

# The Fraternal

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## CALL TO PRAYER AND MISSION

*A message to all Baptist Ministers from the Chairman of the Baptist  
Union Evangelism Committee*

Brothers,

We live in momentous times. Around us a new world is being born and all that was once accepted as our way of life, all the institutions, attitudes and values that were once revered, are now questioned.

In the ferment of our times, it is not difficult to see dangers and evil. But God is also active and moving in sovereign grace and judgement. Among the many questionings, there are those which are of God and in the turmoil of the times, God also is disturbing His Church. It is He who is weaning our souls from trusting in His good gifts and will not let us rest until we rest ourselves in Him alone. It is He who is causing our faith to fret at the limitations of its present forms and has put the longing in our hearts to seek for Him afresh in known and unknown ways.

At the moment we have but little understanding of the things for which we are asking. We ask for truth but have not considered whether we could bear to know the burden of God in our time. We ask for love but we have not stopped to wonder at love's terrible cost. We ask for success and God, in His mercy, has given us failure that He might lead us to the deeper and harder blessing He purposes for us.

His greatest blessings often come through disappointments. The first disciples asked that Jesus should bring in the Kingdom of God. They expected great earthly conquest, power and glory. Instead Jesus led them out to heal the sick, to mix with outcasts and to preach the Gospel to the poor.

In like manner, we have prayed for revival and have little realised how much we were asking that our churches should be successful and our pews full. Instead the Christ is leading us out to be the Church of the Servant and has called us afresh to take up our cross and follow Him.

In pondering these things, the Baptist Union Evangelism Committee has felt its heart moved to issue, first to our ministers and later to our whole people, a Call to prayer and mission.

Prayer is needed in that our situation is not to be saved by our cleverness or even by our good works or generous care and goodwill. This situation can be matched only by men whose souls have waited upon God and have caught flame there, whose hearts have felt His burden and His longings and whose minds have been given, by His Spirit, an understanding of His purposes.

A new spirit of Mission is needed in that we have so much looked upon the problems and opportunities of our times as though they were academic questions for our interested discussion and have thus avoided the cost of simple obedience to the will of God

as it is already revealed to us. Our search has been for freedom from our problems but not for freedom from ourselves in abandonment to Christ. Our search in evangelism has been for "special" or "successful" methods or short cuts rather than for serious and sustained training for the continuous, daily ministry and witness of the ordinary church member in all the many and varied involvements of his life. The further light we seek will be given to us when we give faithful obedience in the things to our hand and seek and follow the movement of His Spirit in the present moment.

It is not easy for us to drop our familiar defences and to expose ourselves to the costly love of God and the disturbing creative life of the Holy Spirit. But all the pointers of our time are that the Spirit is moving and taking us afresh to Christ, leading us to new aspects of His Person and purpose for our time.

To be alive and to be a Christian in such a time as this is a thing of unspeakable thrill and fearful responsibility. Brothers, we offer first to you this Call to Prayer for our whole Denomination and affectionately commend you to Him whose grace alone is sufficient.

"O Lord, grant us  
towards ourselves, hearts disciplined as steel  
towards others, hearts of love and compassion  
and towards Thee, O Christ,  
a heart of burning flame."

L. R. MISSELBROOK

## THE QUESTION OF AUTHORITY IN THE MINISTRY

### A Psychological Point of View

A probationer minister writing in *New Society* said that he believed he had 'not an authority which is earned, but an authority which is given. All the qualities and gifts are found in a minister, not a layman. Autocracy is the true exercise of leadership'. (*New Society*, January 7th, 1965.) This points to a growing concern—a psychological point of view amongst us about the nature of authority, and in particular the authority of the minister.

The article referred to sets forth something of the frustration of the ministry and the writer suggested a way out through the minister asserting his authority, claiming that as an ordained minister he has absolute supremacy over his people. The view seems to be that the minister has the right to tell his people what they must do and to assume that they will follow like sheep, he gives the directions and they will respond without question.

Now, no doubt this is a theological question. But it is here suggested that minister and people must be understood in their

psychological as well as their theological relationships. The first and last word about this problem may be theological, but somewhere in between there must be room for the idea of the minister as shepherd of the flock being aware of the emotional relationships they have with one another and with him. These relationships we attempt to explore with reference to the authority of the minister.

The relationships between the leader of any group and the members of the group are exceedingly complex. In consequence it would be quite impossible to provide a set of rules for would-be leaders. The relationship between leader and group, in our case the minister and the congregation, is a dynamic one and it is most important to think much more of his flexibility and sensitivity towards people.

It is recognised that we are emotionally dependent upon one another. In human life there is a universal and permanent need to love and to be loved, for the support and security which such relationships give, for a satisfying place and function in the family and in a wider circle. This is not to say that each person should be devoid of strength 'to stand on his own feet'—quite the opposite—but it is to say with Buber that 'life is meeting'. 'The real psychic drama of human life is the struggle to become an integrated personality, a mature individual so that the personal life of relationship to other persons can be lived; while only in seeking to sustain personal relationships can the individual be fulfilled and become a person'. (*Psychology for Ministers and Social Workers*, Guntrip, p. 175). That is, of course, a psychological statement. Is it not, also, a theological statement? Is not D. M. Baillie, using biblical/theological terms and ideas describing the same process when he writes: God's 'eternal purpose was that mankind should be "one body", with the unity of a perfect organism, . . . a free and harmonious fellowship of persons united in the love of God. In such a perfect community each individual would have the fullest and highest freedom—without which there can be no true fellowship . . . the true life of personality is in close fellowship. Moreover, fellowship with God and fellowship with men cannot be separated in human life—can hardly even be distinguished'. (*God was in Christ*, p. 203. The whole chapter is very relevant). The whole learning process and missionary task is about this.

It has been argued that there are two basic types of group functions (*Group Dynamics*, edit. Cartwright and Zander, p. 496): '(a) the achievement of some specific group goal or (b) the maintenance or strengthening of the group itself'. Not always can both be achieved together with equal success for sometimes the pursuit of one hinders the achievement of the other. Sometimes it must be admitted that so far as a local congregation is concerned it is not clear which, if either, of the group functions is in mind.

The Apostle Paul seems reasonably clear about the function of the Christian congregation. It is the 'building up of the Body of Christ' and it is to 'build itself up in love' (Ephesians, 4). The Holy

Spirit gives gifts to the leaders of the church 'to equip God's people for work in His service'. In this service there will be 'the due activity of every part' of the Body; every 'constituted joint' will be flexed in the task of this new community of Holy Love. In this 'building up' the Apostle surely included all unbelievers who are to be gathered into Christ's recreated humanity, i.e. the new fellowship of the Spirit is reaching out beyond itself.

