer's baptism, which is nowadays almost always by immersion. The Baptist negotiators in Ceylon for long pressed that this be permitted in the United Church, but it was

opposed by all the other negotiating Churches and was not included in the scheme.

The official Précis of the Scheme contains the following two sections concerning Baptism and Initiation, which are worth quoting in full.

Baptism: A person may receive either sponsored baptism in infancy, or believer's baptism. Where parents do not wish their children to receive sponsored baptism, they shall bring them to a service of dedication. By such a service the Church recognises the place of the child within the Christian fellowship and emphasises the duty of parents and Church to bring up children so dedicated in the fear and nurture of the Lord.

Initiation: The full Service of Initiation of Believers shall include the following elements:—

- (i) Declaration of Christ's commission to the Church to baptise.
- (ii) Confession to God by the candidate of his sin.
- (iii) Witness before the congregation by the candidate of his belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.
- (iv) Assent by the candidate to the Apostles' Creed.
- (v) Baptism of the candidate with water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- (vi) Presentation of the candidate to the Bishop by the Presbyter, the Bishop thereupon laying his hands upon the candidate's head with the prayer that he receive power by the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- (vii) Welcoming the candidate into the fellowship of the congregation by the Presbyter, who will give him the right hand of fellowship.

But (vi) and (vii) can also constitute a separate Service of Confirmation to be held in the case of those who are admitted to communicant membership of the Church some time after they have received believer's baptism.

A person who has received sponsored baptism in infancy shall be admitted to communicant membership in a Service of Confirmation, such service to provide for a candidate to accept and ratify the vows made on his behalf when he was baptised. The other elements provided for in this Service of Confirmation will be those numbered (ii), (iii), (iv), (vi) and (vii) in the full Service of Initiation of Believers.

The Anglican difficulty relates to "orders". In the Lambeth Quadrilateral the four requirements which the Anglican Church has laid down as its minimum requirements for a United Church include the historical episcopate. The Anglicans in Ceylon have stood out for this, as they are doing in North India. They regard themselves as combining the Catholic and Protestant traditions, and one of the most important of their Catholic inheritances is the Historical Episcopate.

In the Church of South India this was accepted, but there was no attempt at re-ordination of the existing ministry of the uniting Churches, or even of a service that could be interpreted as adding episcopal ordination to that already received. This led to the Anglican Church's withholding full recognition to the C.S.I. until all the non-episcopally ordained ministry shall have died out. To avoid a similar situation in Ceylon the Anglicans have pressed for an initial service of consecration and re-commissioning for the new bishops, which is to be followed by services in each diocese, at which the bishop will lay hands on the heads of all the clergy and pray for blessing to follow their ministry within the United Church. Although the word re-ordination is studiously avoided, it is clear that, to the Anglican, this service is regarded as conveying whatever was required to make up episcopal ordination. The fact that the bishop may be an ex-Methodist, Presbyterian or even Baptist, and that his consecration may have been carried out by bishops of the Swedish or Syrian Churches, is not important, so long as they are recognised as belonging to an historical episcopate. In fact, it is intended to ask bishops of different traditions to take part in this service.

Another point in the Scheme which has perturbed the minds of some Baptists in the West is that celebration of communion is confined to ordained ministers. After correspondence with the B.M.S. Home Committee, the Baptist negotiators suggested that room be left for celebration by laymen, when no ordained minister is available. In India, with its vast distances and shortage of ministers, this was pressed because of the impossibility of covering all the village Churches with the existing staff of ordained men, as well as for theological reasons. In this small island, however, there is no fear of congregations going for long periods without a communion service. Also, as a matter of practice, even in the Baptist Churches in Ceylon, communion is hardly every administered by any except ordained ministers and those on probation. Further, as the Ceylon Baptist Council is much more centralised in its administration than are our Churches at home, both ministers and people are used to the idea of the Churches uniting to give authority to ministers to administer communion, rather than leaving each local Church to make this choice for itself. For these reasons the Baptist delegation did not really press the matter of lay celebration, especially in view of the willingness of all the other negotiating Churches to allow this.

