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The Fraternal

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EDITORIAL

AFTER COPENHAGEN

THE Copenhagen Congress demonstrated beyond all doubt that the B.W.A. is a real spiritual force in the world situation. The great Assemblies with their inspiring addresses and attendant enthusiasm, the imposing procession through the City, the open-air gathering which constituted a record in the annals of Copenhagen, the sense of fellowship between Baptists from forty different lands—all combined to send delegates home enheartened in their mission, especially those who came from scenes where Baptist witness is maintained at a high cost.

No service was arranged in the Cathedral, as was the case at Stockholm, but the Bishop attended the Congress and spoke words of brotherly welcome. The State Church in Denmark places the Free Churches at a disadvantage, and candidates for the teaching profession, however highly placed in examination lists, if they are Baptists, are officially informed that they are "not qualified to teach religion." Perhaps one result of the Congress will eventuate in an advance towards religious equality.

Our British representatives acquitted themselves with distinction and the fact that their forward-looking, statesmanlike speeches did not always command unanimous assent, may be taken as a compliment rather than otherwise.

As in the International situation the Americans, especially those of the Southern Convention, tended to dominate the Congress; a fact not surprising in view of their vast numerical superiority. That their views differed from those of our own, especially on matters ecclesiastical, was apparent, and this constitutes a call for mutual forbearance and for co-operation in prayer and thought.

Worthy tribute was paid to Dr. Rushbrooke, J. H. Shakespeare's successor as the architect of the World Alliance, and the acknowledged and honoured leader of the world Baptist Movement. His passing must have raised in many minds the question of his ultimate successor. In this connection it was encouraging to

note that, in addition to the assured sympathy of older leaders, many of our ablest younger men are already making their influence felt.

What part will British Baptists as a whole take in the B.W.A. in the years ahead? It ought to be an important part in view of the geographical position of Britain and also because of the vital contribution British Baptists can make to the theological thinking of the Alliance; building, it may be, a bridge between it and the World Council of Churches. Beyond this there are vast responsibilities in the fields of relief and of evangelism. The Alliance is really only at the beginning of its career and we pray that it may command the active interest of the highest quality of leadership both in this and in other lands, so that its great potentialities of spiritual influence may increasingly be realised.

The new President is Dr. C. Oscar Johnson, St. Louis, pastor of a church with 6,000 members, while Dr. W. O. Lewis continues for the present as General Secretary. The chief office is to be in Washington but there is to be a British office in London, which we trust will grow in importance and in influence.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH OVERSEAS MEMBERS

We are grateful to all who have kindly consented to send an occasional letter to members living overseas—a bit of brotherly fellowship which will be greatly valued by Commonwealth and Missionary brethren. Will those who have promised to write note that, with their own *Fraternal*, there is included an additional copy addressed to an overseas member. Please add extra postage as is necessary. We need further offers for this service. Thank you.

A GROWING CONCERN

We congratulate the Baptist Students' Federation on progress made. Officers have been chosen, a Constitution framed and the new organisation is a really going concern. It seeks to unite Baptist students in colleges, schools, hospitals, etc., for mutual help and furtherance of Baptist principles and aims. We warmly commend the Federation, and hope that ministers whose young men and women have gone into training will put them in touch with the Hon. Secretary, Mr. A. R. Taylor, Medical College, London Hospital, E.1.

SECOND ADVENTISM.

THE idea of the Second Coming of Christ has taken a variety of forms amongst Christians in all ages. Broadly speaking, however "Second Adventism" means two things: (1) a belief that Jesus Christ will come back to earth to establish His Kingdom. This event will be introduced by a series of terrible convulsions so that Heaven and Earth will alike be involved in fearful strife and confusion. Christ will then overthrow His enemies, and victory will be followed by a long period (a thousand years) of peaceful rule, at the close of which will come the true End of the World, the Last Judgment and the final separation of mankind into two groups, good and bad. (2) The second feature common to most (though not all) forms of Second Adventism has been the conviction that the return of Jesus Christ may be dated more or less accurately, and is to be expected soon. Often in Christian history, there have been those who have predicted that the present era would come to an end within a specified period. Irenæus placed the date 6,000 years after Creation. In the thirteenth century, it was supposed that the Millennium would begin in A.D. 1260. Pastor Russell and Grätton Guinness selected 1914 and 1923 respectively. Must we dismiss these speculations as worthless, or do they contain elements of enduring value? Of one thing I am quite sure. We must not allow the strangeness of some of these ideas to prevent our trying to do justice to them, for it is not unusual in spiritual things for truth of great value to be conveyed under very unlikely forms, whose significance can be apprehended only after patient search.

St. Mark's gospel says that "Jesus came into Galilee preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God" (1, 14). The phrase shows that, in this as in so many other ways, the new thing which Jesus brought to men was bound up with what they knew already. For the idea of the Kingdom of God was familiar to the hearers of Jesus. The Jews were nurtured in the conviction that one day God would intervene in this earthly scheme of things to restore Israel to a place of authority and splendour in world affairs, and to set up, through His vicegerent, His Kingdom of righteousness and peace in the earth. The aim of Jesus seems to have been, not so much to reject this deeply-rooted expectation as to purify and uplift it. In His hands, in fact, it did become a new thing. To Him, the Kingdom of God was not a distant political objective, but a present spiritual reality—the gracious rule of the Holy and

Loving Father of all mankind. It spelled mercy for the sinful and the needy of all nations, who in penitence and faith would seek and receive it. It spelled judgment and destruction for the proud, the unforgiving and the unbelieving. In particular, it called Jesus Himself, and those who would come after Him, to a vocation of self-sacrificing service which might, and in fact often did, include suffering and death (*Cf.* Mark 8-21ff). It must be remembered, however, that in this and elsewhere in the Gospels, it is clear that Jesus expected to survive death and to return to the world. He told the high priest that he would see "the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Mark 14, 62). He told the disciples "there be some here of them that stand by which shall in no wise taste of death till they see the Kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9, 1).

The precise meaning of these predictions is a matter of long-standing controversy, as is also the question how much of this material we must attribute to Jesus Himself, and how much to the New Testament writers. But this at least is certain, that the early church thought that the end of the present era was close at hand, and that it could not be long before their Master would return and set up His Kingdom. Let me give a few illustrations: "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. 4, 16f). "The night is far spent and the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light" (Rom. 13, 12). The Revelation of St. John says: "He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him" (Rev. 1, 7); and the same book describes in a series of visions what is likely soon to take place. 1 Peter says: "But the end of all things is at hand"; while 2 Peter offers to its readers reasons why these expected events have not yet taken place.