For the Church, then, it is neither one or other goal of group activity but both as part of one whole. The Christian fellowship is a therapeutic community, where in love members grow up into Christ. But in so far as we think of the 'maintenance and strengthening' of the group/church itself it is in order to equip it for the 'work in His service', the channelling of the divine agape into human life beyond the group/church.

But to appreciate the therapeutic ministry of the fellowship of believers and the minister's task it is necessary to go back to the early stages of life. The nursery is the first and vital stage for forging happy and satisfying relationships and these are deepened and strengthened through the progressing stages of family life. We cannot over estimate the role of the parents; the security of young people is given in a happy balanced home life. The satisfactory nature of the earliest relationships with parents, with mother in particular, determine to some extent the ability to make good relationships with others at the later stages of life, maturity depends on the early years, and many immature character traits which remain in adult life began in the early years of life through poor relationships in the family structure.

For example, a man who could not hold down a job for more than a few months said, 'I get mad. They tell me what I should do, or they criticise me about something and I blow up. Something seems to explode inside me and I see red. I tell them where they can get off—nobody's going to boss me around. Then I find myself on the street.' After subsequent interviews with his counsellor it was discovered that when he was a small boy he had suffered many unkindnesses of his father which he deeply resented. The aggressive attitude adopted towards his superiors at work stemmed from the character traits of resentment and aggression which he had developed towards his father in early years. (*Fathers are Parents too*, English and Foster, p. 74).

So many reach adult life without becoming mature, unable to feel secure, vaguely ill at ease, moving towards other people, yet quickly moving away again at the least disturbance. Colloquially we say someone has a 'chip on the shoulder' or is prickly and so on. Some people withdraw from others, are shy, long for personal contacts yet are afraid to make them. Others know a general vague sense of insecurity and apprehension. Yet others are critical of their fellows, irritable, resentful of others successes, hostile and aggressive. We cannot of course classify people into two groups—the mature, stable, etc., and the insecure, anxious, withdrawn, etc. There is no

clear dividing line. Many of us, perhaps most of us, carry with us into adult life some of the insecurity, petulance and childishness of the nursery.

Here, then, are the people who have been committed to our pastoral care, men and women at different levels of maturity. And in this larger family there emerges jealousy of others, resentment at being overlooked, seeking the limelight, a deep desire to be appreciated and publicly thanked and so on. These childhood stresses and fears have become embedded into character and find expression in adult life. Of course, there are many members of the Christian congregation who have grown to advanced levels of maturity; but because the church is a caring community and because many need security in fellowship and in a substitute father figure, the church has at least its quota of the less secure members of the community at large.

### *The role of the Minister*

The minister may not accept the title 'Father', but undoubtedly there are those who try to make him fulfil that role. In their immature need for dependence they find security in him and in the community of which he is the head. So long as he is meeting their emotional needs they idolise him. He represents a pillar upon which they can lean, an unshakeable foundation for their tottery emotional structure, a guarantee of a pattern of life which won't change and in which they find security.

But should he be unable to fulfil all their needs the uncertainty and insecurity emerges again. They grow anxious and begin to turn against him. They begin to criticise his preaching, his visiting or neglect of it, and so on. How are the mighty fallen!

Such a situation may arise accidentally and all kinds of incidents may trigger it off. But it may be precipitated. The minister may feel the time has come to urge his people to make new moves in Christian mission, a visitation campaign, a stewardship scheme, a new emphasis in his preaching, etc. Let him beware! Insecure people are notoriously conservative and no amount of good logic breaks through this kind of emotional blockage. Such changes threaten the cherished patterns and traditions which have veiled the insecurity of the inner life. Two new hymns this month. The world is coming to an end!

The minister walks along a knife-edge, the knife-edge which all who seek to exercise leadership must walk. It is not sufficient to say 'autocracy is the true exercise of leadership'. On the one hand the minister must seek to lead if he has the vision. Yet, on the other hand, he must be keenly aware of how far, and how fast, the flock can follow. No psychiatrist can burst open the blocked psyche of his patient. No more can the minister ride rough-shod over the sensitivity of his people. There must be growing points, often points of pain for growth is sometimes painful. But it needs the most sensitive and delicate handling because there is a limit to how much pain the soul of man can bear.

The minister is clearly the king-pin in this situation. He has a responsibility to these people. He is their leader, but he cannot drive them. First he needs to understand them, and they need to know that he is truly sympathetic with their difficulties. If he presents himself as one withdrawn, remorselessly pressing on with his fine reforms without reference to their emotional disturbance he creates yet more dis-ease and consequently more criticism, deeper resentment and a general loss of security. On the other hand they need encouragement to think clearly and without fear about themselves and their relationships with the community, to be able to face courageously new opportunities and experiences. This calls for skilful leadership and delicate pastoral counselling. It needs time and patience. The minister may have to recognise that there are projects which, though highly desirable, must be postponed because the community is not yet ready to face them. 'There is still much that I could say to you, but the burden would be too great for you now' (John 16. 12).

In all this the minister needs to become aware of his own emotional stresses and weaknesses. He, too, needs someone on whom to lean. Doubtless, for many of us this support is found in 'mother' church. That is, we are sustained by the affection, encouragement and good will of our people. The minister's strain comes when following the vision he believes he has been given, he finds reluctant people who become critical people. It becomes a question, not merely of how far he can push them, but how far he can push himself. Or perhaps, how long can he contain himself and hold a vision in his spirit, waiting patiently for the growing moment when a reluctant, uncertain congregation will catch the gleam and begin to move into the light. Here is the frustration of leadership.

He will be a happier man if he knows what is happening. If not, he too may resort to criticising his people now that his own insecurity has been unveiled. The situation may grow worse and get out of hand. Of course, he could seek a change of pastorate, but in our independent system this is often difficult. 'Mother' church is for practical purposes the local congregation which is partially rejecting him; for all practical purposes the wider fellowship of the denomination is able to offer little help, for it has become known, or will become known that he has had differences with his present congregation. 'Things are not happy there' it is rumoured. So he does not move pastorate and he labours on—the congregation exposed and vulnerable and the minister no less so. His own emotional needs together with the structures of denominational life virtually drive him out of the pastoral ministry.