From the above it will be seen that although the proposed new Church would give Baptists much freedom to worship in their own way, it will, when established, look more Anglican than Baptist. As there are 48,000 Anglican Communicant members in Ceylon and only 1,800 Baptists, this tendency may increase.

It must, however, be pointed out that there is widespread uneasiness in other Churches on the subject of infant baptism. Dr. D. T. Niles, in the sub-committee which drew up the final

draft of the section of the scheme which deals with Baptism, said: "Believer's baptism should be regarded as the Norm". The question that now remains in the minds of all Baptists is whether we are justified in staying out of the Scheme in order to continue our witness to our particular point of view, or whether this can best be done inside the United Church.

TO JOIN OR NOT TO JOIN?

(a) The first, and possibly the strongest, argument for uniting forces with other Christian Churches is the difficulty of carrying on evangelistic work when we are divided. Numbers of genuine enquirers have been put off by the divisions amongst the Churches and their rival claims.

(b) One observer of the religious situation in Ceylon writes: "These different sects of Christians, which often appear to the outsider to be mutually antagonistic, differ very slightly on small points of doctrine and the way they conduct religious worship. To a non-Christian inhabitant of Ceylon these different sects present a somewhat puzzling problem because they usually make more of their differences than their similarities." We must ask ourselves whether the points on which we differ really justify our staying outside.

In the Day of Judgment I cannot believe that we shall be asked whether we were baptised by immersion or were confirmed by a bishop. St. Paul says that the mystery which is the heart of the gospel is: "Christ in you the hope of glory", and we all have to admit that we have met many members of all denominations of whom we had to say that Christ was in them.

(c) N.T. teaching is clear on the desirability, indeed the *necessity*, of Christ's body not being divided. A Baptist missionary whom I heard say that the N.T. speaks often of Churches but never of The Church was very biased in his exegesis—yet this is the false point of view towards which many of us lean.

(d) I do not think that the issue of Baptism alone will prevent the Churches of the Ceylon Baptist Council from joining the United Church. The members of its delegation felt that the vital point was that only persons with a personal faith in Jesus Christ should be accepted as members, and this has been safeguarded in the scheme. For the rest, provided the ministry, organisation, forms of worship and sacraments lead the members into real union with Christ, they feel that there is room for a good deal of variety. People's temperament, upbringing and national and cultural backgrounds are such that some are brought closer to Christ by the simplicity of a Quaker service, and others by a service full of colour and ritual. It must be conceded by all unbiased observers that the average Indian and Ceylonese Christian prefers a service with more pageantry than those normally held in Baptist Churches. It will be helpful if, in association with the United Church, our Church services become more colourful, even if this is not in the Baptist tradition.

B. M. S.

The Officers of the B.M.S. are greatly encouraged by all the support so freely given by the Ministers of the Denomination. They rejoice with all friends of the Society in the continued generous response in candidates for service abroad, money, work, and prayer.

They would remind you, and themselves, of the Call of God through the very events of our times to "teach unceasingly and proclaim everywhere the Good News of Jesus Christ".

BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY

93 GLOUCESTER PLACE

LONDON, W.1

What some people are anxious about is the danger of the Sacerdotal idea triumphing over the Evangelical one. If increasing stress is to be laid on set forms of administering the Sacraments, if to be held to depend on valid ordination of the celebrant rather than on the faith of the recipient, and if the new Church is, in time, to imply that Salvation depends on the mediation of a Priest, then they feel that this is a denial of the teaching of the New Testament.

In Anglican Churches in Ceylon there has been a marked tendency towards High Church practices, and in some cases deliberate attempts have been made to force them on formerly Low Church parishes. It remains to be seen whether this tendency can be checked in the United Church.