The important thing to notice next is, that this dramatic note of crisis is not the only one struck in the New Testament. Jesus Himself had said that the Kingdom is at hand (Mark 1, 15). From His ministry it appears that the Kingdom is already present in Him and in His work: "But if I by the Spirit of God cast out devils then is the Kingdom of God come upon you" (Matt. 12, 28). The Kingdom of Heaven, says Jesus, is not an outward event to be observed with the physical eye, but an invisible spiritual reality

already present in men's midst, if not in their hearts (Luke 17, 20f). The influence of this deeper view is seen best in the Fourth Gospel where the Return of Christ is seen not in terms of an outward event in the future, but as something already taking place. Thus the judgment of God is not postponed to some future date. Men are judged here and now by their attitude to Jesus Christ. "He that believeth is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already" (John 3, 18). Those who hear the word of Christ and believe on the Father have passed already from death to life (John 5, 24). From this point of view, the Second Advent seems to be regarded as having already occurred, since the promised new era of spiritual opportunity and responsibility characteristic of life in the Kingdom of God has dawned at Pentecost (Cf. Acts 2-16). God's people have already been delivered out of the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love (Col. 1, 13).

If this is correct then Second Adventism errs, not in emphasising the return of Jesus Christ to the world, but in emphasising it in the wrong way. This is not to say that it has not vital truths embodied in it, as I shall hope to show, but it is to say that, taken as a whole, it is a distortion, and not a true representation of Christian truth; and our wisdom is to try so to order our normal preaching and teaching as to satisfy in right ways those basic needs which, when not met, are apt to find expression in an abnormal concentration on the Second Advent.

Dr. Rowley, in his book *The Relevance of Apocalyptic* indicates what he conceives to be "the enduring message of Apocalyptic." His conclusions may be briefly summarised as follows:—

1. The conviction that God is in sovereign control of history, and especially that He will bring the world to an end by a great and final act of momentous significance and power.
2. A recognition of the dreadful power of cosmic Evil in world affairs, and the tragic consequences which that involves for man.
3. The certainty of the ultimate triumph of God's kingdom and the overthrow of the Devil and all his works.
4. The urgent necessity for a spirit of passionate loyalty and sacrificial devotion in God's people, so that the will of God may be fulfilled at all costs in them, and through them.
5. The hope of Life Hereafter.
6. The fact of Divine Judgment, and the abiding consequences of moral choice.

There is not one of these features of the Apocalyptic message which is not equally characteristic of the Gospel. They are all part of that rich heritage of Christian truth from which we are called upon to nourish our people, and without which they must inevitably be half-starved. The best way, therefore, to meet Second Adventism is to see that these truths find their proper place in our preaching, and that, not merely by individual reference but by study and consistent emphasis upon them.

Among the most pressing needs which we have to try to meet, I would put first that of a *Christian philosophy of History*. It is one of the tragedies of our time that, for far too many people, they have no pattern of history into which they can fit their own lives and the lives of others in such a way as to discover their real meaning and value. Nor do they know where they can find such a pattern. But, whether we like it or not, it is to the credit of the advocates of Second Adventism that they do offer their followers a pattern of history. Their pattern seems to me far too mechanical and deterministic, being based on a misreading of what Prophecy is, and what it is intended to do. Yet at least it does relate history to God, and to God's plan for our lives, and it encourages people to turn again to their Bibles. Have we then anything better to offer as a philosophy of history? The answer is surely, yes. For the Bible is nothing else than a record of God's purpose in history and the successive acts by which He has been seeking to realise His purpose. What we need now is an interpretation of history based upon the Word of God. We must be prepared to give time and effort in order to master and expound the fundamental moral and spiritual principles underlying both the Old Testament and the New—those principles of God's righteousness and mercy of which the Hebrew prophets were the great exponents, and upon which our Lord in His turn set His seal. These are the laws of His Kingdom, and to perceive them, as they were fully interpreted at last in the Life, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, is to gain a fresh vision of the Divine purpose in history and beyond history.

Secondly, we must point our people again to *the significance of the great Christian facts* as evidence of what Jesus Christ is doing here and now in the world which He has redeemed. The good news of Jesus Christ is that He has established His Kingdom here in this world, that the leaven of His influence is already at work, and that believers in Him experience to-day the baptism of His Spirit. We need not indeed be surprised if, in periods of violent

and revolutionary change similar to that through which we are now passing, men's minds are haunted by the terrible power of evil, and many are prone to interpret this as an indication that the world is steadily getting worse rather than better, and that its affairs are working up to some unprecedented apocalypse of evil which will be the prelude to the return of Christ. Nevertheless, the fact that such anticipations invariably draw freely upon apocalyptic imagery shows that they rest not upon an observation of the total situation so much as upon certain menacing features in that situation as seen in the light of a particular interpretation of prophecy. I suggest therefore, that they can best be met in two ways: first, by a more informed and adequate exposition of what prophecy really is, and a clearer indication of its true place in the economy of Divine revelation (see, e.g., T. H. Robinson's *Prophecy and the Prophets*); and secondly, by a better acquaintance with the actual course of Christian history, and the truly remarkable way in which the life of the world has been penetrated by the influence of Christ, and directed towards the objective He has set before us. No one who reads such a book as Latourette's *Unquenchable Light*, can doubt that God does fulfil the prophecies of the past. But the prophecies upon which such a reader will be disposed to dwell, as being in most accord with the Christian revelation, will not be those of Jewish apocalyptists, but rather such as point to the increasing spread of the knowledge of God in spite of all the power of wickedness, and the quiet but sure increase of the Gospel of Christ in the life of Man.

Our people hear far too little of the miracle of divine grace working in and through the Church, by means of which the Kingdom grows. Let us encourage them, in the words of an old saint, to "think glorious thoughts of God, and serve Him with a quiet mind." In so doing, we shall help them to speculate less upon the end of the world, and to concentrate more upon making their present lives a means of blessing to their fellows, and an acceptable offering of love and obedience to God.

Finally, let us learn from the Second Adventists to rejoice more in that *living Hope* into which, as St. Peter says, "we have been begotten again" (1, 3). It is an ironical comment upon the optimistic world-view of the nineteenth century, that, after the lapse of so short a time, men to-day have almost forgotten what it is to look forward with genuine expectancy and hope. The smoke of the atomic bomb has steadily spread over the whole sky, so that the

future is overcast with clouds of anxiety. Nor is there any indication that either scientist or statesman really knows how to dissipate these clouds, and it is the sober truth to say that only the winds of God can remove them. But this does not mean that even the Christian Gospel has any easy solution for the world's present sickness. The fact that we have now definitely passed into the "atomic era" means that the struggle for power which seems inseparable from the life of man will go on with increased intensity, and that the achievement of world peace will demand the exercise of greater patience and wisdom than ever before. Looked at from the human point of view, therefore, the outlook is indeed dark and the next stage of mankind's journey seems bound to be painful and difficult.