We now seek to understand more clearly the kind of leadership which is demanded. Essentially his task is to create the therapeutic community and atmosphere in which members can grow out of their inhibitions and fears and meet others in love and freedom. We note four aspects:

1. The general attitude and approach of the minister. Obviously he has been chosen leader because it is thought that he has some power, an ability to influence others. But the nature of this power is not easy to define. In 'Social Dynamics', quoted earlier, five kinds of power are noted (pp. 613 ff).

(a) Reward power which is dependent upon the leader's ability to give rewards for obedience.

(b) Coercive power dependent upon the expectation of punishment for disobedience.

Each of these forms of Power are to be found in the Roman Catholic church's promise of rewards and threat of punishment, e.g. excommunication. It is interesting to ask how far, if at all, they function in the thought and practice of our Baptist churches. But we should note immediately that such power if exercised in the Christian community is likely to reinforce immaturity and the defensive mechanism of its members.

(c) Legitimate power lies in the principle accepted by all group members that the leader has the right to influence them, and that they have an obligation to accept his authority. Here, too, members are accepting a slavish and therefore immature functioning.

(d) Expert power is the recognition that the leader has knowledge or skill beyond the group and the members accept it from him. Has the minister such knowledge and, if so, what is it, and how ought he to impart it so that members are not reduced to blackboards on which he writes his words of wisdom?

(e) Referred power is a not very clearly recognised identity with the leader. 'I like him and I will believe as he does and behave as he does, etc.' But again, unless kept within strict limits this power tends to hinder individual growth and initiative.

We have briefly examined these types of power in order to show the kind of relationships which exist between Minister and people. But if we keep our main task in view—'the building up of the Body . . . in love'—we may decide that none of these elements of power come into the functioning of the minister.

We should take the point, well made by Reuel Howe (*Herein is Love*, p. 15 f) who, in criticising Clericalism, writes that it 'blocks the ministry of the church, because it tends to make lay members second class citizens who feel incompetent on matters of religion'. Many a Christian man has supported clericalism because 'his need grew out of his dependency, timidity, and his fear of assuming responsibility. He needed to exalt the clergy. He wanted to be told what to believe and to do; . . . clericalism justified him in his need'.

In the development of human relationships a different kind of leadership is needed. It has been well said that 'perhaps the most central characteristic of authentic leadership is the relinquishing of the impulse to dominate others'. (*New Society*, March 3rd, 1965, Article entitled 'Anti-Hospital', David Cooper). This is important.



So long as the minister is authoritarian in his approach to his people, they will remain in an immature childish dependence upon him and his authority. Their faith will tend to be his not their own.

Christ's question to Pilate is one the minister silently asks his people, 'Is this your own idea, or have others suggested it to you?' (John 18. 34). He will feed to them the ideas, the good news of the Gospel of God's Love in Jesus Christ, give them opportunities of experiencing it, living it, and so let their faith and living develop. And he must be patient, sympathetic and understanding while it does. An idea which is rejected one year may be reintroduced another (perhaps by the very person who rejected it at first) and win the acceptance of all. The minister must bear with this, and resist the temptation to say, 'Well, I told you this last year!'

2. This attitude will govern his pastoral counselling work. He will know that men and women are accepted by Christ *just as they are* in order that they may grow in Christ. He will accept them too. The great spiritual goals of the Christian life are not attained all at once; men must grow towards them and this demands patience. God is infinitely patient, and so must the minister be. Privately he explores with them their difficulties and hesitations and encourages his people in their spiritual adventure.

The authoritarian attitude works the other way—as an icy blast on a tender plant. Instead of growing towards fullness of human stature, a man closes up inside himself, his inner fears and insecurity causing him to grow more defensive, and restrictive.

3. Preaching and teaching become the occasion when the minister explores the Truth of God with his people in the sure confidence that the Spirit of God is at work enlarging the mind and heart of each. It must not be so idealistic that men are driven to despair, nor so denunciatory that a man says, 'I cannot speak to the minister; he would not understand my difficulty'.

There will be authority in the Christian preaching. But does this mean a dogmatic authoritarian approach? 'The Bible says . . .' in one way. 'What does the Bible say?' in another way. The authoritarian approach tends to suggest 'You've got to believe this because I say so'. Whereas Jesus told stories of man's common life to illustrate the Kingdom of God and left men to make their own judgement about it. 'He that hath ears to hear . . .' The minister should try to resist the role of being the "answer-man", and find ways of sitting down with his congregation that together they search the mind of Christ. In this sense preaching is pastoral work for the preacher is sensitive of the needs of his people.

If we enquire further what is the 'expert' power of the preacher we shall admit that he has been trained and ordained to teach the Faith. This he must do. But we need to pursue further the distinction made by J. G. Davies (*Worship and Mission*, p. 56) between 'proclamation of the Good News' and 'the purveyance of certain ideas, . . . the transmission of certain propositions'. The idea of preaching as dialogue has been considerably developed in a helpful

way in the East Harlem Protestant Parish where the congregation in small groups studies the Bible passage for each Sunday and the preacher is made aware of group 'findings' as he prepares his sermon. (*Congregation in Mission*, Webber). The preacher utters the Eternal Word made flesh, the revelation of a Person through whom the healing grace of God sets us free and builds us up in love.

4. The minister will encourage a fellowship of people which is forward looking, adventuring together under the guidance of the Spirit of God. By introducing the experience of the church through the ages and by sharing the work of the church today in other places, he will seek to help his people to understand what God has done, is doing and will do in them. They gain confidence in themselves, in their leader, and above all in the ongoing leadership of the Spirit of God.

In all this the minister cannot compel; there is no room for compulsion in the realm of the spirit. He can patiently and skilfully present opportunities for development and growth under the direction of the spirit of God.

RONALD A. COWLEY

## THE LOCAL CHURCH AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

The late Douglas Stewart often used to say that the conversion experience of a believer involved turning to Christ as Lord and Saviour but also 'conversion' to the worshipping company of believing people of Christ, the Church. Further than that Christians must be 'converted' to the world in which their ministry must be exercised and learn to understand its problems, rejoice in its variety and power, and discover within it the guiding purposes of God.

Writing of his own play, *The Lady's not for Burning*, Christopher Fry said, 'I see no reason why I should not treat all the world as I see it, a world in which we are all poised on the edge of eternity, a world of mystery in which God is anything but a sleeping partner'. Writing of the possible theological movements of the next generation, Neville Clark has said (*Baptist Times* 5.8.65) we shall be driven into the heart of the world's turmoil to find God there, and in his new and stimulating book, *The Roots of Experience*, R. C. Walton argues that there is in principle no encounter with the world which may not hold within itself an encounter with God.