(e) The Scheme is now before the Churches of the Ceylon Baptist Council for their consideration. They, knowing their own situation far better than the Churches of the West, have to come to a decision whether or not to join the United Church. They know the needs of their Churches, the environment in which they have to work, and the nature of the other negotiating bodies better than most Europeans. We can advise on theological grounds—from our point of view—but let us not take up the attitude that we are the ultimate arbiters of what is right and true, and that all who do not see with us are to be cast out. That has not been the main Baptist tradition in the past, although certain extreme elements within the denomination have at times attempted to act in this way. We can be certain that the Baptist Churches in Ceylon will not take any decisive step in this matter without long and prayerful consideration. They are seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit that they may choose aright. Let us pray that they may be rightly guided.

R. C. COWLING.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON RELIGIOUS BROADCASTING—II

PERHAPS the most serious rival to the Light Programme is not Luxembourg, but Television, and the Department has been anxious to see that the lively ideas of the Light Programme found their way sooner or later into Television. To begin with, Television was a difficult medium. It was not like sound-broadcasting and we spent a long time experimenting with it, so much so that there were loud cries about the small amount of religion on Television. The B.B.C., however, set its face against swamping the programme with religion before it knew how to do it and it is only recently that religion has found its place in Television. By prolonged experimenting we have discovered what can be done effectively. We know, for example, that the televising of a religious service is not the best use of the medium. It is for that reason that the number of religious services broadcast on Television is twelve a year. We know, too, that the best type of religious programme is the one that takes the viewer

into the very heart of the work of the Church. Such feature programmes, which we call "Church in Action", are expensive and difficult to make, but they are always worthwhile. The procedure is to film the Church at work and, with the help of a commentator, explain to the listener what the Church does. The viewer must be taken into the premises and shown things happening. He must meet the minister and get to know him as a man and then he can be taken into a service of worship. One of the most successful of these programmes, although not at all typical, was the one from Mirfield, an Anglican Monastic centre, with Christopher Mayhew as commentator. There is an increasing desire to use such professional men to introduce the work of the Church. Christopher Mayhew had already made his name in a valuable series on great religions of the world. He showed that he could go to men of all religions and ask them simple penetrating questions, allowing them to answer for themselves. This method, so successful with Hindus, Jews, Buddhists and Christians in his famous series, was used to the full in interviewing the monks at Mirfield.

After long preparation, Television launched this year a series which was to be the vision equivalent to "Man Born to be King". The full effect of that will not be known for some time. Whether it is to become a classic like Dorothy Sayers' play we do not know. It was at least right to try to bring to a presentation of the life of Christ all possible professional skill, and to give it the background of real films from Palestine.

Television encountered something that sound broadcasting has never known. It encountered a competitor in the so-called Independent Television Authority. The effect of this has been a number of disputes and the danger that the B.B.C. would have to take more seriously than it had the popular demands for light entertainment. So far it has resisted the kind of all-out competition that we feared, which would mean light entertainment every evening to keep people away from I.T.A. It seems to have been satisfied with having a few popular programmes throughout the week and for the rest to concentrate upon quality and a good balance of interest. How long it will be able to do this will depend upon the pressure of competition. In the midst of this competition between B.B.C. and I.T.A. an important step was taken by the Central Religious Advisory Committee of the B.B.C. They tried to avoid the worst elements of competition in Religious Broadcasting. They did this by agreeing to act as advisers to the new Authority in much the same way as they have acted to the B.B.C. If their intentions work out in fact, religion will be spared the competing of one Church with another that we have tried to avoid.