But the whole point of the Christian Gospel is that we must not look at these things only from the human point of view. If we do we shall fail. Our salvation is to approach them in faith, for from that standpoint we know that no earthly situation can finally defeat the wisdom and goodness of God, or frustrate the working out of His purposes. By faith, we shall believe that the contribution made by the British Empire to the life of man will not have been in vain, even though the Empire itself should cease to be. And by faith we shall be assured that were our present civilisation to disappear from the earth in some fresh outbreak of savagery, God would still be able to raise up a new order of life from the ruins of the old. This is not to be taken as an invitation to indulge in any mood of pious resignation. Such moods are all too often only another name for faithless inactivity. But it is a reminder that He who marks the fall of the sparrow and counts the hairs of our heads is not to be supposed to be incapable of controlling the elemental forces which are His own creation.

Nor is that all. For the Christian Gospel means that there is offered to all men through Jesus Christ the opportunity of sharing here and now in a higher order of life of such enduring worth as to place it beyond the power of any outward catastrophe, whatever its magnitude, to destroy it. It was to give this fullness of life that Christ lived and died and rose again; and faith affirms that, although we cannot read the future, the work which He has begun here will be perfected hereafter. The promise still holds good: "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations . . . and lo, *I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*" (Matt. 28, 19).

R. L. CHILD

FINAL DESTINY.—I

IT is quite evident that a large place is given in the New Testament to the doctrine of the final destiny of the unbeliever. It is also evident that it was our Lord Himself Who uttered the most solemn warnings to men against the abuse of God's mercy. It mattered vitally to Him whether men accepted or rejected the Gospel message. He made it abundantly clear that sin entailed final retribution and eternal remorse.

It was our Lord who spoke of a man being bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness. It was He who spoke of wailing and gnashing of teeth, and of the worm that did not die, the wicked eternally punished in the everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels, and the story of the rich man lifting up his eyes in Hades, being in torment with all his faculties keenly alive. He taught that he had come into the world to seek and to save that which was lost; that to believe in Him was salvation, to reject Him was to perish.

Most of us are acquainted with that book *What we Believe*, published by the Church of Scotland. The late Prof. MacIntosh was the convener of the committee responsible for its publication, and it bears many evidences of his cultured and reverent mind. He asked a friend what he thought of it. After some words of praise, his friend said, "There is one grave omission, no one is perishing." A shadow passed over the thoughtful, scholarly face, and then he remarked, "But surely all that is implied." "Ah!" continued his friend, "in the heart of His Gospel, God did not hesitate to strike the warning note, 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life!'" It is true. The final destiny of the unbeliever is not merely implied in the teaching of our Lord and in the New Testament, it is definitely stated. The doctrine is an essential part of the Gospel message. Christ died to save men, not only from the guilt and the power of sin, but, also, from its consequences. He died that men should not perish.

Our greatest difficulty in seeking an understanding of the doctrine, lies in the fact, that it is expressed, for the most part, in figurative and symbolic language, but the very fact that metaphors and symbols have to be used, shows that the reality is greater and vaster than the human mind can ever grasp. In the space at my disposal it is certainly impossible adequately to deal with the

subject, and I must confine myself to stating three points which seem to me to be fundamental.

The final destiny of the unbeliever is spiritual death. "Who-soever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." That is the fate of those whose names are not recorded in the book of life. We are not left in doubt as to the meaning of the lake of fire. We are told that it is "the second death." The Moffat N.T. Commentary comments that that is "the relinquishment of all that a man holds precious. It is an exile into a fearful darkness, an unending awareness of loss, a sojourning in gloom as dark as the new Jerusalem is bright." Death never means extinction of personality; it always means separation. The father says of the prodigal, "This my son was dead and is alive again." The boy was dead to the father all the time he was in the far country. The unbeliever in this life is in a moral condition of separation from God and is therefore said to be "dead in trespasses and sins." The believer, on the other hand, has, in the Master's own words, "passed from death unto life." As spiritual life is conscious existence in communion with God; so spiritual death is conscious existence in separation from God. I do not think we can ever begin to understand what that means until we begin to understand something of the meaning of our Lord's cry of forsakenness upon the Cross. That awful, heart-broken cry "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me," expressed the fact that in that hour He was left alone in the Universe. He was forsaken of the Father. He suffered spiritual death. What Christ suffered in the darkness of Calvary the unbeliever must suffer in eternity. "The wages of sin is death"; spiritual death. This is the lake of fire, the second death. Thomas á Kempis declared, "I had rather choose to be a pilgrim on earth with Thee, than without Thee to possess Heaven; and where Thou art not, there is death and Hell." Whittier expresses the same truth in his lines:—

"To turn aside from Thee is Hell,
To walk with Thee is Heaven."

The final destiny of the unbeliever is an endless condition. Christ says of those on the left hand, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." It is significant that He sets the doom of the wicked in direct antithesis to the bliss of the saved; "These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." If the bliss of the saved is endless, then the doom

of the unsaved must also be endless: the word in the Greek means, "that which always is." Of course, it is not the derivation of a word but its use which determines its meaning, and in regard to that Baron von Hugel declares that "the essence of Hell lies assuredly, above all, in its unendingness." The word is used of God in Psalm 90, "From everlasting to everlasting Thou art God." In Romans 16, 26, He is called "the Everlasting God," and in Hebrews 9, 14, the Holy Spirit is called "the Eternal Spirit." The compound phrase "For ever and ever" is used twelve times in Revelation; eight times of the reign or glory of God and of Christ; once of the reign of the righteous, and three times of the duration of the torment of the wicked.

The final destiny of the unbeliever is self-determined. The Divine purpose for all men is salvation. "God does not wish any to perish but all to betake them to repentance" (2 Peter 3, 9). "God our Saviour desires all men to be saved" (1 Timothy 2, 4). God has done everything possible for the salvation of men. He has set up the Cross on the highway of human life that all men may turn into the way of eternal life. But men may refuse to repent and be saved, and, therefore, because God deals with men as free, responsible, moral beings, a man determines his own final destiny. The free choice of each man is the expression of his own character, and character tends to become fixed in time as well as in the eternal state.

The question of an eternal Hell is ultimately a question of human freedom. If men choose to walk in their own way, God will not force them to walk in His. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man but the end thereof is death," but that is a man's own free choice. The modern theories of conditional immortality, universalism, and annihilationism virtually deny the free, moral responsibility of man. In addition they fail completely in view of the atoning work of the Cross.

We must speak the truth on this subject, but we must speak the truth in love. Robert Murray McCheyne met his friend Andrew Bonar one day and asked him what he had preached on the previous Sunday. Bonar replied, "I preached on 'The wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the nations that forget God.'" McCheyne laid his hand on Bonar's shoulder and said, "Brother, did you ask for special grace to speak on that text?" Yes, we need grace for all our preaching, but for this subject we need special grace.