Consequently, when thinking about citizenship affairs we recognise that Christians must participate in the life of the world with distinction, serve in the world for the world's sake and enable men and women to be met by Christ wherever they are because of their encounter with a quality of life which is transformed and transforming.

In writing of the sense of social responsibility of the churches today it is convenient to emphasize three spheres; parliamentary action, community service and personal example.

Although pronouncements of individual church leaders on social and political affairs have not the same significance as they used to have, the churches today have much more effective machinery for debating contemporary issues and representing the mind of Christian people to the Government. Several matters of special concern to the churches are before Parliament at the present time. The main denominations have, for example, been studying the Crathorne Report on Sunday Observance published in December 1964. It now seems unlikely that the Government will itself introduce legislation based on the Report and this matter will therefore have to be raised as a Private Member's Bill. Lord Arran's Bill on abortion is before the Lords and will eventually go to the Commons. No Parliamentary action has so far been taken on the recommendations of the Wolfenden Report in 1957 that private homosexual acts between consenting adults should no longer be criminal offences. The Baptist Union Council was divided on this matter and in 1960, when the Commons discussed the Report, a motion calling on the Government to implement these recommendations was defeated by 213 votes to 99.

At the moment legislation is awaited on drink and driving. The Government has accepted in principle that driving with more than a certain percentage of alcohol in the blood should constitute an offence. Churches have felt that the BMA recommendation that the alcohol level should be 80 mgs. per 100 mls. of blood is too high and satisfactory methods of testing have still to be further investigated. Further, such new legislation must be only one of a number of measures which must be taken in the light of appalling figures for road casualties. The official figures in Great Britain in the first six months of 1965, issued by the Minister of Transport, showed an increase of 6% compared with the corresponding period of 1964. That is, 186,362 including 3,721 deaths or roughly 21 a day.

The National Plan (HMSO 30s.) published last September warrants careful study. One matter about which many feel uneasy is the decision the Government has undertaken temporarily to slow down the rate at which our aid to poorer countries has been increasing. In recent years our spending in this way has been growing by about 10% a year but the National Plan regards this as too much while we are heavily in debt ourselves. At the same time the Plan envisages an increase in our personal consumption which will rise by one fifth by 1970. We have to recognise that part of our service as producers, consumers or tax payers rests upon our willingness to put our personal, group or national interests second in order that we may share what we have with others.

These are just a few rambling areas in which Christian responsibility today must take its full place in the form of judgment. There is a multitude of other concerns: international affairs, housing, home and family life, industry, personal conduct as Christian stewards of ability and possessions; aftercare of offenders, decisions about life and death and methods of healing, the influence of mass

media of communication through newspapers, broadcasting and advertising—the breadth of concern and the complexity of the issues involved may seem overwhelming but the opportunities are exciting.

The following points are worth further thought and discussion:

1. Those of us who conduct services should perhaps try to relate worship and preaching more closely to community life. This is obviously more difficult for itinerant ministers and lay preachers who are not accustomed to leading the worship of the same congregation regularly. The question is whether our worship tends to lift us out of the ongoing stream of the world's life or whether it tends to send us out into it with new vigour and insight.

2. Further dialogue between local church congregations and professional social workers in the community might be encouraged. Here the initiative must lie with the local church by inviting those who operate the local welfare services to come to church meetings and other organisations to explain their problems and opportunities and say frankly ways in which voluntary help is needed and how sometimes goodwill without understanding and skill can frustrate social casework. The newly formed Institute of Religion and Medicine, for example, is seeking to deepen confidence and dialogue developing between theologians and members of the medical profession.

3. We need to deepen local church fellowship so that it becomes not only a caring community serving people in their need, but also one which challenges people to be more faithful stewards of their strength in terms of money and other material possessions and ability of brain and hand.

4. There is an increasingly wide range of opportunities in professional social work which young people might be challenged to consider seriously as a career. Most universities provide basic courses of training and in addition there are a number of specialised courses in particular branches of social work. *The Social Workers*, HMSO 1s.9d. 1965 edition, is an excellent guide. An exceedingly helpful new book surveying the nature and scope of social work today is *Christians and Social Work* (SCM 8s. 6d.) by Kathleen Heasman, who is a lecturer in Social Studies at Queen Elizabeth College, London.

5. Support by prayer and gifts for the BMS, Christian Aid, United Nations Association and Feed the Minds Campaign are important adjuncts to the Government's support for the developing nations in terms of trade, aid, free loans and gifts and the technical assistance of specialist personnel. The BMS can accept qualified people on short term engagements particularly as doctors and nurses overseas. There are also openings for young people with Voluntary Service Overseas and similar bodies who need agriculturalists, technicians, teachers, administrators and engineers. A leaflet about these opportunities may be obtained from the Citizenship Department.

6. The development of community service through good-

neighbour projects, housing associations and councils of churches offers increasing opportunity. Maidstone and District Council of Churches has recently sponsored a survey of the town's social services including provision made for young people, families, the elderly, sick and disabled, offenders and potential offenders, housing, advice and information services. The report *Maidstone, a Closer Look* is available from the Social Secretary, 36 Woodville Road, Maidstone, Kent, at 5s. post free. Local surveys of this kind must form the basis for responsible community action.

The Rev. H. M. Brown, who returned from overseas work a few years ago, has been serving as Secretary for Overseas Immigrants in Sheffield and his appointment is an interesting example of joint action between the City Council and Council of Churches.

The British Council of Churches Housing Association, 10 Eaton Gate, S.W.1, is able to offer advice on the formation of housing associations particularly in the London area. Some of our churches can perhaps place part of their premises at the disposal of local voluntary welfare bodies who need to expand their work. In this way a congregation may be drawn further into community life.

Surveying the vastness of human need and the complexity of social problems can be a daunting experience but there are a host of exciting schemes under way. Perhaps we need to cling to our moods of helplessness, frustration and despair lest we ever become reconciled to our situation and settle down with it. This would be the death of the church for others.

JOHN HOUGH

## MINISTERS' PRAYERS

On a recent afternoon of thought and prayer arranged by the ministers of our Sale and District Group, I was asked to lead the devotions. It occurred to me that others might like to follow the same line of thought as we did.