Another recent aspect of Television is the widening of its scope to include the whole of Europe. It is now possible to take a programme direct and live from almost any capital in Europe. This "Eurovision", as most people call it, is gradually building itself into

the programme of the B.B.C. With this extended range has come some difficulty, particularly for Religious Broadcasting. We have always tried to balance denominations in England so that the proportions were, roughly: Anglican 11, Free Church 8, Roman Catholic 3. This proportion, which is fair for Britain, can hardly be called fair for Western Europe. It is, therefore, natural that at least half the religious programmes offered by the European companies to the B.B.C. are Roman Catholic services or programmes. As these are built into the B.B.C. Television programme they not only increase the number of services felt not to be the best kind of Television, but they have also increased the proportion of Roman Catholic services. The B.B.C. is thus caught between two protests. On the one hand, Protestants object to too many Roman Catholic broadcasts; on the other hand, the Roman Catholics object to having all their broadcasts coming from Europe as though there are no Roman Catholic churches in this country. That is a problem which will have to be solved in the future and it will be a growing problem and we hope it will not be met by England adopting her traditional insular attitude and cutting herself off from Europe.

To return to Sound broadcasting, which is still the greater part of broadcasting. One feature of recent years has been the reflecting of world conferences. The first assembly of the World Council of Churches at Amsterdam was, of course, world news and it was carried by the B.B.C. After that, the World Council launched itself upon an orgy of conferences which scattered the pages of our books with names of places that had meaning for some people: Rolle, Willingen, Lund, Evanston. Some world conferences could not be classed as world news, but the things that were said, and the people who were there, helped us to build interesting programmes even for non-Christian listeners. At Rolle, for example, in 1951 a group of 25 theologians met to work out the main theme of the second assembly of the World Council of Churches. At that meeting a powerful conflict between Karl Barth and Reinhold Niebuhr developed which explored some of the fundamental questions of our day. This conference, though quite small, was reflected in broadcasting by presenting, with recordings, the actual debate that took place. The discussions at Rolle were thus re-presented with the voices of those taking part. The same was done for the missionary conference at Willingen and the third world conference on Faith and Order at Lund—both in 1952. Evanston presented us with a lot of new material and many programmes were broadcast.

The past seven years have seen some great moments in broadcasting and there have been great strains placed on the B.B.C. The Coronation, for example, was its greatest test and its greatest triumph, both in Sound broadcasting and Television. The visit of Billy Graham to this country and his second visit to Scotland presented other kinds of problems to a Corporation which had not often reflected this kind of preaching. His first visit caught the

B.B.C. unawares. Few expected that it would have such success or would stir such publicity. The second visit, which was largely the campaign in Scotland, found the Scottish broadcasting people ready for it, and there was an adequate reflection of Billy Graham's impact. It was also a triumph for Scottish broadcasting that Billy Graham's campaign was so closely linked with the Tell-Scotland Movement which had arisen out of a number of situations including the Scottish Radio Mission.

Scotland has been frequently mentioned in these reflections because Scottish broadcasting has always recognised fully the importance of religion in its programme. It has also taken the lead in so many new ideas. *Lift Up Your Hearts*, for example, originated in Scotland. Other regions, however, have made their lively contribution to religious broadcasting. The West of England has given many new ideas both in its own regional broadcasting and to the national, in the Home Service, and Light Programme. In particular, the development of "Faith in the West" as a magazine programme by Martin Willson has given a quality to West of England broadcasting. That magazine programme has never been allowed to fall into a steady pattern that might become dull. It is always pursuing new ideas from discussions in factories to the answering of questions put by well-known people. Wales has seemed to be much more a nation apart, but it, too, has contributed ideas to broadcasting. Many of its programmes are in the Welsh language and this has added to its separateness. Religion, however, plays a large part in Welsh broadcasting. Many who do not understand a word of Welsh enjoy listening to the Sunday afternoon hymn-singing from a Welsh chapel. The North of England, which is the largest region, covering more listeners than the London transmitters, has taken a lead in ideas. First under Eric Saxon, and later with the present Religious Broadcasting Organiser and his assistant, plans have been developed that eventually found their way into national broadcasting. Under Eric Saxon, *The Creed of a Christian* series of programmes for discussion groups were developed and they have now become a regular part of our autumn broadcasting. More recently, the North has contributed more than its share of ideas for the use of Television. Both Midland Region and Northern Ireland have reflected their own peculiar form of religious life. Together they represent the two extremes. In this way the richness of regional and national broadcasting has been poured into the basic Home Service, the Light Programme and the Third Programme. More than ever it has become necessary for the Religious Broadcasting Department, including its representatives in the regions and nations, to work and plan closely together. That is why they all meet frequently to see how best broadcasting can reflect the religious life of the country, and speak to those outside the Churches.