WILLIAM WHYTE

FINAL DESTINY.—II

A METHODIST down in the Fens once told me that he found no problem in the subject of Final Destiny. All was quite clear and settled in his opinion: "If you are a believer in Christ, then when you die you will go to Heaven. If you are not a believer, then you will go to Hell." And that was that. He would have approved presumably of those stern, clear-cut, painfully blunt charts of destiny which religious people were wont to draw for the benefit of erring humanity.

For good and ill such charts as that would carry no convicting power for many people to-day. The preaching of Hell as our fathers understood it has gone. The orthodox religious form in which chastisement had been presented is held by many to be contrary to the spirit of the Gospel and to the specific doctrine of the New Testament, and they would emphasise the following points for consideration:

1. That the word "eternal" in the New Testament does not mean an everlasting extension of time.
2. Nowhere does the New Testament draw the "death line" or declare that at death our eternal destiny is decided.
3. If death fixes the eternal fate of men it means that the majority of mankind will be lost. What of the heathen, those who have had little opportunity even in Christendom of knowing Christ, and what of the spiritually undeveloped?
4. Is the Saviour's work limited to the limits of human, earthly life? Can we conceive of Him doing other than continuing His redeeming ministry on behalf of those who "pass over"?

This criticism of the so-called "orthodox view" is not entirely modern, the Church has never been unanimous in its teaching on this issue. The three solutions—conditional immortality, universalism, and Hell-fire—continually find advocates in one form or another through all the Christian centuries.

"Hell-Fire."

Belief in everlasting evil, the final doom of the wicked, was developed by certain Christians out of elements received from Judaism; elements Judaism itself inherited from the thoughts, fears and threats in the eschatology of other races long, long ago. Jewish apocalyptic writers wrote indeed with the will to make an impression and exert a spell of fear on all who read their works. They

leave nothing to the imagination. "Flames leap up against a sky of darkness and the gloomy valleys are filled with the voices of despair." Here one sups full of horror. It seems far removed indeed from the sweet Sabbath rest of Galilee and the gracious calling of the Gentle Christ.

At the same time, no man facing the events of recent years can fail to realise the reality of evil and the devastating might of the powers of darkness. A generation which has ceased to believe in Hell-fire has seen its towns and cities *on* fire! And men who prided themselves on ceasing to fear Hell *beneath* the earth have been with tragic irony compelled to experience Hell *on* and *in* the earth. The language and symbolism of apocalypse may be repugnant, may be stamped as primitive and naïve, nevertheless in some respects it may get nearer to a realistic understanding of the human situation than much of the over-confident, pseudo-scientific, assumptions of learned but secular ideologies of our time.

Jesus spoke in impressively tragic tones about the "lost," and the sin against the Holy Spirit. The moral, spiritual suicide of Lady Macbeth in calling good "evil" and evil "good"—a sin of which our age has known much—was declared to be unpardonable. Life is real. Its issues go beyond the earthly stage. Men may be actors and have their entrances. But they have their exits, too! They may play many parts, but "the play's the thing," and the King, Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, is the author and the audience.

One big question, the doctrine of Everlasting Evil leaves unanswered. From our limited viewpoint we may feel acutely that an everlasting Hell is not too dreadful for a Nazi concentration camp bully. But an everlasting Hell implies the eternity of evil. Final failure to attain the good is defeat for the will and purpose of God, and of His Son. Have we to accept that as true in regard to many millions, to thousands, to a few, to one "for whom Christ died"? Can Christ really see of the travail of His Soul and be satisfied as long as one younger son or elder brother is out of the Father's home?

The Solution of Conditional Immortality attracts the scientific mentality of our time. It has obvious ethical qualities, considerable New Testament support, and can be accommodated to the idea of evolution, an idea which has exerted a dominating influence on the thought of our age. It enlisted the support of many Christian thinkers of the nineteenth century. The theological form of this

solution is that "men were created with the gift of immortality, but lost it through the Fall. The doom of the sons of Adam is to perish utterly. But Christ came to restore the lost inheritance." Edward White, in his *Life in Christ*, says, "The object of the incarnation was to immortalise mankind." Those who hear Christ's voice and by faith enter into true fellowship with Him attain immortality. "The world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." Those who refuse remain in the realm of mortality and in due time become as though they had never been. The opportunity of attaining immortality is not limited to *this* life. This evades the dualistic view while retaining a real perdition. It is, however, a compromise. It involves belief that the soul can be destroyed, and it denies the organic unity of the race. Followed to its logical conclusion it seems to make impossible any reasonable psychology of human nature. The gap between human goodness and human badness is, after all, really so small that it does not justify so great a consequence as the difference between mortality and immortality. There is "So much bad in the best of us, so much good in the worst of us," and they who fain would serve Christ best are conscious most of wrong within, that it is asking much to believe that final destiny is determined by the difference. It puts excessive responsibility on spiritual activities, spiritual responses, of our own.

The third solution is *Universal Restoration*. The belief that evil will finally pass away through the reconciliation of all souls to God. It is a doctrine of limitless hope. Its core is "God is love." It refuses to believe that God will permit any human being liberty to damn itself to everlasting doom. The gift of such freedom as that could not be, as all God's gifts are, the expression of His good and loving will. God, this doctrine affirms, cannot, will not, be defeated. If He were it would mean that He is confronted with a power stronger than Himself. The total destruction of sin cannot be until every soul is saved. I began with the old plan of salvation and am interested to find in C. H. Dodd's *The Bible To-day* material for a new plan which is indeed large enough to embrace our brave new world in all its need and directly relevant to all that is happening in it. Dodd reviews the contents of the Old and New Testaments and says, "This record the church offers as a revelation of God." In the events of history and time God has been meeting with man; the record is one continuous and increasing revelation. The Lord appears unto Jeremiah, and Christ

appears to Saul. Isaiah sees the Glory of God in the Temple, and the disciples see the Glory of God in the face of the Risen Lord. These encounters of man with God through the events of history carry with them an obligation on men to act in response to them. The response involves worship and awe, realisation of sinfulness, repentance and prayer for pardon, cleansing and readiness to serve. Thus through the ages a supra-historical factor has been entering into the human scene from Abraham to Moses, from Moses to the Prophets, and the Apostles, to the climax of the revelation, Jesus, Who embraces in Himself the spiritual issues of the ages, and through His life, death and resurrection becomes the Creator of a new community—the Christian Church—which has no frontiers in space or time.

Christ is the supreme of the mighty acts of God. The "Creation" of Genesis is the "Prologue" to this amazing record. The "Last Judgment" is the "Epilogue." Prologue and Epilogue lie before and after the time-space order and can be spoken of only in symbols. But God's ways in history give us intimations of what may lie before and beyond history.