Our group consists of five churches in our area which, in the years between the wars, formed themselves into a small group for our mutual help. A pulpit exchange takes place for one service on the second Sunday of each month, following a rota. Half-yearly group meetings are held to report on the work in each church and to discuss it and the possibility of mutual help. The minister, church secretary and treasurer of each church are the representatives at these meetings. If any church is without a minister, the others render help to that one for visitation, funerals or weddings, and baptisms. We share baptismal gowns. A united service and communion is held once a year. A joint effort in a college evening is held on a Saturday evening also annually, one church being responsible for both in rotation. The college evening produces between £30 to £50

with gifts from the churches, beyond their own college Sunday collections, and the total is divided in proportion to the colleges from which the ministers of the group come.

We would commend this voluntary grouping for mutual help and fellowship to other churches. It has given us a sense of the Body and an opportunity to get to know each other's churches and people which has removed the sense of isolation which sometimes afflicts us in our work.

## MEDITATION

To return to our afternoon review of ourselves and our work. We began by some short New Testament readings as follows:—

(1) John 15, 1-11: the vine, the vine-dresser and the branches. The only reason for living is to bear fruit. If that is not happening the harsh words of the Master are for us—dead branches are no good for anything except to be burnt. Some of the words of "Gentle Jesus" are terrible if only we were willing to take them realistically.

(2) Phil. 2, 5-15: the Kenosis; Christ emptied Himself and put on the slave's apron. Principal Wheeler Robinson spoke of similar kenosis of the Holy Spirit when He emptied Himself to clothe Himself with us. We limit Him and thwart Him when He would work out His purposes in and through us.

(3) Rom. 12, 9-44: This is a picture of how our lives should be lived. Dr Moffatt translates it thus: "Let your love be a real thing with a loathing for evil and a bent for what is good. Put affection into your love for the brotherhood; be forward to honour one another; never let your zeal flag; maintain the spiritual glow; serve the Lord; let your hope be a joy to you; be steadfast in trouble, attend to prayer, contribute to needy saints, make a practice of hospitality. Bless those who make a practice of persecuting you; bless them instead of cursing them." And verse 21: "Do not let evil get the better of you: get the better of evil by doing good."

These searching words were meditated upon and then we heard the words of Jesus to His disciples and through them to us, in John 14, 12-14. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also: and *greater works* than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And *whatsoever* ye shall ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask *anything* in my name I will do it."

## PRAYERS

We directed our thoughts and prayers first to our lives.

1 *Our Own Lives.*

and we prayed

For a fresh vision of God's purpose in our lives.

For a renewed sense of His call and ordination.

For a sense of remaining in Him so that His life is filling ours.

For the opening of our lives to be flooded with the Holy Spirit.  
So that we can have the renewing of our spirits by the washing  
away from us of:—

any bitterness or unforgiveness — which is like grit in the  
machinery;

any envy—which is the occupational disease of the ministry and  
can poison our lives.

any self-satisfaction and pride—remembering Luke 17, 10 “So  
likewise ye when ye shall have done all those things which are  
commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants: we have done  
that which was our duty to do.”

And on the other hand we bring to God:—

any fears about our adequacy for the work—if God calls us He  
will be our sufficiency.

any fears of others and any feeling of inferiority. God’s message  
comes through us, and we must banish those fears and that sense  
of inferiority if we are to be His messengers.

any doubts about the Holy Spirit’s power to change us, and  
others through us. We pray to be forgiven that we so seldom see  
this happen and that we have largely ceased to expect conversions  
from our ministry. We seek to build up His people and leave aside  
the uncommitted. We pray for a renewal in us of that sense of  
urgency in seeking to win others for Christ.

## II *Prayers for Our People.*

We pray for them corporately now, but in our private petitions  
we must pray for them individually giving thanks for their love and  
loyalty and belief in us.

We should have all their names in a note-book and pray for them  
separately taking a page a week bringing their individual needs and  
situation to God as intercessors.

Also we should pray for our deacons,  
our Sunday School teachers,  
our helpers in the Women’s work,  
our helpers in the Children’s work,  
in the missionary work,  
and in the general work of our church.

Especially we must pray for any who annoy and irritate us that  
we may see them as Christ does.

For the critics of our work or our ideas and for those who oppose  
us. Especially we pray to be delivered from despising those who  
have different theological views from ourselves—or if not despising,  
assuming an attitude of superiority towards them and an unwilling-  
ness to seek to help them in humility.

For our young people—that they may hear Christ’s call and give  
themselves to His work.

For those young people who have slipped away after making a  
confession of faith.

For any in special difficulties or in illness or infirmity through  
age.

### III *For the World Outside.*

Let us pray that we may never miss opportunities for witness or discussion or propaganda for Christ in our own circle or in our casual contacts in travel or business matters.

That we may be able to draw others to Christ.

For our visiting that we may leave the people with a sense of the reality of fellowship with God, not forgetting a word of prayer with them usually before we leave.

For our social contacts and welfare interests that through them we may help others to understand the way of Christ.

### IV *For Our Homes.*

So often these are neglected because of the many meetings and committees we have to attend, and the hours of those meetings, so that we hardly see our children or our wives who often have very lonely lives.

For our children that they may be led to dedicate their lives to Christ's service at home or abroad.

For our homes that they may be easily accessible for our people and any needing help and guidance.

That they may be centres of influence and happiness and witness for Christ's way of life.

That we may have courage and guidance and deliverance in the financial difficulties which arise in our homes, as we cast ourselves on the Lord.

E. B. GREENING

## AN ECUMENICAL CHAPLAINCY FOR CANTERBURY

WHEN I FIRST CAME to Canterbury an Anglican cleric said to me, "A Cathedral is like a great tree—nothing grows under it, except perhaps cabbages!" That he was wrong is demonstrated by the numbers of ministers and laymen of different Christian traditions who now meet regularly to promote united witness and service to the city. A consequence of this has been the successful Bible Week held at the Baptist Church, which is likely to be repeated next year; an approach is being made to all newcomers to Canterbury, using a welcome card, and offering friendship and help in the name of our Lord; a "Feed the Minds" project to provide a book-van for the Congo has just been launched, while Christian Aid Week continues to draw Christians together to collect and raise money. It will be some time before we prune our church programmes sufficiently so as to meet more often and grow and serve together as we should. But at least we have made a start, and in one respect at least, there has been a remarkable achievement: the Ecumenical Chaplaincy Centre.