One last word on broadcasting that is never heard in this country. A whole service of broadcasting in English spans the world day after

day. It has in mind the needs of English-speaking people abroad. Many a Church asked to record a half-hour service for the General Overseas Service of the B.B.C. may feel some disappointment that their friends in this country will not be able to hear them broadcasting, but they should not under-estimate the tremendous effect of these services in strengthening the faith of those who are far from home. Correspondence shows how much the religious broadcasting of this General Overseas Service is appreciated by those who have settled in strange lands. Again, there is another part of broadcasting not heard in this country, included in the European service of the B.B.C. This includes almost all broadcasting in other languages. The German section includes weekly religious broadcasts to Western Germany and also a special weekly broadcast to the Soviet Zone. There are other religious items and features about religious life in this country included regularly in almost all the language broadcasts of the B.B.C.

E. H. ROBERTSON.

OPPORTUNITY DOWN-TOWN

IT will be said that the circumstances were exceptional, the climate favourable to a degree and that nowhere could the prescription be repeated with the same results. We are thinking of nine years in the ministry of a church whose membership had largely fled from the congested centre of the city, whose meeting house was a pile of rubble relieved only by the shelter of a military hut and facilities for worship in a nearby hall.

Friends contemplated the future with misgiving and suggested that a dignified funeral was all that could be expected. It has not been so, thanks be to God. There has been magnificent devotion on the part of the inner nucleus and, as older members have been called to "higher service", new hearts have been yielded to the Master, so that with every succeeding year the average age of the membership has decreased. New buildings have been erected, perhaps the most spacious post-war buildings in the denomination. Contributions towards all causes have increased and, in at least one case, the position is one of national supremacy.

What basic principles have governed the work under God?

1. EVANGELISM. Always we have said that at the heart of all our enterprises must be seen the sign of the Cross. The Cross is there not only for our personal salvation, but for the saving of the world. The process of encouraging one another in the privilege of witness has been laborious enough, but in recent years the reports upon candidates for church membership have not infrequently referred to the persuasion of a young ambassador in the sixth form of a Grammar school or at the bench in a shoe factory, incomparably the most fruitful form of evangelism.

It is humbling for those of us who have led campaigns, entertained student teams and conducted guest-night services that the rather tongue-tied witness in the setting of daily toil is used more conclusively than any other agency for winning the people.

2. THE OUTPOST. Every church worthy of the name must be outward looking. All the long-established and larger churches of the denomination have a fine record of new causes initiated and nurtured. Some of these young churches are still receiving substantial support in men and means.

This on the face of it is a fine thing. But in actual fact it has in not a few cases led to the slow death of the down-town church and too slow a progress, except in the Sunday school, for the estate or suburban church. Modern man likes to be a member of a flourishing movement and, looking at the world-wide picture, the Christian movement has flourished phenomenally during the last century. But at home the story is a sad one.

Always we diagnose the trouble to be due to rank sin in the world or technical inefficiencies in our own methods of evangelism. Taking the Gospel to the people has rightly been regarded as paramount in our thinking. But why have we taken as axiomatic the so-called responsibility to reproduce little worshipping groups wherever a new piece of housing is contemplated? In scores of places this has meant the placarding of struggle; a demand for sacrifice in the manse; an actual lessening of the total evangelistic impact upon a town's life, and even a down-grading of both minister and people in the eyes of the neighbourhood.

It will be claimed that people will not come from the distant circumference of a town to the overcrowded centre to worship and that certainly the children could not be brought such a long way. How does this opinion square with the view of those who provide us with the spiritual food of Beethoven's Fifth or Handel's *Messiah*? They believe that the crowd will come to town. The crowd does come according to its bent, even to listen to the classics. Chamber music has its place, but we should be incomparably poorer without the great symphonies.