The thought that we all lie under God's judgment and that every human being is ultimately destined in God's mercy to Eternal Life is the thought that moves St. Paul to say, "Oh! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God. How unsearchable are His judgments." It is God's merciful purpose to "sum up all things in Christ." Dodd admits that this universalism has never been generally accepted by the whole church, but if Paul believed it who can lightly reject it? And who can easily let go the glorious hope that at the last the final voice of all humanity's Babel tongues shall be the voice of Jesus the Son of Man? Naturally we ask "When? When shall this consummation be?" And the answer is Acts 1, verse 7: "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has set within His own authority."

Realisation of one's own ignorance is a valuable, if depressing, possession and, as Leckie says, "It is a thing the student of eschatology is likely to acquire." To know God's purpose for us here and now is more important than to know when His purpose for the race will be achieved. In knowing and doing the former we serve and put ourselves in harmony with the latter. Laws of the physical universe are universal; laws of the moral universe are eternal. The road to the knowledge and enjoyment of God here-

after is the *same road* as that on which we know and enjoy Him here and now. Other-worldliness which detracts attention from the ordinary Christian duties of daily life is a false pietism. No one who rightly apprehends it can really use the larger hope as justification for continuing in sin. Real, spiritual belief in ultimate salvation involves the acceptance and working out of it with fear and trembling here and now. God's forgiveness does not ignore or forget sin and sin's consequences. It grasps them, transforms them, and creates out of them something new. It takes the vacillating temperament of an impulsive fisherman and makes it the rock-like character on which to build a church; it takes the sordid record of a Mary Magdalene and converts it into one of the most poignant appeals for purity; it grasps a gibbet and converts it into a crucifix. And one of old declared that He makes the very wrath of men to praise Him.

Is any other affirmation daring enough after this to do justice to the convicting, converting power of the Christian Gospel? It is a great Gospel which can take ordinary men and women and make them pilgrims of the Celestial City. It is a greater Gospel when it declares that it accepts the challenge of the Town of Destruction and of Vanity Fair, and will not cease its Holy War until all the kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdom of its Christ. Christ, after all, is not only a light leading us out of the world: He is "the Light of the World." In that light we see the Son of God giving abounding life to those who tread the upward way, and going down Himself in redeeming love into the tawdry haunts of silliness and sin, going down into Hell itself to save even to the uttermost.

Is it not true to say that the more we see of human life, and the better we know ourselves, the more deeply do we feel the need of a Gospel which—when it speaks of final destiny—tells, not of an everlasting punishment, but of an everlasting mercy?

G. W. BYRT

THE ROOT AND FRUIT OF BRITISH TOLERATION

IT is one of the glories of our Baptist tradition that the first English book to advocate universal religious liberty was written by a Baptist, Thomas Helwys, who published *The Mystery of Iniquity*, in 1612. It must not be supposed, however, that the Separatists were left to continue the struggle for religious liberty unaided. Within the Church of England there was a small, but

growing and influential movement in favour of toleration. This movement was led by the Cambridge Platonists, Benjamin Whichcote, Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge (1633-44), and Provost of King's College (1644-60), and his followers, John Smith, Ralph Cudworth, and others. These Anglican scholars were nicknamed "latitudinarians" by their enemies who poured ridicule upon their teaching. But their high character and forceful intellect contrasted favourably with the lethargy of most of the Restoration clergy, and the "latitudinarian" movement gained a considerable following in Cambridge. Students flocked to hear the eloquent and earnest preaching of Whichcote, who interpreted the Christian message in the light of Platonism and the Logos doctrine. He declared that every man has not only the right, but the duty, to listen to the voice of Reason and obey the guidance of his own enlightened conscience, which is the seed of the Divine Logos, "the light that lighteth every man." "God hath set up two lights" he said, "to enlighten us on our way: the light of Reason, which is the light of His creation: and the light of Scripture, which is after-revelation from Him. Let us make use of these two lights and suffer neither to be put out." "The spirit in man is the candle of the Lord, lighted by God and lighting man to God." Every man must follow the light which is given to him. "I will not make a religion for God," he declared, "nor suffer any to make a religion for me." "No man can command his judgment, therefore every man must obey it." He vigorously denounced religious persecution: "That must not be done in defence of religion which is contrary to religion."

John Smith, the disciple of Whichcote, in his *Præfatory Discourse concerning the True Way or Method of attaining to Divine Knowledge*, remarked: "Freedom from the dictates of man is necessary for a true judgment." The true Christian is not one who merely accepts "orthodox" pronouncements without thinking, but one who seeks "the nearest union with the divine essence that may be. This life (of fellowship with God) is nothing else but God's own breath within him, and an infant Christ, if I may use the expression, formed in his soul."

Strong opposition came from the High Church Party, who insisted upon the unquestionable authority of ecclesiastical creeds and episcopal judgments, and refused to recognise the right of private opinion or dissent in matters religious. We might, however, have expected the Separatists to welcome the support which

the Cambridge doctrines afforded to their own position; but instead of being grateful, the non-conformists, suspicious of Platonic learning, joined in the general abuse which descended upon the heads of these philosophical divines. "It is clear," wrote the historian Burnet, "that the Cambridge Platonists were misunderstood and disliked by sacerdotalists and non-conformists alike. To the rising generation—the generation that gave ten pounds for *Paradise Lost* and left its author to die in poverty and obscurity—they seem mainly to have been objects of ridicule."

Nevertheless the witness of Whichcote and his successors to the principles of religious liberty could not fail to be influential. When we consider the thousands of students who came under the spell of Whichcote's preaching and afterwards went out to assume responsible and leading positions in the State, it becomes obvious that the progress towards that religious toleration which made possible the Revolution Settlement of 1689 was due in no small measure to their influence.

This Settlement has proved to be the lasting foundation of our English Democratic Constitution. Trevelyan writes: "England has lived at peace within herself ever since. The settlement in Church and State proved to have the quality of permanence. It stood almost unaltered until the era of the Reform Bill of 1832. And throughout the successive stages of rapid change that have followed, its fundamentals have remained to bear the weight of the vast democratic superstructure which the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have raised upon its sure foundation" (*The English Revolution*, p. 11).

Thus our democracy is founded upon a Settlement which was itself the fruit of the latitudinarianism of the Cambridge men, which in turn was an outcome of their studies in Plato and Plotinus, combined with a wise and penetrating insight into the message of the New Testament. When we reflect upon the important position which the Cambridge Platonists hold, not only in the history of British theology and philosophy, but in the history of British democracy, the neglect into which they have been allowed to fall is as deplorable as it is unaccountable. By the candid testimony of one of our greatest living historians, we owe to the influence of these philosophical divines the tolerant and freedom-loving spirit which has become characteristic of our country at its best.