When it was seen to be necessary to provide for the spiritual



welfare of the newly-founded University of Kent at Canterbury, a Committee was quickly set up, with the object of creating a single inter-denominational chaplaincy. The Bishop of Dover acted as chairman and representatives from the Church of England, the Roman Catholics and Free Churches were appointed. It was decided to form a joint organization known as "The Chaplaincy", to provide for the spiritual needs of the University. This has simplified the relationship with, and negotiations between, the University and the various Church authorities. The Master of the first College (known as Eliot College) has generously placed two rooms at the disposal of the chaplains. It was recognized, however, that though the University had been so accommodating, proper premises must be found and made suitable for the work of the chaplains. A Chapel and/or Chaplaincy Centre could not be provided from University funds. The Church of England offered the Church of the Holy Cross (near the Westgate Towers) for this purpose. This Church was built in the 14th Century and considerable alterations had to be completed. There again, there were the usual legal formalities involved in making a church a "chapel-at-ease". Alternative facilities had to be found for the former worshippers, who have transferred their allegiance to neighbouring churches, but not without a pang of regret! The activities of a University Chaplaincy are not confined to worship, and it has been found possible to convert the north aisle into a meeting-room, the vestry into a kitchen and the back of the nave into offices for the chaplains.

The money for this operation (at least £4,000) was raised by a lay committee, who sent out appeal leaflets to the churches of all the major denominations in Kent. The appeal remains open, for it will be considerably costly to furnish, light, heat, clean and insure the premises. Furthermore, it may be necessary after 5 years to provide for its conversion back to a Parish Church, if that is thought desirable. Clearly by that time, the Chaplaincy Centre will not be adequate for the 3,000 students then in residence, and there is a site reserved for us 'on the campus' for building a Centre for this purpose. Meanwhile the Holy Cross Centre will cater not only for University students but for the hundreds of students in other Canterbury colleges and hospitals.

Although it has been found possible to create a chaplaincy with a marked ecumenical flavour, it is clear that provision must be made for both ecumenical and denominational activities. Sunday morning 'celebrations' by Anglicans and Roman Catholics take place in the same chapel. Free Church students are encouraged to attend their own local churches, though occasional early morning united Free Church communions are being arranged. Each term there is at least one service in which all Christians can join. The inauguration of the new Centre took place in January, with prayers conducted by the Methodist District Chairman and the Abbot of Ramsgate, and a sermon preached by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The chaplains are arranging discussion groups and social activities, and a students' chaplaincy committee has been formed, to co-ordinate all Christian witness to the University. Denominational society representatives, I.V.F. and S.C.M. secretaries serve on this committee and a deep fellowship has developed between us. Each Saturday, coffee is served for all students, when they can meet the chaplains informally, and read various Church periodicals. The students are arranging to receive clothing for refugees at the Centre this term. The University music society has twice used the Centre for performances of classical music.

Being the Free Church Chaplain to this new and rapidly-growing University is an exciting experience. Already there have been invitations to meet and talk to students in the Teachers Training and Technical Colleges. There is a readiness among students to discuss religion, but most of them separate their thought of 'religion' from that of the Church. They think the Church quite irrelevant and frankly do not wish to approach the faith through the medium of the Church. Often they know little about the Church and its teaching, and pick up much of their scepticism from modern writers who dissociate religion entirely from the Church. Students sometimes admit to a feeling of insecurity in the modern world. They welcome the removal of misunderstandings about the Christian faith. Chaplaincy-sponsored "Meeting-points" have attracted a good many non-Christians, some of them remaining till the early hours of the morning, deep in discussion with Christian students. Speakers and subjects for Trinity Term include Father Thomas Corbishley, S.J. ("Towards Christian Unity") and Dr G. R. Beasley-Murray ("Mass Evangelism and the Churches"). I believe that a mission to the University would be very effective. But it must be preceded by a period in which we can gain the confidence of under-graduates, and all Christian societies must be seen to be involved in it.

The Chaplaincy Centre may yet serve a wider purpose—perhaps a Samaritan telephone service or a Church and Community Service Centre. But these premises are not only functional but symbolic. The scheme points the way forward to the sort of ecumenical partnership that is possible and the pattern of Christian service in the days ahead. There are those who are critical about the use of a former Anglican Parish Church for Roman Mass. Others caution me about the unwisdom of co-operating with Roman Catholics. I can only say that consulting together about the spiritual care of students and kneeling for prayers as we do every Thursday morning at 9, we have come to accept one another as brothers in Christ, and we share a fellowship in Him that overflows the fences that divide us. These are days in which we simply cannot afford the luxury of working in isolation from, or in competition with, each other. Many are disturbed by recent trends towards fellowship in worship and co-operation in service. But must Baptists stand suspiciously aloof, while other Christians go ahead without our

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To the Members of the Baptist Ministers' Fraternal.

Dear Friends,

" . . . a photograph of, say, a cathedral is an objective description, whereas a painting of that same building is a subjective interpretation."

I once heard the Rev. B. Grey Griffith say that a layman betrays himself as a layman by the extent to which he quotes! Well, I *am* a layman, and now and again I write down for future use a quotation which arrests me.

This particular quotation, from a series of lectures by Eric Newton on Style and Vision, is dated March 1957. These are words which ever since have been in my mind and which have surfaced from time to time as I have met with some aspect of subjective interpretation.

"Othello" has always been a favourite with me but my appreciation of that play has been immeasurably deepened by Olivier's interpretation of the Moor at the National Theatre.

Giulini conducting Verdi's Requiem in St Paul's Cathedral during the City Festival was an occasion to be remembered.

And so on . . .

In my own field I suppose most people would claim (no pun intended) that insurance policies are flat and uninteresting. But a little trouble in interpretation will give birth to understanding if policies are looked at in terms of planned protection. Suggest to your deacons that they should consider their insurance needs in the light of the local situation and then ask us to assist in the subjective interpretation of those needs.

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General Manager

distinctive witness and our valued help? And have we nothing to learn from 'catholic-minded' Christians? And is it not the Holy Spirit Who is leading us into this new partnership? This Chaplaincy scheme has taught me that we can be ecumenically involved and remain true to our evangelical faith and Baptist principles—indeed that is what other Christians expect us to be! Meanwhile we have a great deal to gain from this encounter, especially in the realm of worship and the devotional life.

R. W. F. ARCHER

## SYSTEMATIC VISITATION

When it was reported some time ago that the Rev. G. Sheriff Johnson had died, there quickly appeared some notices of appreciation of his pastoral visitation. In all his pastorates he followed the practice of announcing each Sunday in which streets or roads he would be visiting during the following week.