The same applies to worship. Allow with obvious truth that the children must be given local facilities for Sunday school, that the younger people should have some nearby place of meeting and that a cell for prayer and mutual encouragement should be available in every suburb or estate. But let Sunday be a high day in Zion; let the tribes come up to a great concourse; let the reunions of people separated by the planners and re-housers be a frequent delight which is assured by attendance at worship; let the minister be upborne by the stimulus of the many faithful and the many to be won.

For some years a deaconess toiled at the traditional pattern in an attempt to create a worshipping group from a Sunday-school outpost in this city. People who lived already in one another's pockets were shy and the natural reserve of the East Anglican was

THE BAPTIST HOME WORK FUND



***Ministers are asked to pray
that the Home Work Fund
may achieve what it sets out
to do***



**The General Secretary,
The Baptist Union, 4 Southampton Row, London, W.C.1**

THE BAPTIST UNION WOMEN'S DEPARTMENT

Four Questions

- ARE** the women in your Church receiving the inspiration and practical help offered by the BAPTIST WOMEN'S LEAGUE ? Programme suggestions, visual aids, correspondence Courses available on application.
- DO** you know that business girls and students coming to work in London can be accommodated at moderate cost at "St. Andrews", the attractive and comfortable HOSTEL run by the B.W.L. ?
- HAVE** you heard that there is at THE HAVEN a home where many young unmarried mothers are skilfully cared for physically, lovingly taught about the saving grace of God in Christ and helped to make a fresh start in life ?
- WILL** you suggest to Baptist folk wishing to adopt a baby that they may apply to the BAPTIST UNION ADOPTION SOCIETY ?

Full information may be obtained from the Organising and Deputation Secretary, Miss Lois Chapple.

exploited by the Devil. Then the critical question was asked: Were our assumptions right? Should there be a church with all that is meant by that term in every corner of the city where a Sunday school is established? The principle that had seemed challenging enough, "for every pub a Bethel", was now being scrutinised.

Our enquiry could be answered only by the adventure of an experiment that might well antagonise some devoted souls. The evening service at the outpost was closed and friends from the estate encouraged to come to the "home base" of the church. They came in ever-increasing numbers, lives were changed and hearts refreshed. The outpost will remain an outpost because it has been proved beyond doubt that God's purpose is more fully served in that way.

It is now necessary to outline in some detail the way in which the transition from outpost to home base is being carried out. The border post is manned by a deaconess whose quick mind and heart are fully at the Master's disposal and in whose thinking the conventional approach is never regarded as essentially the Divine approach. She is leader of the Young People's department, organiser of the Wednesday evening recreation, responsible for the Thursday evening class for young Christian commandos who visit the district, and undertakes work among women through the Women's Meeting and Young Wives' club. The minister is regarded as available for all visitation of the critically sick, for discussions of a marital or personal nature, together with the chairmanship of a number of inevitable committees.

The Wednesday evening for recreation is regarded as the prerogative of those under 15 years of age, whilst those between the ages of 15 and 25 meet on the premises of the mother church on two evenings a week under the ægis of the Baptist Youth Fellowship for devotional and recreational pursuits. This means that the youth of two Sunday schools meet socially and for Bible study on the church premises twice during the week.

Sunday is the day for implementing the scheme in the most intensive way. Young people from the outpost come into the city church for tea. Half an hour before the evening service they gather into a kind of "university seminar" on prayer. The "professor" is a devout and experienced senior deacon who gives specific guidance on the art of public prayer. From the atmosphere of learning and devotion they go into worship with the whole family of the church and later meet again for discussion, study and friendly exchange in the Youth Fellowship.

There are no indications that such an intensive programme involves an overdoing of what in smaller doses would be admirable. On the contrary, this group has about it all the marks of true community and obvious success. These characteristics are constantly proving to be an irresistible invitation to an ever-widening circle of young people whose church allegiance was severed in early

adolescence. The "joy of the Lord" through the *koinonia* and service constrains beyond any spoken word or organised peak meeting. No one doubts the future now.