A. W. ARGYLE

SYSTEMATIC PREACHING

I WONDER sometimes how ministers find their subjects for sermons. I have a vivid recollection of calling one Saturday on James Thew, in Leicester, my grandfather's successor at Belvoir Street, when he alarmed me by saying: "Oh! James, you must preach for me tomorrow, I have been hunting all the week for a text and it will not come." An invitation I was unable to accept. Are there many ministers to-day who follow Thew's example and yet preach as he did to crowded congregations? I have never been one of them.

On leaving Rawdon I received a copy of Bruce's *Training of the Twelve*, from William Medley. I confess I found the reading definitely dull, but it gave me an idea and, following its track, it led me through St. John, chapters 12 to 17, and with Westcott's aid, an almost verse by verse exposition, supplied me with useful theme for nearly six years.

At Berwick, where I began, Communion was observed every Sunday, but on first Sundays it was held at night which decided the kind of sermon I should preach, viz., a pre-Communion address. About that time a well-known Presbyterian minister in London was preaching to young men on the second Sunday evening in each month, and being myself young, I decided to speak to young people that night, and continue to do so till the end of my ministry. The third Sunday evening was devoted to evangelistic appeals. My chief recollections of these sermons gather around Bible questions. It is astonishing how many questions its pages yield to the preacher who looks for them; the first, if memory serves, was, "Where art thou?" while a much later one is, "How shall we escape?" Somewhere or other there may be a batch of my sermons entitled, "Questions for the heart"—these furnished part of my third Sunday evening subjects.

Always interested in biography I turned naturally to Biblical biography which is so vivid and so various—the Bible is crammed with it. Even the prophetic books, and not a few of the New Testament, are largely biographical, and it was inevitable that the fourth Sunday evening in the month should be devoted to Bible Lives. Some occupied one evening and others, like Joseph and Gideon, claimed longer treatment. Pulpit exchanges, anniversaries and the like, occupied more than the few days in those months, containing five Sundays.

What I plead for is some system, however obvious. Two-talented men like James Thew might be able to go from Monday to Saturday with no idea of Sunday subjects, but one-talented (or even less) men, who desire not to bury, but to dedicate to their Lord's glory, such ability as they have, need some order in their work for Him. Even a commonplace system as the one indicated has distinct advantages. One was that it drew me to my Bible with a definite practical purpose in mind. It was my job to expound what I found there—the thoughts and experiences of men whose lives God had touched. I imagine that exposition may be dull and a congregation bored by a verse-to-verse exposition of Psalm 119. Dull preachers have no business in any pulpit. The Book of Amos is one of the most exciting in the world, Edgar Wallace is not in the running with it, and no Baptist Association that I know of equals that described in chapters 1-3 of the Apocalypse. We suffer from too little, not from too much, Bible preaching to-day.

Moreover, systematic preaching saves time. A study is sometimes a place where very little study is done. Charles Brown once told me that he had an hour's "class" the first hour of each morning and herein much of the secret of his success is revealed. Personally, I spent from nine o'clock to one, at sermon work, and I am amazed to note how many New Testament Books I worked through for the pulpit.

To conclude, I do not see how ministers can be helpful to their people or faithful to their Master without the application of some system to their work as preachers.

JAMES MURSELL

AN EPISTLE OF PRAISE AND BLAME

THE third Epistle of John mingles praise and blame, warm commendation with sharp condemnation. As a commentator has said of John: "He had an extraordinary simple way of saying deep, loving, and terrible things." This short letter is addressed to one Gaius, who is commended for his hospitality, his readiness to welcome and entertain itinerant Christian brethren whether they happened to be known friends, or unknown strangers. It was enough for this large-hearted Gaius that these visitors were moving from place to place "for the sake of the Name." His generosity is sharply contrasted with the rude and cavalierly treatment given to these visiting brethren by a member of the same church, one

Diotrephes, a man of ambitious spirit, who loved the pre-eminence and disowned the apostle's authority.

The Christian pastorate gives us many opportunities of exercising a ministry of commendation. A word of praise and encouragement where it can honestly be given, goes a long way, and is often an incentive to further effort and achievement. It is long-remembered and often recalled. I sometimes live over again one of my first efforts at conducting a service. No one had anything to say to the young student at the close, save one tall military-looking man, who strode down the aisle, and heartily shaking hands with the preacher, spoke only one short sentence: "Young man, go on!"

The commendation of the minister to those deserving of praise, by way of word or letter, is greatly valued, just because it is praise from him. How Gaius must have treasured the great apostle's letter, and John's uncommon prayer that he might enjoy as much health of body as he had of soul! Praise has a quality like that of mercy; it is twice-blessed: the New Testament is most urgent in the matter of praise, because without praise, many other virtues and graces cannot be born; without thanksgiving they have no breath of life. Perhaps the most of us are much too niggardly in our commendations. We are afraid lest we should overdo our appreciation. The Church Secretary or Deacon might get that fearful disease called "swelled-head." We may put it on record, however, that most of us are over-sparing with our bouquets in the land of the living. Dr. Kelman said of Alex, "We would have laid down our lives for him, Hugh Black and I. The only difference we ever had with him was, that by all sorts of subtle ways he thrust us forward into any prominent or desirable position which he himself was expected to take, and we had to watch him for this, and circumvent his too great generosity In the vestry after one had preached, he almost always had some kind thing to say, and in the strength of a couple of sentences we went out into the street taller and more erect and feeling that life was worth living."

In contrast to the open-hearted Gaius, stands Diotrephes who "loved to have the pre-eminence," lording it over his fellow-members in the church. This lordly man, not only refused hospitality to the itinerant brethren, but forbade the others to receive them. Harmack, by the way, saw in Diotrephes the emergence of the Episcopate in the early church; he was possibly the first bishop

of the monarchical type. The apostle does not spare this disturber of the peace. In John's words, there is a flash of that fire from Heaven he once desired should consume those who refused to receive his Master.

Diotrephes is still to be found in some of our churches, though perhaps the type is less pronounced. We tend to idealise these first Christian communities, and to think of them as patterns in the matter of Christian behaviour. They had their excellencies and also their defects, their noble and ignoble figures, their weak and ambitious members. We must expect Diotrephes to crop up in our church work and fellowship. Our democratic methods provide him with many opportunities. This love of the leading place runs strong in some natures, and for some of us, Diotrephes has proved a real thorn in the flesh. Nor have we always sought and found the grace sufficient in handling him. He can be a sore problem, and the cause of much trouble; can sow great handfuls of tares among the wheat.