Sheriff Johnson was at Hitchin when I was in my teens. His method of systematic visitation was frequently commended in my home at St. Albans, and knowing then God's call to the Baptist Ministry I vowed that I would follow his pattern. I applied to Spurgeon's College for training, although my late father insisted that it should still be called *Pastor's College!* Perhaps Spurgeon was right. Preachers are born, not made. We cannot be taught to preach in college, but we can be trained in pastoral work.

In these days when husbands and wives frequently both go out to work, and when the evening is spent "watching telly", pastoral visitation has become increasingly difficult. Except in rural areas the afternoon visit has largely died out. With so many meetings and activities on in our churches each night it is difficult to fit in pastoral visits in the evenings. Yet how else can we get to know our people and their personal needs, so that our preaching is relevant and helpful? Not only must we find the time, we must work out a system of regular pastoral visitation.

In some of my churches I have announced the district in which I shall be visiting. This has several advantages. Those not being visited know that someone else is! How often is a minister accused of doing no visitation. Some critics of the ministry have invented a foot-and-mouth disease for ministers: "He can't preach and won't visit"! This announcement of a particular district for visitation also prepares people to receive the visiting minister—they are *in* when you call, and time, petrol or bus fares are not wasted on a fruitless visit. I have also found that favourite cakes and biscuits have been "laid on" in anticipation of my visit! Finally, when such a pastoral visit is expected the family are usually there all together, and family

worship can be engaged in at the close of the visit.

In conjunction with the announcement on Sunday of the district in which I shall be visiting, I have usually put up a map of the town and district in the vestibule of the church, with an arrow pointing to the week's district (the arrow has on it the words, "This week"). Needless to say some districts are bigger than others, or there are more members living in some districts than others, and so the arrow remains on one district longer than another.

Recently I have issued all members with a miniature map, printed on a card entitled: "Pastoral Visitation and Prayer Reminder Card". This card is used in conjunction with the printed list of members and names and addresses.

As will be seen from the accompanying sketch the visitation districts are divided between town and country in my present pastorate. A simplified map of the town and surrounding countryside has been drawn and the visitation districts are labelled A, B, C, and so forth. Arrows are fixed to the maps at the centre where the black dots are on the sketch. These arrows are then set each Sunday by the members with the map in the church vestibule. I alternate a town with a country district and when the arrow is indicating a town district ("A" for example) the arrow on the country map is resting on "Park". So when visiting a country district ("E" for example) the arrow on the town map is on "Park".

On the printed list of members their district is indicated in a separate column, thus the membership can pray each week for each other, remembering all the As, Bs, Gs, Hs, as the case may be. At the mid-week Prayer Meeting, the visitation district is again remembered in prayer, the Pastor being able to mention specific needs.

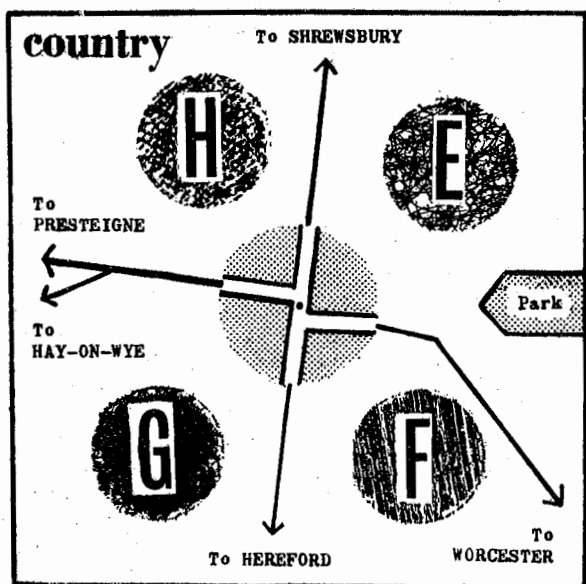
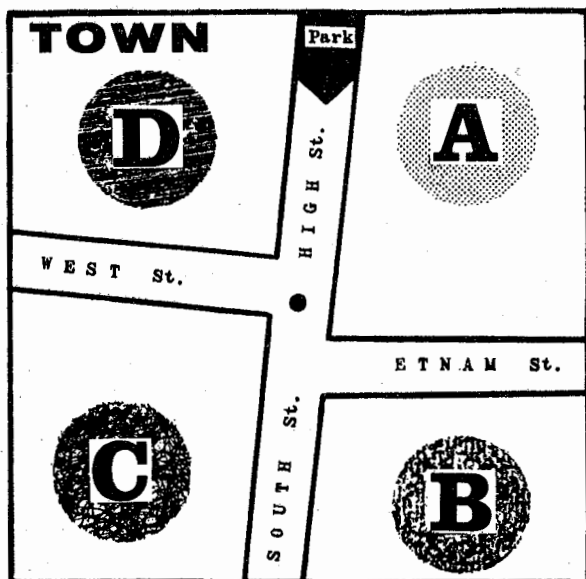
On the card issued to the membership it is clearly stated that this system is for *systematic* visitation of the membership, but cases of need, sickness or sorrow, take precedence. Hospital visitation takes priority.

I have usually found that in a church where the membership is around the 200 mark every member receives approximately four visits a year. Since most members are ill once or twice a year, their visits add up to more than the bare minimum of this system. Others receive more visits again because they send for the minister or invite him and his wife and family for a meal!

Having ministered at the seaside, in a county town, in the Metropolis, and in the country, I can say that the system works equally well in any situation. It has to be adapted, of course, and as the years go by I find improvements. Needless to say, I shall be glad to hear from any brethren who have adopted a similar system and can improve on mine. One of the chief dangers of the ministry is to live an undisciplined life. No doctor could possibly see his patients without a system of visitation. Each visit he makes is recorded on his filing system and treatment is entered on our health card. So I have noted down each visit through the years on my card index, making notes about sickness, births, deaths, examina-

tions passed, and so on. These notes are helpful on subsequent visits, and frequently impress the member being visited with the excellence of his minister's memory!

ERIC W. HAYDEN



*The following article was recently submitted on behalf of the Ministers of the East Midlands Association. Readers of "The Fraternal" will appreciate that the article has not been commissioned by the B.M.F. in any official capacity, but it is hoped that its contents will be fully discussed in local fraternals.*

## HAVE YOU GIVEN IT ANY THOUGHT?

"You never realise just what it can mean until it happens to you!" This was said to me the other day by a young couple whose newly-acquired home had been broken into whilst they watched television. And this is true of far more serious tragedies than that.