Much is said about the need for careful research in regard to the problems of the village church. Already a number of useful reports have been published on the subject. The down-town cousins, on the other hand, have been burdened with an equal problem of decline and fall, but their malaise has been regarded as inevitable. They are as they are because they are where they are. It is sad, of course, like the passing of an aged saint. The State cathedral will remain, the central hall will be maintained, the City Temple will be rebuilt, but the great centres of Baptist worship must die on the altar of an unexamined principle. If they have ceased to have a distinctive purpose, then let them perish.

It seems to us, however, upon the basis of work in the city that the "Bethels" need the encouragement of "Zion". Those one or two churches down among the halls of common council, the courts of law, the assembly rooms of the arts, the laboratories of the scientists and the markets of the traders are essential. They are for Baptists no less than for any other Christian body necessary gifts to the Master for His redemptive work, until there shall be no church and only the City remains.

J. PENRY DAVIES.

THE WIDER CIRCLE

AUSTRALIA

Queensland. The death of R. Sayce robs our Australian ministry of a well-beloved leader. Removing from the West of England in early life he became, after some pastoral experience, Secretary of the Queensland Union, an office he filled with distinction for 30 years. Contacts with him at the Jubilee Congress enabled us to understand that high esteem in which he was held.

G. W. Peck, a tutor at the College, has taken first-class honours in Philosophy, together with a Gold Medal. Congratulations.

Victoria. During the interregnum following the retirement of Principal Grigg, T. F. Keyte is Chairman of the Faculty. B. S. Brown is now joined by J. H. Watson, M.A., M.Th., who, after training in Glasgow and in Victoria and serving 26 years in the pastorate, now returns as Tutor to his old College.

Thanks to N. A. Skinner for an interesting letter. He does not forget Leigh-on-Sea, his birthplace. Greetings to J. Emmott as he enters upon his new pastorate.

G. H. Blackburn is resigning his editorship of the *Victorian Baptist*, a journal he has made influential throughout the State. Thanks for his letter.

Our Students' Federation will welcome the news that Baptist Students at Melbourne have formed a William Carey Society. All success to this excellent enterprise.

South Australia. The College, having outgrown its present premises, has acquired spacious accommodation in a new area. We are sure "Amplius" will describe all the work of the College.

Tasmania. At Hobart the Triennial all-Australian Assembly has just concluded. The chief visitors were Oscar Johnson and "Pearly" Gates, who have had a triumphal tour of the Commonwealth and whose visits to our churches have been a source of spiritual uplift.

New South Wales. How it began. *The Sydney Monitor* for April, 1831, contained the following paragraph: "A Mr. McKaeg has commenced preaching in the long room of the Rose and Crown Inn. A few persons of Baptist persuasion attended". From this humble beginning, 125 years ago, there grew up our great work in Australia.

Thanks to our correspondent, H. E. Evans, for a list of 53 N.S.W. Fellowship members and cheque to cover. He refers to the film on the Aboriginal Mission in Central Australia, now showing in Britain, and hopes that financial results will accrue. F. C. Morton will be glad to supply these films on application.

A. C. Prior has had a strenuous Presidential year. One of his official engagements was his attendance at the opening of the State Parliament. He is shortly to spend six months in U.S.A.

Friends in London and Deal will hear, with interest, that Victor Willis has commenced his work in Sydney under the happiest circumstances.

West Australia. In our July issue we hailed W. G. Crofts as Secretary of the W.A. Baptist Union, whereas it should have been a word of farewell and congratulation on good work well done. He is succeeded by J. Hendy, to whom greetings and all success. Rawdon seniors will be interested to know that Crofts is son-in-law of F. E. Harry, who entered College in 1883, the same year as J. G. Collett, now the sole survivor of that year. Harry later filled pastorates in Australia and New Zealand.