In dealing with our Diotrephes, stern measures are sometimes called for. It is the best and safest policy at times, for all concerned to grasp the nettle, and take all the risks. There is a loss that can ultimately turn to gain. Peace at any price can be too big a price to pay. The love that "beareth all things" has little effect on some people. There are situations in church life that call for a purging of the floor if the chaff is to be separated from the wheat. Dr. Forsyth reminds us that our Lord, though carrying gentleness to the last degree, was a severe critic, a born fighter, of fiery scorn so that the people thought he was Elijah or the Baptist. Anger, it has been said, can be like an "unclean bonfire"; it can also be like "a sea of glass mingled with fire." It all depends what kindles it. "Who is made to stumble and I burn not?" The minister has his own appointed place to keep and guard, his own influence to maintain. It cannot be for the good of his people that his place be usurped or compromised.

Yet hasty and precipitate action is, in most cases, unwise, and often defeats its own end. Some of us are over-sensitive and impatient, and re-act too quickly to anything in the nature of appreciation. There are times when, though we have ears, we should not hear, and should have eyes that see not. A good deal that happens, and much that is said, should pass by us as the idle wind which we respect not. There are the higher levels by which we can approach many of the practical problems of the ministry. Awkward

situations often unravel themselves through prayer. Prayer begets patience, and patience is the soul of peace. Our Diotrephes is not like the Ethiopian; he can change, not his skin, but his whole spirit and attitude; he can shed his offensive egoism and curb his ambition. He may even graduate for a place on the Diaconate, or become worthy of some other office of responsibility in the service of the Church. The refining grace of God can achieve surprising results.

ALLAN M. RITCHIE

THE THEOLOGY OF THE "MAN-IN-THE-STREET"

BEFORE my subject can be set down on paper two considerations must be in mind. The first, that any attempt to describe a type inevitably leaves so much unsaid that should be said. All one can hope to do is to listen-in to a typical conversation and reduce it to some order. The second, that any minister who seeks to describe something of the men with whom he has been privileged to serve, is tied by a sense of loyalty which demands that his words would seem just to those whom he sought to teach and from whom he was learning continually.

Twenty per cent. may be regarded as "inside," and fifteen on the fringe. That estimate leaves sixty-five per cent. on the "outside." Perhaps that is too generous in our favour. Among the sixty-five per cent. are the intelligentsia on the one hand, and the man who feels that life has never offered him a chance on the other; the one sophisticated, the other often crude and liking to be crude. The man whose theology is described comes somewhere between, a "sheep without a shepherd," and not consciously requiring one.

While this "outsider" has found that he can get on admirably without organised religion, he has not yet dispensed with God. His god has very little in common with the Christian God. (For the sake of clarity I am not using capital letters for his god). Because his god is to him so relatively unimportant, any description is inevitably vague. As an institution his god is of service for a victory day or a national occasion. He does not interfere in history. There was considerable argument when some representatives of the Christian God suggested that their God had shown His favour at Dunkirk. There is no thought of providence in his thought of god, though vaguely he has something to do with things that

"have-to-happen" or "are-to-be." When one's pal was killed, it was bad, but it "was-to-be." More will be said about this fatalism. In contrast to all this his god is in one respect more than an institution. I do not know whether the Radio Padre coined the phrase "slit-trench religion." He certainly used the term to good effect. This god is useful in an emergency. "When the family had run into debt, I was desperate; I'd never won anything from football pools before. That week they went away with a prayer. They brought me in just exactly what I needed." That case may sound extreme, but it is characteristic. The god had served his purpose and could be ignored until the next emergency. An impression from talking with padres of the 1914-18 war is that in action there was less "slit-trench religion" in this war than in the previous. No one would pretend that this generation knew less or more of fear than their fathers; more likely, they were less intimate with their god. This comparison would come a lot better from a padre who had served in both wars.

It is strange that hand-in-hand with so vague a religion there should be found such an obstinate philosophy of life. The man whose theology I attempt to describe is a fatalist. His fatalism may not be consistent but it is unshakeable. It is much more fundamental than the proverbial bit of steel with your number on it that kills you. I am not giving any reality to his gremlins; they were part of the happy furniture of life that made bearable what might otherwise have seemed intolerable. But one felt that there was something so wrong in healthy British manhood feeling that so much "had-to-be." It might be suggested that it could be described psychologically, when for so long men had been obeying orders, so often without a reason why. But by the way in which many of them used their jargon one felt that they had always talked that way. To the Christian it would seem clear that the "was-to-be" attitude whether applied to a posting order, a road crash, death in action, or a war, leads to moral irresponsibility. One can sometimes laugh and sometimes feel despondent recalling the wit and the sting of arguments heard or overheard. It almost seemed at times as though one's challenge to his doom had got across. As so often happens in discussion, if arguments started again, they had to begin at the very beginning; nothing had been accepted. He was rather like the psychopath, who will be convinced by the doctor to-night, but will know that he is wrong tomorrow morning.

We all know to our cost how the man-in-the-street confuses his ethic with his religion; he calls it his religion. His reference to the "golden rule" is threadbare. His application of "doing-to-others-as-he-would-be-done-by" is superficial in the extreme. Let us be frank; petty dishonesty is prevalent in civilian and army life. What does not belong to a man himself but is W.D. property or belongs to a place in which he is billeted gets scant respect. The man who will put his hand in his pocket for his mate when he is broke, will "borrow" something from another chap that is not only of monetary but of sentimental value. This sort of thing is often comical, but to-day it is a problem that has reached quite serious dimensions. By taking men and women away from a life which safeguards them by the restraints and conventions of the family and the local community, war inevitably increases immorality and the general break-up of accepted standards. Crediting the man-in-the-street with his good intentions, one would not term his view of life immoral; amoral is a fairer word. His god has nothing to do with goodness; his religion is amoral. On the one hand there is so much to admire—sympathy, comradeship and loyalty often given so freely—but at the same time there is an almost entire absence of any regard for values, which to us are of paramount importance, but which to him are stale conventions.

This would be incomplete without a reference to his view of our faith. I am asked to believe that while he has discarded institutional Christianity, he still has a sense of reverence for Jesus Christ. This may be true of the product of our public schools, who never quite forgets what he learned in school chapel; it may be true, too, of many who were scholars in our Sunday schools but never knew the worship in our churches. But in the minds of the many who have never had a real contact with our church life at any point, and whose interest has been limited to the street in which they live, the cinema, the pub and the club, the name of Jesus Christ has no live association. I do not dispute the fact that frequently the loudest applause in a Forces concert went to the one who sang "Ave Maria" or "The Holy City," ever two favourites with the soldier. But Jesus is so relatively unimportant to the man who has never been on the inside or on the fringe that it is hard to accept the suggestion that he feels reverence for Christ. Our fathers would have regarded the common use of names of the God-head to extend a limited vocabulary to be blasphemy; it is not meant seriously enough to be regarded as such to-day. Nevertheless we do not use lightly words that really mean something to us.