In 1960, a Baptist minister serving a church in Nottingham died very suddenly at the early age of 43. He left a widow and three young children. The heroism which we have come to take almost for granted in the minister's wife was an inspiration to those who were privileged to share with this family in the bereavement that had come so unexpectedly. But there were practical problems to which even the greatest courage could supply no answers. With so very short a time in the ministry, it had been possible for only the most meagre provision to be made for such an emergency; and now there was the necessity of obtaining living accommodation and providing for the educational needs of the growing family.

I know now that you can never fully realise just what it means until you become personally involved in such a situation. The stark reality of the material needs facing this family made it imperative that something be done. The local church, though not a wealthy community, was more than generous; the Baptist Union did what was possible; the East Midland Baptist Association appealed to every church within its four counties and, as a result, a gift of more than £1,500 was made to the family. Our hearts were warmed by such practical and generous expressions of concern and fellowship; but this is a large Association and many Associations just couldn't do what was done here. In any case, ought we to allow such situations to arise without making what provision is possible?

The churches of the Association made it very evident that they wished more adequate provision to be made for the families of the ministers who served them. In response to their expressed concern, the Association asked Mr E. R. Grief, J.P., to explore the possibilities of an Insurance Scheme which would, to some extent, provide for such circumstances. After Mr Grief had discussed the matter with the Phoenix Assurance Company Ltd., definite proposals were submitted to all Baptist Fraternals for their comments.

It was suggested that an Endowment Scheme should be included in addition to benefit in the event of death prior to the normal age of retirement. Full details have already been sent to all Fraternals and there is only the opportunity here to outline the Scheme. This is a Group Assurance Scheme which would secure for ministers age 25 next birthday a maximum benefit of £1,000 payable at age

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65 or at prior death. To make this scheme as simple as possible the benefit for all ministers under 60 years of age on joining would be £25 per annum for each completed year of membership on attaining the age of 65 and, in the event of death prior to the attainment of age 65, an amount equal to the endowment sum which would have been paid at age 65. For the first forty years the benefit would vary considerably according to age at entry, as would the total premiums paid. It is estimated that the cost of the scheme could be covered by a premium of £20 per annum, £10 payable by the minister and £10 by the church.

Mr Grief's own comments on this scheme are: "It is obviously highly desirable that all ministers join the scheme and, having regard to the generous cover provided at what seems to be a reasonable cost, I should think that ministers and churches would welcome the opportunity of making a provision which many churches and laymen consider to be long overdue."

In view of our own experience in 1960, this Association welcomed the Scheme as a very practical contribution to Christian concern and fellowship and asked the Baptist Ministers' Fellowship to seek the support of Baptist Fraternalists for it. We would have been gratified if the Scheme had found acceptance; we would have been delighted if the initiative taken by Mr Grief on our behalf had resulted in a better scheme being worked out; but we have been surprised and disappointed that the only re-action would seem to be indifference.

Our Ministers' Conference meeting at Willersley Castle this year urged me to seek the courtesy of this space in your pages to bring the Scheme, once more, to the notice of Fraternalists and to ask that, at least, this aspect of our concern for each other be discussed and comments sent to the Baptist Ministers' Fellowship.

"You never realise just what it can mean until it happens to you!" Have you given it any thought?

ARTHUR H. BONSER

### WHAT SHALL I READ?

Through the generosity of the Particular Baptist Fund, new books are continually being added to the B.M.F. library. And the librarian would be glad to receive your suggestions and requests, so that the best use can be made of this opportunity. The following 69 titles have been added since the supplementary book-list issued in September, 1965. In future it is hoped to print each quarter the titles of new books obtained.

Anderson: *There was a Man* (Paul Carson). Arnold: *Dorothy Kerin: Called by Christ to Heal*. Baillie: *To Whom shall we go?*

Barry: *The Relevance of Christianity*. Baxter: *The Reformed Pastor*. Bea: *Unity in Freedom*. Beasley-Murray: *A Commentary on Mark Thirteen*. Black: *Days of my Autumn*. Bovet: *That they may have Life*. Bruce: *The Spreading Flame* (Church History to 800). Bull: *God Holds the Key*. Bull: *The Sky is Red*. Chardin: *The Appearance of Man*. Come: *An Introduction to Barth's Dogmatics for Preachers*. Crabtree: *The Restored Relationship*. Crago: *The Story of F. W. Boreham*. Davies: *Christian Deviations*. Dibelius: *In the Service of the Lord* (Autobiography). Douglas: *Light in the North* (Scottish Covenanters). Duthie: *God in His World*. Elliot: *Shadow of the Almighty*.

Farmer: *The World and God*. Frankl: *Man's Search for Meaning*. Fromm: *The Heart of Man*. Gilmore: *Baptism and Christian Unity*. Goldman: *Readiness for Religion*. Gould: *Jesus, King most Wonderful*. Graham: *World Aflame*. Harton: *Doors of Eternity*. Hilliard: *Christianity in Education*. Hoekema: *The Four Major*

*Cults*. Jones: *Two Ears of Corn* (Oxfam).

Kavanaugh: *The Quaker Approach to Contemporary Problems*. Kelly: *The Athanasian Creed*. Kung: *Justification*. Lewis: *Philosophy of Religion* (Teach Yourself). Macbeath: *The Gift of Wings*. Manson: *The Sayings of Jesus*. Manson: *The Teaching of Jesus*. Martin: *Healing for You*. Mendelssohn: *The Forest Calls Back* (Dr Binder). Moore: *The Church reclaims the City*. Morgan: *The Ordeal of Wonder*. Newman: *The People of the Covenant*. Nuttall: *Richard Baxter*.

Parker: *The Morning Star* (Dawn of Reformation). Payne: *Free Churchmen: Unrepentant and Repentant*. Peddie: *The Forgotten Talent*. Pollock: *Billy Graham*. Porteous, Daniel: *A Commentary*. Ramsey: *Basic Christian Ethics*. Rodgers: *The Theology of P. T. Forsyth*. Russell: *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*. Shedd: *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology*. Sheen: *Canon Peter Green*. Taylor: *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*. Thielicke: *Encounter with Spurgeon*. Thompson: *The Bible and Archaeology*. Thornton: *The Rock and the River*. Thurian: *Visible Unity and Tradition*. Tournier: *The Whole Person in a Broken World*.

Urch: *Be Still my Soul*. Varah: *The Samaritans*. Walker: *The Growing Storm* (Church History, 600 to 1350). Weatherhead: *The Christian Agnostic*. White: *An Open Letter to Evangelicals* (1 John). Williamson: *The World of Josephus*. Wood: *Terror Reveley Glover*. Wood: *The Inextinguishable Blaze* (18th cent. revival).