There is something similar in the critical attitude now felt towards the Church in this country and the anti-clerical movement on the Continent. The Christian is a menace to what is regarded as freedom; Sunday cinemas, football pools and easier divorce are the liberties which we oppose. The grounds for the attitude at home and in Europe are totally different, but there is a similarity of temper. There is sometimes justice in the accusation that we are too negative. His criticism of the lives of individual Christians is interesting in that it so often reveals a man on the defensive. The critic is not unlike the proverbial preacher who talks loudest when he feels his logic to be weakest.

It may be argued that too much has been taken at its face value, and that the man-in-the-street does not mean seriously a good deal that he says. Sometimes he must be taken seriously, for his expressed opinion is the kind of thing with which he deceives himself; it is his substitute for what we seek to offer him. He at least claims to find it adequate. He would not approve the question, nevertheless I ask it—is not the attack that he makes an indication that he is not quite confident about what he is saying? He is so likeable that there is something in me that would prefer to stand with him in the canteen just talking trivialities. For him to pass from his world with his god into our world with Christ is a costly business, costly to him as well as to us. It is so much easier to be good-humoured and to hope that brotherliness will do the work for us. I do not find it easy to ask of him this costly experience that is so radical, demanding so much of him mentally, morally and emotionally. Yet without it he is poor indeed.

MELFRYN W. POWELL

SIDELIGHT ON AMERICA

THE visitor to the United States is in grave peril of generalisation. At best he can stay at comparatively few centres of population and gain but a cursory idea of the life and thought of the people. What may be true of the Eastern Seaboard may be quite untrue of the Middle West. Even within the same geographical areas the mixture of population and the complexity of American life tempt the visitor to feel that anything he says must be wide of the mark. When I was asked to write this article about my three months' tour in America I was conscious of this danger. What I have to say can apply to those whom I met and,

even then, three months is all too short a time to gain any exact knowledge.

The first impression an English visitor has about Baptist Church life in America, is that it is on a far greater scale than anything we have over here. In a town you often find the Baptist Church is the leading Church, and this is particularly true in the Southern States. Because Baptists are so numerous their organisation tends to be far more comprehensive than ours and the resources of the average church much greater. For example, it is not uncommon to find a Minister with two assistants, a full-time Sunday School organiser and an office staff. Even in smaller churches the minister often has a full-time secretary and consequently the church tends to cover a great deal more ground and touch many more people than we do in this country. Although I heard complaints about inadequate giving, it was my impression that the average church member contributed much more to the support of the church than his opposite number in this country. But, of course, wages are higher and personal resources greater. However, the larger sum contributed does enable the average church to organise its life and work efficiently.

I spent a good deal of time in theological seminaries, and here I was struck by the complexity of the courses through which students were expected to pass. The period of training is approximately the same as in our colleges but the subjects covered are many more. In addition to the Bible, Church History, Christian Doctrine and the Philosophy of Religion, students must take courses in Psychology, Church Administration, Christian Education (covering Sunday School and youth work), Pastoral Oversight, Social Studies, etc. In addition, every student is directed to undertake practical work at the week-ends. It appeared to me that this programme has its advantages and disadvantages over our own rather more specialised courses. On the one hand their students are introduced to a more comprehensive view of the minister's function. We are often told that our men have little or no training in pastoral work and in this we have much to learn from the Americans. For example, in every American theological college there are students in training for Sunday School work to become directors of Religious Education—an office recognised in most churches for a full-time person. This means that every theological student is brought into direct touch with this type of work, whether he is specialising in it or not. Incidentally an opening for full-time Christian service is

afforded to girls in this connection, which is largely denied them here. In addition to Sunday School work the American student is given an introduction to his pastoral duties, not only through a full-time Professor of Pastoral Theology on the college staff, but also through his week-end service. He is not, as in this country, sent out by himself as a student pastor, but rather he is often placed for the week-end under the supervision of an experienced minister. Again, when I was in Boston I learned that at the Massachusetts General Hospital, theological students are trained for hospital work and sick visiting. Two chaplains are on the full-time staff, and they have the standing of doctors, wearing white coats with a cross inscribed on the pocket. They see every patient between them and are given facility for exercising a spiritual ministry. The senior chaplain has a special teaching function. Groups of students come for a period of training during their vacation. They are put on the wards as medical orderlies and learn the background of hospital life by performing the most menial of duties. The chaplain told me that the doctors and nurses gain a new respect for the function of the minister when they see students and even sometimes ordained ministers perform jobs that they would not consider part of their own medical training. To start from the bottom gives the minister a real standing. This was one of the most fruitful ideas I struck in all my travels.

Although there is much to be learned from this approach to preparation for the ministry there are grave drawbacks to the whole system. In the first place, a theological course which contains so many subjects means that none of them is studied thoroughly. I met many students who said that they were too busy to digest anything that they were being taught. One told me that he had to cram so much factual information in order to pass his tests that he could never stop to think about anything. In many instances I found this led to the development of an uncritical mind—a student was inclined to accept what his professor said without question. Secondly, Biblical and theological studies tend to be crowded into a somewhat restricted part of the curriculum and many students come out of theological colleges possessing a technique of approach to people but without a firm grasp upon the message they have to proclaim.

That leads me to my final impression. Wherever I went I was struck by the bitterness of the theological controversies obtaining inside the Baptist Body. In many places in the Northern

Convention there is a Liberalism almost unknown in this country. The word "Baptist" seems to stand for little except liberty to believe and practise what you like. On the other hand there is a militant Fundamentalist wing which stands by the literal inerrancy of the Scriptures and sometimes goes beyond this and stands by the literal inerrancy of a particular theory of the millenium. I felt that each extreme really created the other and that the root fault lay in the theological seminaries. Many of these seminaries were definitely partisan—standing for a school of thought rather than for training men and women in the understanding of the traditional gospel. People were always trying to attach labels to me. Was I a fundamentalist, or a liberal, or orthodox or neo-orthodox? My reply was, that I did not understand labels; I was a Christian, standing in the historic Christian tradition, accepting the historic Christian faith. Behind the theological confusion prevalent in many parts of the United States lies American individualism. A man is free to believe, practise and propagate whatever appeals to him. In this situation the Roman Catholic Church is having a wonderful time: for the Roman case against this approach to Christianity is unanswerable and that is why so much headway is being made, and will be made, by Roman Catholics in the years to come. Everywhere a new Reformation is needed in Protestantism—a Reformation according to the Word of God. We need to bring all our beliefs and practices under the judgment of the Christian revelation contained in the Scriptures. Nowhere is that emphasis more necessary than in the United States, though one is bound to confess that it is increasingly needed here at home.

PAUL ROWNTREE CLIFFORD
